

## SHARING OF BIOSAFETY NEWS:

Sharing of biosafety related news on issues relevant to CPB, activities taken up as part of Phase II Capacity Building Project in India, new releases on various aspects of biosafety etc is being circulated extensively to stakeholders at national and regional level through a quarterly biosafety newsletter. The readers are also informed about the upcoming national and international events on a regular basis.

The newsletter can be subscribed by writing to [biosafety-mef@nic.in](mailto:biosafety-mef@nic.in).



# Strengthening Regional Cooperation: Sharing Biosafety Project Outcomes at Regional and International Platforms

## Phase-II Capacity Building Project on Biosafety



### IMPORTANT CONTACTS

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**Ministry of Environment  
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Government of India



## INTRODUCTION

- The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) is implementing the UNEP/GEF supported Phase II Capacity Building Project on Biosafety, aimed at strengthening the biosafety management system in India to ensure adequate protection of human health and biodiversity from potential harm arising from activities involving living modified organisms (LMOs). The focus of the project is on LMOs in agriculture.
- The key thrust areas of the project are Risk Assessment and Risk Management, Handling, Transport, Packaging and Identification of LMOs, Socio-economic considerations and Public Awareness.
- The four thrust areas have been prioritized to be in line with the Strategic Plan of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (CPB) for the period 2011-2020.



## Thrust Areas Prioritized in line with Strategic Action Plan of CPB (2011-2020)

**Risk Assessment and Risk Management**  
(Article 15, 16 and Annexure III)

**Handling, Transport, Packaging and Identification**  
(Article 18)

**Socio Economic Considerations**  
(Article 26)

**Public Awareness and Participation**  
(Article 23)



- The outcomes under these thrust areas are intended to contribute to the overarching goal, i.e., to assist the Government of India to comply with the international obligations as Party to the CPB.
- Regional Networking and Cooperation is an integral part of the biosafety projects of UNEP/GEF towards promoting regional harmonization of biosafety regulations and standards for the effective implementation of national biosafety frameworks.
- During the course of the project, the project outcomes have been presented at regional and international platforms for sharing of information and experiences.

## REGIONAL EVENTS ORGANISED UNDER THE PROJECT

Two Regional events were organised as part of the project for sharing of experiences among Asian Countries. Government officials and experts from 10 countries viz., Bhutan, Cambodia, India, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Mongolia, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka and Vietnam attended these events. Participants from India included members of regulatory committees, senior officers from various Ministries/Departments and scientists from partnering institutions/ organizations associated with implementation of the Phase II Capacity Building Project on Biosafety.

### REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON STRENGTHENING THE BIOSAFETY CAPACITIES AND SHARING OF EXPERIENCES IN THE REGION

A Regional Conference on Strengthening the Biosafety Capacities and Sharing of Experience in the Region was organised on April 7-8, 2016 at Hyderabad for encouraging South-South cooperation in the area of biosafety. It was intended for sharing of experiences by the participating Asian countries towards harmonization of biosafety frameworks at regional level.

It covered an overview of existing status of biosafety framework of the participating Asian countries particularly with regard to their national policies on biosafety, relevant laws and regulations, biosafety administration systems, procedures for granting approval to LMO applications, current status on research, development and use of LMOs with a focus on challenges and key areas for capacity building in biosafety.



### REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON RISK COMMUNICATION

A Regional Workshop on Risk Communication was organised on April 4-6, 2016 at Hyderabad towards developing communication skills for addressing queries related to LMOs/GMOs, at various stages of regulatory process for different stakeholders from the Asian region.

It covered presentations on evolution of risk communication, practitioner foundation theories, trust determination, risk perception, message map development and how to fine tune the message maps and use risk communication principles in oral communications. Practical training on how to use message maps as a basis to respond to interviews was also discussed at the two day workshop.



## PARTICIPATION IN NATIONAL PROJECT COORDINATORS MEETINGS FOR THE ASIAN REGION

- Annual meetings of National Project Coordinators (NPC) of the GEF supported biosafety projects are organised by UNEP, for sharing of experiences and challenges faced in implementation of the projects. The meetings also aim at enhancing regional cooperation and harmonization.
- During the course of implementation of the Phase II Capacity Building Project on Biosafety, the Indian project team participated in four NPC meetings:
- The 19<sup>th</sup> and the 21<sup>st</sup> NPC meetings were held concurrently with the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Annual South Asia Biosafety Conference held at Dhaka and Hyderabad respectively.
- The 21<sup>st</sup> NPC meeting was hosted by the MoEF&CC at Hyderabad
- NPC Meetings provided an opportunity of sharing the outcomes of the Phase II Capacity Building Project on

Meeting	Date	Venue
11 <sup>th</sup> NPC Meeting	July 1-5, 2013	Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia
16 <sup>th</sup> NPC Meeting	June 9-13, 2014	Thimpu, Bhutan
19 <sup>th</sup> NPC Meeting	September 21-23, 2015	Dhaka, Bangladesh
21 <sup>st</sup> NPC Meeting	September 18 - 22nd, 2016	Hyderabad, India

Biosafety with a number of Asian Countries viz., Bhutan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Iran, Indonesia, Laos, Mongolia, Malaysia and Tajikistan



21<sup>st</sup> NPC participants at Hyderabad, 2016



Participants at Bangladesh, 2015



Participants at Bhutan, 2014



Participants at Mongolia, 2013

## PARTICIPATION IN THE SOUTH ASIA BIOSAFETY CONFERENCE

- The South Asia Biosafety Conference (SABC) is an annual event organized under the aegis of South Asia Biosafety Program, an international developmental program being implemented in India and Bangladesh. It is co-organized by ILSI Research Foundation, USA and Biotech Consortium India Limited (BCIL), New Delhi with support from National Agencies/organizations.
- The annual event provides a platform for sharing of knowledge on current developments in the area of biotechnology, environmental risk assessment and biosafety regulation of genetically modified organisms in the South Asian region.
- More than 200 participants from about 15 countries participate in the conference annually, including senior officials from concerned Ministries and Departments dealing with agriculture biotechnology and biosafety issues; members/representatives of regulatory authorities/committees; scientists from public research institutions; representatives from the Indian private sector/industries and research students engaged in activities related to GE crops.
- MoEF&CC supported and actively participated in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> annual SABC to share the outcomes of the Phase II Capacity Building Project on Biosafety. The project supported the participation of project partners, regulators and scientists.
- In the 3<sup>rd</sup> SABC held at Dhaka, Bangladesh the Biosafety Resource Kit and the Monitoring Manual on Confined Field Trials of Regulated GE Plants prepared as part of the project were released.
- Dr. Amita Prasad, Additional Secretary, MoEF&CC and the National Project Director, Phase II Capacity Building Project on Biosafety released the Guidance documents



Release of the Guidance Documents on Environmental Risk Assessment of GE Plants, by DrAmita Prasad, Additional Secretary, MoEF&CC and NPC, Phase II Capacity Building Project on Biosafety, Shri Gyanesh Bharti, Joint Secretary, MoEF&CC and NPC, Phase II Capacity Building Project on Biosafety; Dr Anupam Varma, Vice President, National Academy of Agricultural Sciences, Dr. Andrew Roberts, Director, ILSI Research Foundation and Dr Vibha Ahuja, Chief General Manager, BCIL.



3rd Annual South Asia Biosafety Conference at Dhaka, Bangladesh

on Environmental Risk Assessment of GE Plants at the 4<sup>th</sup> SABC. The three guidance documents viz., Guidelines on ERA of GE plants, A Stakeholder Guide on ERA of GE plants and the Risk Analysis Framework have been prepared as part of the Phase II Capacity Building project on Biosafety and adopted by the Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC).

- Project outputs were showcased in a series of five posters at the poster session organized for the 4<sup>th</sup> SABC.



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



## MEETINGS OF CONFERENCE OF PARTIES SERVING AS MEETING OF PARTIES TO CARTAGENA PROTOCOL ON BIOSAFETY

- The meetings of the Governing body of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (CPB) viz., Conference of Parties serving as Meeting of Parties (COP-MOP), held every two years along with various parallel meetings, side events and fairs to facilitate sharing of experiences and challenges among Parties towards implementing the Protocol.
- To ensure showcasing the project at an international level, the project outputs were presented at the exhibitions and side events organized in parallel to the COP-MOP7 and COP-MOP8 meetings.

Meeting	Date	Venue
COP-MOP7	29 September - 3 October 2014	Pyeongchang, Republic of Korea
COP-MOP8	December 4-17, 2016	Cancun, Mexico



Indian delegation led by Dr Amita Prasad, Additional Secretary, MoEF&CC and National Project Director, Phase II Capacity Building Project on Biosafety at the concurrent meetings of COP13, COP-MOP8 and COP-MOP2

## SIDE EVENT AT COP-MOP8

- MoEF&CC in association with Biotech Consortium India limited (BCIL) organized a side event on “Strengthening Biosafety Management System in India: Sharing of Indian Experience”, at the COP-MOP8 in 2016. The side event aimed at showcasing the outcomes/publications developed under the project and sharing of experience in implementing the four thrust areas of the project.
- About 35 participants from various countries like Kenya, Austria, Germany, South Africa, Bangladesh, Brazil etc attended the side event. Dr. Braulio Ferreira de Souza Dias, Executive Secretary, CBD graced the side event as the chief guest.
- Presentations were made by Dr Amita Prasad, Additional Secretary, MoEF&CC and National Project Director (NPD), Phase II Capacity Building Project on Biosafety, Dr Solaiman Haider, Director (Planning), Department of Environment, Bangladesh and Dr Alex Owusu-Biney, Portfolio Manager (Biosafety), GEF Coordination Division of Environmental Policy Implementation, United Nations Environment Program.



## COMMUNICATION, EDUCATION AND PUBLIC AWARENESS FAIR

- The Communication, Education and Public Awareness (CEPA) Fair is held on the sidelines of the COP-MOP meetings to provide an opportunity for parties, other Governments and Organizations to showcase their work, national experiences and contributions towards implementation of the CPB.
- Posters were exhibited and presentations made at the Communication, Education and Public Awareness (CEPA) Fair in 2014 and 2016.
- The presentation on “Enhancing Public Awareness and Public Participation on Biosafety Issues in India”, made by Shri Gyanesh Bharti, Joint Secretary, MoEF&CC and the National Project Coordinator, Phase II Capacity Building Project on Biosafety in 2016.



Shri Gyanesh Bharti Joint Secretary, MoEF&CC and National Project Coordinator, Phase II Capacity Building Project on Biosafety making a presentation at the CEPA Fair, 2016



The posters showcased at the CEPA Fair in 2014 and 2016 showcasing the project outputs