

RESOLUTION

Seminar on the International Technical Assistance Project of the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity

“Capacity-building to Promote Integrated Implementation of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and the Convention on Biological Diversity at the National Level”

Minsk, 22 July 2016

INTRODUCTION

The project objective “Capacity-building to promote integrated implementation of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and the Convention on Biological Diversity at the national level” is **to strengthen capacity** of 10 countries that participate in the pilot project, including the Republic of Belarus to elaborate practical measures on the integrated implementation of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (hereinafter referred to as “the Protocol”) and the Convention on Biological Diversity (hereinafter referred to as “the Convention”) and formulate proposals to the State Bodies responsible for the fulfillment of commitments on the Protocol and the Convention. The project is implemented at the national level by the State Scientific Institution “Institute of Genetics & Cytology of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus” that exercises functions of the National Co-ordination Biosafety Centre and the International Research Center for Safety in Genetic Engineering Activities.

In the discussion of issues related to legislative regulations and activity efficiency in the area of Safety in Genetic Engineering Activity, as well as on raising awareness of individuals involved in establishing of a strategic course and decision-making, the representatives of organizations that belong to different departmental subordinations and the activity of which is related to biosafety issues in the Republic of Belarus, took part: House of Representatives of the National Assembly of the Republic of Belarus, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection, the Ministry of Agriculture and Food, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the State Customs Committee, the Republican Research Unitary Enterprise “Belarusian Research Center “Ecology”, the Republican Research and Practical Center for Epidemiology and Microbiology of the Ministry of Health, the Belarusian State Institute of Metrology, the Aarhus Center, the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus and subordinate Research and Development Institutions, including the Institute of Microbiology, the Republican Unitary Enterprise “Research and Practical Center of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus for Arable Farming”, the Republican Unitary Enterprise “Research and Practical Center of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus for Animal Breeding”, the State Scientific and Production Amalgamation of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus “Scientific and Practical Center for Bioresources”, V.F. Kuprevich Institute of Experimental Botany, the State Scientific Institution

“Central Botanic Garden”, the State Scientific Institution “Institute of Genetics and Cytology”.

The seminar participants noted that the Republic of Belarus had accumulated some experience in Genetic Engineering Activity and in ensuring of its safety and a full-fledged National Biosafety System that provides legal regulation of Genetic Engineering Activity and use of its findings in the scientific field and their practical application had been developed.

A multistakeholder dialogue identified a number of practical steps towards the integration of biosafety issues both into National Strategic Plans and State Scientific Research Plans, as shown in the seminar summary below.

WORK STAGES

1. In the course of the seminar the following reports were heard: “Establishment of Biosafety System in the Republic of Belarus” by V.A. Lemesh, Director of the State Scientific Institution “Institute of Genetics and Cytology of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus”, “Sustainable Development of Agriculture and Biodiversity: contemporary state, issues” by S.B. Melnov, Director of the Republican Research Unitary Enterprise “Belarusian Research Center “Ecology”, “Biosafety State and the Cartagena Protocol Status at the National Level. Key Data and Desk Study Findings ” by G.V. Mozgova, Head of the “National Coordination Biosafety Center”, “Genetically Engineered Organisms as the Nagoya Protocol Objects” by E.N. Makeyeva, Head of the “National Coordination Center on Access to Genetic Resources & Benefit-Sharing”

2. The participants held a discussion of the reports and desk study findings in relation to legislative regulation of the activity carried out within a framework of implementation of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety by our country; the information on the Republic of Belarus participation in other National, International and Multilateral (the Eurasian Economic Union, EAEU) Agreements that ensure the provision of Safety in Genetic Engineering Activity, including safety in use of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) in economic activity: in handling of food raw materials, foodstuffs and animal feeds derived from GMOs or their ingredients (components), medicinal products; implementation of a mechanism for the interested public participation in the decision-making with regard to GMOs, as well as departmental and interdepartmental mechanisms for management and coordination of Safety in Genetic Engineering Activity; tools for establishing and strengthening of National Interdepartmental Coordination Mechanisms to ensure an integrated approach to implementation of the Convention and Protocol Provisions; a degree of involvement and biosafety integration mechanisms in National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans and other appropriate departmental and interdepartmental plans, strategies and programs, national budgets, bilateral and multilateral collaboration programs (projects) at the national and international levels; raising importance of biosafety issues in projects to obtain support within GEF funds allocated to countries - Parties to the Convention with a view of biodiversity conservation. During the seminar the

consultants suggested that GMO biosafety paragraphs be included into the national strategies that regulate activity in the area of biological diversity conservation and its sustainable use.

SUMMARY

1. The seminar participants noted that the Republic of Belarus has an effectively operating legislative and administrative legal system in the field of Safety in Genetic Engineering Activity. The basic law in this area is the Law “On Safety in Genetic Engineering Activity” of 9 January 2006, No. 96 (hereinafter referred to as “the Law”) elaborated on the basis of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and aimed at implementation of the given international commitment. A number of by-laws were elaborated as an addition to this Law to ensure Safety in Genetic Engineering Activity.

2. Due to increasing GMO variety being developed by the global community and in the Republic of Belarus, the participants confirm that some changes and adjustments should be introduced to the Law “On Safety in Genetic Engineering Activity” and if necessary to the by-laws.

3. *To promote the effectiveness of the interdepartmental information exchange in area of biosafety, the following steps should be implemented:*

3.1. Make use of the National Co-ordination Biosafety Centre (NCBC) potential, providing the requested information within the NCBC functions established in the Resolution of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus of 19 June 1998, №963;

3.2. Establish a constant liaison of the State Institutions engaged in Genetic Engineering Activity and responsible for taking decisions on GMO release into the environment, GMO registration, GMO detection and identification, GMO use in the production, GMO circulation within the country, including the Institutions (establishments) that provide import, export and / or transit of GMOs in the territory of the Republic of Belarus, with NCBC, providing information on contact persons;

4. Hold seminars on a regular basis for the individuals that determine a strategic course and involved in decision-making, as well as professionals of departmental institutions engaged in biosafety and biodiversity conservation issues to inform on the implementation of activities included in National Strategies and Programs, and if necessary adjusting them (by NCBC);

5. Take measures to encourage public involvement in the discussion of issues related to the environmental protection in the part of biosafety (NCBC with the assistance of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection and in collaboration with the National Center for the Aarhus United Nations Convention and NGOs).

6. The participants back up the recommendations given in the course of the Round-table Meeting at 2nd stage of the International Technical Assistance Project, which was held on 25 May 2016, on the necessity to consider by competent authorities of the proposed amendments to the Law “On Safety in Genetic Engineering Activity”, including the recommendations related to Safety in

Genetic Engineering Activity contained in the Resolution of the round-table meeting (paragraphs 1.1-1.6), as well as proposed recommendations on harmonization of the EAEU legislation, methods and standards (paragraph 2 of the Round-table Resolution) and inclusion of biosafety issues of genetic engineering activity into the National Strategies and priority directions of scientific research (paragraph 3 of the Round-table Resolution).