

No. 1 (20) / 90-HSMD
Ministry of Environment & Forests
Department of Environment, Forests & Wildlife

New Delhi dated the 17th May, 1990

Subject: Minutes of the 1st Meeting of the Genetic Engineering
Approval Committee held on 15.05.1990 at 3.00 p.m.

1. The first meeting of the Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC) was held on May 15, 1990 at 3.00 p.m. under the chairmanship of Additional Secretary (E). The names of those who attended the meeting are at Annex I.
2. In his introductory remarks, Additional Secretary (E) mentioned about the Rule on Manufacture, Use, Import, Export and Storage of Hazardous Microorganisms/ Genetically Engineered Organisms or Cells notified by this Ministry on 5th December, 1989. He explained the role of the Ministry of Environment and Forests in relation to the Department of Biotechnology in the area of hazardous microorganisms. The Department of Biotechnology in the Ministry of Science and Technology has got a promotional role for the products of biotechnology and genetic engineering. The role of the Ministry of Environment and Forest is to ensure that environment is not affected from the use/misuse of the hazardous microorganisms or during their manufacture, export or import. With that objective, GEAC has been constituted with experts from all over the country to screen proposals for the large-scale manufacture, import or export of hazardous microorganisms. He invited the experts to give their comments on agenda items put up before the meeting.
3. ADG, ICMR pointed out that the rules notified by the Ministry on microorganisms are wide ranging. In the present context, all ICMR laboratories come in the purview of these and will have to obtain a license from the GEAC. He emphasized the need to simplify the rules and procedures
4. Director, IVRI emphasized the need to have standard methodologies for dealing with applications to be considered by the GEAC. Certain laboratories on a regional basis should be designated that alone should undertake work on genetic engineer. He suggested the formation of three working groups on (i) human pathogens, (ii) animal pathogens, and (iii) plant pathogens, to work out details for the recognition of the labs and to finalize various Performa. He cautioned about the possible duplication of work with the Ministries of Agriculture and Health which have so far been giving approvals for import of vaccines and organisms.
5. The representative of the Ministry of Agriculture explained that there are two Acts, namely, (i) Destructive Insects and Pests Act, 1974, and (ii) Insecticides Act, 1968 which are administered by the Ministry of Agriculture. Genetic engineered organisms are not covered by these Acts.
6. It was recommended that with the help of a consultant the Ministry of Environment and Forests must work out a procedure for granting approval of hazardous

microorganisms by the GEAC. The consultant should also look at what modifications could be made in the Rules on Hazardous Microorganisms so as to streamline the procedure and affect coordination with the Department of Biotechnology.

7. The members also suggested to include Director, ITRC, Lucknow and Managing Director, IDPL (Dr. Venkataraman), Gurgaon, Haryana, as members of the GEAC.

8. The member felt that there is already a controversy over the bovins somatotropin as some reports have appeared in Nature and Science which should be carefully looked into before giving approval for its import.

List of Participants

1. Shri K. Madhava Sarma, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Forest, New Delhi.
2. Shri Mukul Sanwal, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Forests, New Delhi.
3. Dr. S.P. Tripathy, Addl. Director General, ICMR, New Delhi.
4. Dr. S.K. Mahajan, Head, Molecular Biology and Agri. Division, BARC, Bombay.
5. Prof. B.B. Mallick, Director, IVRI, Izatnagar.
6. Shri M.P.G. Kurup, General Manager, NDDDB, Anand.
7. Dr. S.A.H. Abidi, Director, Department of Ocean Development, New Delhi.
8. Shri A.K. Das, IA, DGTD, Udyog Bhavan, New Delhi.
9. Dr. V. Raghunathan, Director, Central Insecticides Laboratory, Dte. of PPQS, Shastri Bhavan, New Delhi.
10. Dr. Sudhir K. Ghosh, Central Pollution Control Board, Delhi.
11. Dr. (Mrs.) Sulbha Gupta, PSO, Technology Bhavan, New Delhi.
12. Mrs. Suchita Ninawe, Senior Scientist Officer- II, Department of Biotechnology, New Delhi.
13. Dr. Indrani Chandrasekharan, Scientist 'SE', Ministry of Environment and forests, New Delhi.
14. Dr. R.R. Khan, Scientist 'SE', Ministry of Environment and Forests, New Delhi.