

South Asia Biosafety Program

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Save the Date September 19-21, 2016

4th Annual South Asia Biosafety Conference at the Taj Krishna, Hyderabad, India

Registration Information to Follow

Thank you to those who participated in the pre-conference survey mentioned in the last SABP newsletter. Over 120 responses were received, including participation from all of the South Asia Biosafety Program countries as well as Bhutan, Guyana, Japan, Nepal, Sri Lanka and the United States. This feedback will be incorporated into the agenda by the conference planning committee.

Be sure to follow along to @CERA_ILSI on Twitter for updates leading up to September and see live tweets during the conference! **#SABC2016**

BANGLADESH

Biosafety Core Committee and Stakeholders Meet on Regulatory Process

Dr. M. Imdadul Hoque, Dean, Faculty of Biological Sciences, University of Dhaka and Country Coordinator, South Asia Biosafety Program



A meeting of the Biosafety Core Committee and Stakeholder Group (BCC+) was held on December 15, 2015 at the Chameli Conference Room of the Department of Environment (DoE) in Bangladesh. Mr. Raisul Alam Mondal, Director General, DoE and Convenor of BCC, chaired during the BCC+ meeting. Mr. Mohammed Solaiman Haider, Director, DoE & Member Secretary, BCC, gave a short background of the consultation meeting.

Representatives from DoE, BARC, BARI, BRRI, the Cotton Development Board, the NPC of the INBF Project were in attendance as well as Mr. Q.S.I. Hashmi, Prof. Dr. Naiyyum Choudhury, Prof. Dr. Zeba Islam Seraj, Prof. Dr. M. Imdadul Hoque, Ms. Khorsheda Yasmin and Dr. Ashish Kumar Saha.

During the meeting, the BCC addressed applications related to the confined field trials of golden rice and salinity and drought tolerant rice to be conducted at the Bangladesh Rice Research Institute (BRRI).

Dr. Andrew Roberts, Director, Center for Environmental Risk Assessment, ILSI Research Foundation, also presented the revised version of the Biosafety Regulatory Process Guidance document which was updated based on the recommendations from the August 10th BCC and stakeholder consultation meeting. Dr. Roberts reiterated that the purpose of this guidance is to allow the use of biotechnology while ensuring adequate protection of the environment and human health. As a next step, the South Asia Biosafety Program will organize a consultation workshop with a small group of expert members to critically evaluate and finalize the guidance document within the next couple of months.

Highlights from the Workshop on Strengthening Biosafety and Biosecurity in Bangladesh

Dr. Asadulghani, Head, Biosafety & BSL3 Laboratory, International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh (ICDDR, B), Dhaka



A workshop was held on strengthening biosafety and biosecurity in Bangladesh on December 20-22, 2015, at the MIS Auditorium of the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS). The workshop was co-organized by the Disease Control Division of DGHS in collaboration with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Atlanta, USA; the Bangladesh Biosafety and Biosecurity Association (BBBA); and the International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh (ICDDR, B) Biosafety Office. The entire program was supported by the Biosecurity Engagement Program of the Biosecurity Engagement Program (BEP) of the US Department of State.

Participants were invited from medical colleges, hospitals, research institutes and universities, including Dhaka University. Professor Dr. Deen Mohd. Noorul Huq, DGHS, was invited to as the Chief Guest. Professor Dr. M. Imdadul Hoque, Dean, Faculty of Biological Sciences, University of Dhaka and Country Coordinator, South Asia Biosafety Program; Dr. Kevin Russell, CDC Country Director, Bangladesh and Scientific Special Advisor to ICDDR, B; and Dr. Mohammed Abdus Salam, Director, Research & Administration, ICDDR, B, were invited to grace the occasion as the Special Guests. The inaugural session was chaired by Professor Dr. Abul Khair Mohammad Shamsuzzaman, Director Disease Control and Line Director, Communicable Disease Control, DGHS.

This program aimed at summarizing the year's activities. Dr. Asadulghani, Head of Biosafety & BSL3 Laboratory, ICDDR, B, introduced

biosafety, biosecurity, and biorisk management to all participants. Given the need to conduct baseline assessments of microbiological and biochemical research laboratories in Bangladesh, an appropriate assessment tool was developed. Using this tool, assessments were conducted in selected microbiology laboratories. Advocacy modules were developed to sensitize different levels of stakeholders at the division levels. Advocacy and sensitization programs for all the divisions in Bangladesh were also organized. Resource persons were identified from the seven divisions and were given proper training. These people will be mentored to work as independent experts in their respective regions.

Biosafety and biosecurity training materials have been adapted and are currently being translated into Bangla. The translated materials will be disseminated broadly through the website of the Bangladesh Biosafety and Biosecurity Association. National guidelines for handling, storage, transportation, and manipulating biohazardous materials are being drafted. At this time, we are also striving to undertake the formation of a national policy on biosafety and biosecurity.

Based upon the gaps identified in the assessments, experience and remarks gathered from the nationwide sensitization programme immediate, short and mid-term, and long term plans are proposed to enhance the biosafety and biosecurity practices, to control and contain the spread of tropical and infectious diseases in Bangladesh.

BCIL Celebrates 25 Years of Successful Operations for Biotechnology Commercialization

Dr. Vibha Ahuja, Chief General Manager, Biotech Consortium India Limited and Country Coordinator, South Asia Biosafety Program



On December 19, 2015, Biotech Consortium India Limited (BCIL), the in-country partner of South Asia Biosafety Program in India, commemorated 25 years of excellence as an organization. The event celebrating the successful journey of 25 years of BCIL was inaugurated by the Hon'ble Union Minister of Science and Technology, Dr. Harsh Vardhan.

Dr. V.P. Kamboj, Chairman, BCIL, welcomed the participants and Dr. Manju Sharma, Former Secretary, Department of Biotechnology, apprised the audience about the genesis of BCIL and its journey over the last 25 years. Dr. Purnima Sharma, Managing Director, BCIL, highlighted contributions made by BCIL and key initiatives taken aimed at accelerating commercialization of biotechnology in India. This included technology transfer, intellectual property management, consultancy, biosafety, capacity building, information dissemination and manpower development.

The Chief Guest, Dr. Harsh Vardhan, congratulated BCIL on the occasion of the Silver Jubilee Celebration. He appreciated the vision and mandate of BCIL and its contributions in assisting various government departments on implementation of key projects. He called for greater involvement of BCIL in programmes in science and technology initiatives for the Government of India. Dr. K. Vijay Raghavan, Secretary, Department of Biotechnology and Prof. Ashutosh Sharma, Secretary, Department of Science and Technology also congratulated BCIL on completion of 25 years.

To commemorate this special occasion, BCIL had organized special lectures on biotechnology commercialization delivered by eminent personalities from the field of science and technology. Honored speakers included:

- Dr. Renu Swarup, Senior Advisor, DBT and MD, BIRAC
- Prof. Balram Bhargava, Professor of Cardiology and Executive Director, School of International Design
- Dr. Ram Vishwakarma, Director, CSIR-Indian Institute of Integrative Medicine, Jammu
- Dr. Krishna Ella, Chairman and Managing Director, Bharat Biotech International Limited
- Shri Rajendra Barwale, Managing Director, Mahyco Seeds Limited.

In the area of agricultural biotechnology, the key issues being faced by the agribiotech sector were presented and the need for addressing the same was highlighted. Approximately 300 national and international delegates from government, industry and academia participated in the silver jubilee celebration.

To learn more about the Silver Jubilee celebration, please visit:
www.bcil.nic.in/25th_Silver_Jubilee_Program.html

THREE OECD CONSENSUS DOCUMENTS HAVE BEEN DECLASSIFIED

Biology of Cowpea (*Vigna unguiculata*): published as No. 60 of the Series on Harmonisation of Regulatory Oversight in Biotechnology. Available at: <http://bit.ly/1ZksEHV>

Biology of Common Bean (*Phaseolus vulgaris*): published as No. 59 of the Series on Harmonisation of Regulatory Oversight in Biotechnology. Available at: <http://bit.ly/1ZksH6s>

Composition of Common Bean (*Phaseolus vulgaris*): published as No. 27 of the Series on the Safety of Novel Foods and Feeds. Available at: <http://bit.ly/1ZksIHN>

To view these documents and more, please visit: <http://bit.ly/1RHeGPP>

EVENT	ORGANIZED BY	DATE	WEBSITE
INDIA			
National Seminar on Plant Genomics and Biotechnology Challenges and Opportunities in 21 st Century	Department of Agricultural Biotechnology, College of Agriculture, and Orissa University of Agriculture & Technology	January 23-24, 2016 Bhubaneswar	www.ouat.ac.in/ForthEvents.aspx
Sustainable Agriculture: Harnessing Technologies- Harvesting Prosperity	Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI)	January 25-29, 2016, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad and New Delhi	www.ficci.com/events.asp
National Conference on "Genetics and Cytogenetics"	University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad and Dr. S.W.Mensinkai Memorial Education And Research Foundation	February 1-3, 2016 Dharwad	www.uasd.edu
Winter School on Marker Free Transgenics and Methods of Transgene Detection	ICAR-National Research Centre on Plant Biotechnology	February 1-21, 2016 New Delhi	www.nrpcb.org/sites/default/files/Brochure_winter%20school.pdf
National Symposium on Vegetable Legumes for Oil and Human Health	Indian Society of Vegetable Science (ISVS), in collaboration with Indian Institute of Vegetable Research (IIVR), Varanasi and Indian Institute of Pulses Research (IIPR), Kanpur	February 12-14, 2016 Varanasi	www.symposium.iivr.org.in/
Recent Advances In Improvement of Vegetable Crops	Dr. Y.S. Parmar University of Horticulture & Forestry Nauni-Solan	February 17 - March 8, 2016 Solan, Himachal Pradesh	www.yspuniversity.ac.in/trainings/caft-brochure-16.pdf
INTERNATIONAL			
International Symposium on "The Role of Agricultural Biotechnologies in Sustainable Food Systems and Nutrition"	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	February 15-17, 2016 Rome, Italy	www.fao.org/about/meetings/agribiotechs-symposium/en/
4 th Biotechnology World Congress	Eureka Science and University of Sharja	February 15-18, 2016 Sharjah, UAE	www.biotechworldcongress.com/index.php
3 rd Plant Genomics Congress: Asia	Global Engage	April 11-12, 2016 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	www.globalengage.co.uk/plantgenomicsasia.html



SOUTH ASIA
BIOSAFETY PROGRAM

The South Asia Biosafety Program (SABP) is an international developmental program implemented in India, Bangladesh and Pakistan with support from the United States Agency for International Development. SABP aims to work with national governmental agencies and other public sector partners to facilitate the implementation of transparent, efficient and responsive regulatory frameworks for products of modern biotechnology that meet national goals as regards the safety of novel foods and feeds, and environmental protection.



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