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Update # 4

(Note: this update contains [web links](#))

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Agricultural Biotechnology Policy and Management Perspectives Contributing to Food Security

Dear Readers,

Please find the 4th IBS Update. In our series of 'Guest Articles' this month an article on the 'International Transfer of Private Sector Technologies' by Randy A. Hautea, Clive James and Anatole F. Krattiger. You will also find the continuation of our CAS search on Intellectual Property Rights.

IBS reorganizes website

IBS is in the process of reorganising its website to better serve the needs of readers. The site will be arranged by *themes* covering various *topics*.

Preview...

In the 'Questions and Answers (Q&A)' section, experts in the field, both from the North and the South are ready to help you. We believe that the sharing of information and expertise will benefit the understanding of problems that concern us all.

Themes include:

1. Deriving social benefits from biotechnology
2. Targeting the impact
3. Capacity, management & leadership

Theme no. 1 will cover the following topics:

- Policy Dialogues and Development
- IPR

- Biosafety
- Ensuring Social Benefits
- International Collaboration and Participation

Theme no. 2 will cover the following topics:

- Impact Analysis
- Priority Setting
- Resource Indicators for Biotechnology
- Trade Implications and Globalization

Theme no. 3 will cover the following topics:

- Distance Learning
- Course Development and Capacity Building
- Management, Leadership and Participation

If you have a question on a topic mentioned above, or if you would like to share your insights, please do not hesitate to send us an E-mail. Our experts will be pleased to assist you.

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Guest Article:

“International Transfer of Private Sector Technologies: Experiences and Constraints”

By: [Randy A. Hautea](#), Clive James and [Anatole F. Krattiger](#), International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-biotech Applications

Abstract

The introduction of the first wave of biotechnology products in industrialized countries is leading to a further shift in equity between developing and industrialized countries. Despite the relatively advanced status and technological capacity in many developing Southeast Asian countries, and the high priority that many of these countries place on biotechnology research and development, very few have actually tested, much less commercialized, genetically modified plants. This contrasts with countries in North America, and some developing countries in Latin America, which are undergoing very high rates of adoption of agri-biotechnology products.

An overview of the ISAAA agri-biotechnology transfer initiative is provided, in relation to opportunities for accessing and utilizing available agri-biotechnology applications that can assist in meeting the needs and priorities identified by the national programs.

Examples of projects in South East Asia are described, in relation to challenges and opportunities in implementing effective biotechnology transfer projects in the region. Some possible approaches to address these challenges and

constraints will also be discussed, to illustrate some options in implementing collaborative biotechnology transfer projects that, to the extent practicable, are built on equitable partnerships between and among the national programs and the public and private sectors.

[Read further...](#)

ISNAR was invited to participate in this West African training to enhance participant knowledge regarding biotechnology.

It was decided to use material derived from the IBS course “[Managing Biotechnology in a Time of Transition](#)”, as well as from chapters in the CABI publication “[Managing Agricultural Biotechnology](#)”.



Participants GBDI Training Course, Nigeria

West African Biodiversity, Biotechnology and Law Training Course

March 1-24, 2000 * Ibadan, Nigeria

This training course, held at [IITA](#) headquarters in Nigeria, was initiated and organized by Dr. John Kilama, President of the Global BioDiversity Institute ([GBDI](#)), located in the US.

Over 50 participants, and some 14 observers participated. They mostly came from Nigeria, but also Ghana, Cameroon, Niger, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Ivory Coast, Mali, Gambia, and the USA were represented.

Presentations included information on managing biosafety, international

collaboration, genetic resources, economics and biotechnology and access to electronic information.

For more information on the GBDI West Africa Training Course, please contact:

[Dr. John Kilama](#)

Events:

17-18 April, 2000
Vienna, Austria

*Meeting of the Inter-Agency
Network for Safety in
Biotechnology*

17-18 April, 2000
Washington, USA

*National Food Policy
Conference; Food &
Agriculture Policy Meet the
21st Century Consumer*

29-31 May, 2000
Brussels, Belgium

*International Conference on
Sustainable Agriculture in
the Next Millennium - the
Impact of Modern
Biotechnology on
Developing Countries*

Organised by Friends of the
Earth Germany, Oxfam
Solidarity Belgium, and the
Dag Hammarskjöld
Foundation

24-28 August, 2000
Ravello, Italy

*ICABR: Measuring the
Impact of Ag. Biotech, on
Public Acceptance, on
Intellectual Property Rights,
on Regulation and on Trade
and Development*

<http://www.economia.uniroma2.it/conferenze/icabr/>

CAS Web Links on Intellectual Property

[Dr. Victoria Henson-Apollonio](#), Senior Research Officer for the CGIAR Central Advisory Service on Proprietary Science ([CAS](#)) introduces four new web links in this issue. These build on those provided in our [last Update](#).

<http://www.cordis.lu/ipr-helpdesk/>

This site -the European Patent Office's (EPO) helpdesk- is an excellent source of patent information. It can be accessed in English, French and German, and has many links to useful patent sites.

<http://www.agcare.org/FS009.html>

This page -from the site of a 'probiotech' organisation with the name "Agcare"- is a good resource for information about 'Bt' (*Bacillus thuringiensis*) and 'Bt' engineered plants. It contains several links to background information on 'Bt'.

<http://www.pst.fhg.de/pla/english/patent/directive.htm>

This page -from the 'Patenting and Licensing Agency for the German Human Genome Project' site- contains the text of the European Directive for the protection of biotechnical inventions.

<http://web.mit.edu/invent/www/links.html>

The Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) 'Inventor's

site' has interesting information and links for persons that would like to read about inventors and (the creativity of) inventions. It also contains a link to the MIT 'Technology Transfer' division.



Publications

ISNAR Briefing Paper No. 43:

"Biotechnology in African Agricultural Research: Opportunities for Donor Organizations"

[Pdf](#) (size 120 Kb), [Html](#)

Authors: [Komen, J.](#), [Webber, H.](#), [Mignouna, J.](#)

ISNAR Briefing Paper No. 42:

"Agricultural Biotechnology Research Capacity in Four Developing Countries"

[Pdf](#) (size 65 Kb), [Html](#)

Authors: [Falconi, C.A.](#)

Interesting Papers:

[Crop Biotechnology: Benefits, Risks and Ownership](#), by Gordon Conway.

Speech delivered March 28, 2000 in Edinburgh, Scotland at: GM Food Safety: Facts, Uncertainties, And Assessment; The Organization For Economic Co-operation And Development (OECD) Edinburgh Conference on the Scientific and Health Aspects of Genetically Modified Foods.

[Conference site](#)

Crawford Lecture 1999

"[Reviving Global Poverty Reduction: What Role for Genetically Modified Plants?](#)", by *Michael Lipton*.

AgBiotechNet has put together relevant topics on biotech and developing countries, showing arguments for and against supporting the application of biotechnology in the developing world, through news, reviews, book chapters, reports, links and abstracts.

<http://www.agbiotechnet.com/topics/devco.asp>



Submit YOUR link!

IBS would like to receive your Internet WWW address. If relevant, it will be listed on the IBS Internet site, enhancing the dissemination of your information to interested parties worldwide.

ISNAR-Biotech@cgiar.org

Biosafety: Call for Discussion

On 29 January of this year, over 130 governments finalized an international agreement that will regulate the safe transfer, handling and use of living modified organisms (LMOs) resulting from modern biotechnology. The ultimate goal of the agreement is to ensure an adequate level of protection to potential adverse effects from LMOs on the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, taking also into account their possible risks to human health. This [“Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety”](#) results

from a decision by the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in 1995, addressing the potential of biotechnology for human well-being while at the same time taking into account the growing public concern over its potential adverse effects. The Protocol will enter into force after 50 countries have ratified the agreed text.

The international biosafety protocol is unique in its attempt to regulate technological advances, balancing environmental, human-health, socio-economic and trade objectives. This balancing act, however, is the source of many ambiguities and unresolved issues reflected in the text of the treaty.

Although the Protocol provides a structure for biosafety decision-making, there’s a tremendous challenge for many signatory countries to implement the agreement nationally.

Starting this issue of our newsletter, we would like to kick off a discussion with our reader on **national biosafety capacity building**. We would like to have your input on this theme, including recommendations for action, which will be used for a more detailed discussion paper that will be posted on our website.

Based on ISNAR’s recent research activities on biosafety, we propose the following priorities for developing-country governments who intend to establish or improve their national biosafety systems.

1. Formulate guidelines that are clear, flexible and science-based.

2. Determine the appropriate legal mechanism to implement the guidelines.
3. Establish clear decision-making procedures and responsibilities among relevant government agencies.
4. Ensure a sound review process that systematically evaluates a GMO and its potential risks and benefits.
5. Design appropriate risk-management schemes that are commensurate with the results of the review process.
6. Build in feedback mechanisms through which new information and accumulated experience can be incorporated in the review process.
7. Establish dialogue with the public to address concerns about biotechnology’s environmental effects and food safety.
8. Invest in people involved in the biosafety system, through training and conference attendance.
9. Ensure adequate funding for the system.
10. Your input! You can send comments or questions to: [John Komen](mailto:John.Komen)

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Previous IBS Updates:

<http://www.cgiar.org/isnar/projects/ibs/updates.htm>