

Decisions taken in the 127th Meeting the Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC) held on 05.02.2016

The 127th meeting of the GEAC was held on 5th February, 2016 in the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) at Narmada Conference Hall, Jal Block from 11:00 am under the Chairmanship of Shri Hem Pande, Special Secretary, MoEF&CC.

Agenda item No. 4: Consideration of applications related to GM crops

4.1 Discussion on the Sub-Committee report on the application for environmental release of 'Transgenic mustard (*Brassica juncea*) hybrid DMH-11 and use of parental events for hybrid development of new generation hybrids' by the Centre for Genetic Manipulation of Crop Plants (CGMCP), University of Delhi south Campus.

The Chair of the Sub-Committee presented in detail the deliberations held in the 1st meeting of the Sub-Committee held on 02.02.2016 and the basis for the Committee recommendation. The GEAC took note of the Sub-Committee's observations in respect of each response submitted by the applicant on the additional clarifications sought by the GEAC and queries raised by Prof. K. Veluthambi, Dr. S. K Apte and Dr. Ramesh Sonti. The Chair of the Sub-Committee also informed that the outcome of the review of the Biosafety Dossier submitted by the Biosafety Support Unit set-up by DBT was also deliberated in detail. It was further informed that the Sub-Committee recommends revision of the Biosafety Dossier by incorporating the additional information/clarifications/gaps identified by the Sub-Committee and the Biosafety Support Unit.

After detailed deliberations, the GEAC adopted the recommendation of the Subcommittee and decided to send all comments of the Sub-committee and points listed by the Biosafety Support Unit of the DBT to CGMCP, with a direction that the DOSSIER be revised as per the comments/suggestions for further review by the Sub-committee and to prepare the Risk Assessment and Risk Management (RARM) document for consideration of the GEAC. In addition, CGMCP may also send a detailed response on the relevant points.

The GEAC further directed that the revised dossier may be submitted within two weeks.

4.2 Discussion on modalities for preparation of the Risk Assessment and Risk Management (RARM) report including roles, responsibilities, consultation, time lines etc.

4.2.1 The Committee discussed the procedure for further review and consultation on the biosafety data in respect of GM Mustard developed by CGMCP and agreed on a road map as follows:

1. The revised dossier received from the Applicant would be considered by the Sub-Committee and a Biosafety Risk Assessment and Risk Management (RARM) report would be prepared for consideration of the GEAC.
2. Subsequent to the above review and if the biosafety dossier is found to be complete in all respects, the biosafety dossier/RARM report excluding confidential information will be put in the public domain for comments.
3. A detailed response to the comments received would be prepared and considered before a final decision is taken by the GEAC.

Agenda Item No 5: Any other item with the permission of Chair.

The Committee took note of the representations received from Coalition for GM-Free India, Chief Minister of Bihar as well other representations/newspaper reports on the concerns related to the GM Mustard application under consideration by the GEAC and agreed that the concerns raised need to be scientifically replied. On the demand for making the data public, the Committee was of the view that currently the review is in progress and when completed, the same will be put in the public domain as already indicated in the decision at agenda item 4.2. The Committee also agreed that an opportunity for personal hearing may be provided as and when requested.
