



SOUTH ASIA
BIOSAFETY PROGRAM

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NEWSLETTER

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www.agbios.com/sabp

SABP

The South Asia Biosafety Program (SABP) is an international developmental program initiated with support from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The program is implemented in India and Bangladesh and aims to work with the local governments to facilitate implementation of transparent, efficient and responsive regulatory frameworks that ensure the safety of new foods and feeds, and protect the environment.

SABP is working with its in-country partners to:

- Identify and respond to technical training needs for food, feed and environmental safety assessment.
- Develop a sustainable network of trained, authoritative local experts to communicate both the benefits and the concerns associated with new agricultural biotechnologies to farmers and other stakeholder groups.
- Raise the profile of biotechnology and biosafety on the policy agenda within India and address policy issues within the overall context of economic development, international trade, environmental safety and sustainability.

DRAFT GUIDELINES FOR THE CONDUCT OF CONFINED FIELD TRIALS OF REGULATED, GENETIC ENGINEERED (GE) PLANTS IN INDIA

Department of Biotechnology (DBT) Guidelines for Research in Transgenic Crops, 1998 extensively provide for approval procedures for research, greenhouse design, *etc.* However, in view of increase in the number of field trials being conducted for several crops with new genes/events, DBT has initiated an exercise to develop guidelines for conducting field trials of regulated, genetically engineered plants in India.

Comments are invited from all the stakeholders on the above guidelines. Comments will be received up to January 15, 2008, following which the guidelines will be finalized. The Guidelines can be viewed at http://www.igmoris.nic.in/field_trials_guidelines/Guidelines.pdf.

DRAFT STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES AND RECORDING FORMATS FOR CONFINED FIELD TRIALS

DBT has initiated an exercise for development of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for field trials of regulated genetically engineered plants. To begin, SOPs have been drafted for transport, storage, management, harvest or termination and post harvest management of confined field trials of genetically engineered cotton. Formats for recording the information during the conduct of field trials have also been drafted.

Comments are invited from all the stakeholders on the above SOPs, which can be viewed at http://www.igmoris.nic.in/field_trials_guidelines/SOP.htm. Comments will be

received up to January 15, 2008, following which the SOPs will be finalized. Comments can be sent to:

Dr. K.K. Tripathi,
Member Secretary, RCGM and
Advisor, Department of Biotechnology
Block-II, CGO Complex,
Lodhi Road
New Delhi – 110 003
Telefax: 011-24361559
Email: kkt@dbt.nic.in

DRAFT PROTOCOLS FOR ASSESSMENT OF TOXICITY AND ALLERGENICITY IN TRANSGENIC CROPS

As recommended by the Review Committee on Genetic Modification (RCGM), Department of Biotechnology constituted a sub-committee to review the existing protocols on toxicity and allergenicity testing of transgenic crops *vide* letter no. No.BT/03/105/2007-PID dated 02.07.2007 under the chairmanship of Dr. B. Sesikeran, Director, National Institute of Nutrition. After deliberating in detail on the state-of-the-art information available for the assessment of toxicity and allergenicity of the genetically modified crops, the committee has recommended the following:

- Acute oral toxicity test should be undertaken with purified protein and sub-chronic 90 day toxicity be undertaken with whole plant material, along with daily intake food/feed.
- Allergenicity testing should comprise a battery of tests including amino acid sequence homology using bioinformatics tools from the allergen databases, pepsin digestibility and protein thermal stability. These tests should be mandatory and the use of other tests *viz.* serum testing (specific/targeted) and use of animal models should be recommended on a case by case basis, based on the source of the gene/protein and the results of the above three mandatory tests.
- The following protocols may be deleted:
 - Primary skin irritation test of transgenic seed and vegetables in rabbit.
 - Irritation to mucous membrane test of transgenic seed in female rabbit.
 - Skin sensitization test of transgenic seed in guinea pigs (OECD 406).
 - Passive cutaneous anaphylaxis.
 - Prusnitz – Kustner (PK) test.
 - Radioallergosorbent (RAST) inhibition test.
 - ELISA for measurement of antibodies.
- The protocols to be adopted for testing of all new materials have been developed and placed at the links below. Any additional tests may be specified on a case by case basis.
- Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) Guidelines for the Safety Assessment of Foods Derived from

(continued on page 2 - see Draft Protocols)

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

INDIA

Event	Organization	Date	Place
National Consultation on Liability and Redress in the Context of the Cartagena Protocols on Biosafety	Biotech Consortium India Limited (BCIL) and Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF)	January 7, 2008	New Delhi
Orientation Programme on Biotechnology, Biosafety and IPRs	Institute of Public Enterprise, Osmania University	January 31 - February 1, 2008	Hyderabad
National Consultation on Insect Resistance Management (IRM) Strategies in Bt Cotton	BCIL and MoEF	January 21 - 22, 2008	New Delhi
National Symposium on Plant Biotechnology for Conservation, Characterization and Crop Improvement	Mohanlal Sukhadia University	February 8 - 10, 2008	Udaipur

Draft Protocols - continued from page 1

Genetically Engineered Plants may be used for further guidance while reviewing the protocols.

- vi) The crop specific sub-committees set up by RCGM would provide detailed compositional considerations to be tested for each crop.

Comments are invited from all the stakeholders on the protocols suggested by the sub-committee. The protocols can be viewed at <http://www.igmoris.nic.in/Protocols.htm>. Comments will be received up to January 15, 2008, following which these protocols will be finalized. Comments can be sent to:

Dr. K.K. Tripathi,
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Block-II, CGO Complex,
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GOVERNMENT OF INDIA APPROVES THE NATIONAL BIOTECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

The National Biotechnology Development Strategy has been approved by the Government of India. The strategy is an outcome of a two-year-long nationwide consultation process with multiple stakeholders including concerned ministries, universities, research institutes, private sector, civil society, consumer groups, non-government and voluntary organizations and international bodies. The draft strategy, which was posted on the web (<http://dbtindia.nic.in/biotech-strategy/National%20Biotechnology%20Development%20Strategy.pdf>), received over 300 comments from all sectors of society. The strategy was finalized after careful scrutiny of the comments.

The key elements of the strategy are:

- The Government recognizes that biotechnology is a sunrise sector and hence, needs focused attention.

- Approval has been accorded for the broad framework of the National Biotechnology Development Strategy and the strategic focus on sectors proposed therein.
- The strategy, while enabling the full utilization of currently available opportunities in manufacturing and services, will lay a strong foundation for discovery and innovation, effectively utilizing novel technology platforms with potential to contribute to long term benefits in agriculture, animal productivity, human health, environmental security and sustainable industrial growth.
- The cornerstone of the strategy is the focus on building coherence and connectivity between disciplines and to bring together variegated skills across sectors to enhance synergy.
- The strategy seeks to address a number of challenges relating to the biotechnology sector in terms of research and development, creation of investment capital, technology transfer, absorption and diffusion, intellectual property rights, regulatory issues, building public confidence, and tailor made human capital for all these aspects.
- The stated vision of the strategy is responsible use of life sciences and biotechnology to promote balanced growth of all sections of society.

Addressing regulation, the strategy calls for the establishment of a National Biotechnology Regulatory Authority

(continued on page 4 - see Strategy)

SPOTLIGHT ON THE WORDWIDE WEB

Over the next number of newsletters we will be spotlighting some important websites, created by the Department of Biotechnology (DBT) and the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF), that provide information on GMOs.

This month we feature the the **Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India** (<http://envfor.nic.in>). In the months ahead we will look at the websites of Capacity Building on Biosafety; India Biosafety Clearing House; National Research Centre on Plant Biotechnology; Department of Agriculture and Cooperation, Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India; and Biotech Consortium India Limited (BCIL). - Editor

SPOTLIGHT ON THE WORLDWIDE WEB

Government of India - Ministry of Environment & Forests

(<http://http://envfor.nic.in>)

Implementation of policies and programmes relating to conservation of the country's natural resources including lakes and rivers, its biodiversity, forests and wildlife, ensuring the welfare of animals and prevention and abatement of pollution are the primary concern of the Ministry of Environment & Forests under the Government structure. While implementing these policies and programmes, the Ministry is guided by the principle of sustainable development and enhancement of human well-being. The Ministry also serves as the nodal agency in the country for the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP), International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) and for the follow-up of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED). The Ministry is also entrusted with the issues relating to multilateral bodies such as the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), Global Environment Facility (GEF) and of regional bodies like Economic and Social Council for Asia and Pacific (ESCAP) and South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation (SAARC) on matters pertaining to environment.

The principal activities undertaken by the Ministry are:

- Conservation and survey of flora, fauna, forests and wildlife;
- Prevention and control of pollution;
- Afforestation and regeneration of degraded areas;
- Protection of the environment; and
- Ensuring the welfare of animals.

These objectives are well supported by a set of legislative and regulatory measures, aimed at the preservation, conservation and protection of the environment. Besides the legislative measures, a National Conservation Strategy and Policy Statement on Environment and Development, 1992, National Forest Policy, 1988, a Policy Statement on Abatement of Pollution, 1992 and a National Environment Policy, 2006 have also been evolved.



सर्वतो वरते
Ministry of Environment & Forests (MoEF)
Home

DEVNAGRI

Click here to select an item

- Right to Information Act 2005
- Fly Ash Notification 2007
- Draft Hazardous Waste Management Rules
- India: Addressing Energy Security and Climate Change

जहाँ है हरियाली ।
वहाँ है खुशहाली ॥

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT & FORESTS
[Annual Report 2006-2007](#)
[Report of National Forest Commission](#) **NEW**
[Environmental Management System Policy](#)



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Updated on Nov 20, 2007

Disclaimer

All efforts have been made to make the information as accurate as possible, Ministry of Environment & Forests (MoEF) or National Informatics Centre (NIC), will not be responsible for any loss to any person caused by inaccuracy in the information available on this Website. Any discrepancy found may be brought to the notice of MoEF or NIC.

[Website hosted by Environment & Forests Informatics Division of National Informatics Centre \(EFIDNIC\).](#)

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All queries/comments regarding the content on this website may be sent to:
Statistical Advisor and Incharge Website Administration at spasad.sharma@nic.in

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