

## GLOBAL PROJECTS

Since 2002 two training programmes were launched at global level to respond to a call for assistance in:

- **seed testing and variety verification, including GM seeds and varieties, in collaboration with the International Seed Testing Association;**
- **Training of Trainers (ToT) on GM food safety assessment.**

**T**he aim of the GMO detection programme is to train the seed technicians from national agencies and other relevant stakeholders in methods of verification of species, cultivars and hybrids, as well as qualitative and quantitative GMO detection. Training in electrophoretic methods and Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) techniques for variety verification and GMO detection were conducted at regional and subregional levels throughout the world in collaboration with the International Seed Testing Association (ISTA).

The following seven hands-on courses were conducted between 2002 and 2005 and trained approximately 250 technicians from 80 countries:

- Caribbean and Central America Subregion: Kingston, Jamaica, 2005.
- Greater Mekong Subregion: Beijing, China, 2005.
- Near East and North Africa: Cairo, Egypt, 2004.
- Central and Eastern Europe: Ljubljana, Slovenia, 2004.
- Asia and Pacific: Bangkok, Thailand, 2003.
- Southern and Eastern Africa: Johannesburg, South Africa, 2003.
- Latin America and the Caribbean: Buenos Aires, 2002.



The ToT Workshops on GM food safety assessment, conducted within the biosecurity approach, aim to provide a common knowledge base on GM food safety assessment and create a critical mass at key agencies in research and development, health, agriculture, plant and animal health inspectorates, standards bodies and coordination of biotechnology/biosafety.

*Codex Alimentarius* principles on risk analysis and guidelines on the conduct of food safety assessment of foods derived from modern biotechnology provide a framework for GM food safety assessment. They are important tools for everyone involved in GM food chain research, development, trade and regulation. To ensure that these tools are effectively applied in risk assessment and regulation, countries have requested capacity building support for GM food researchers, developers and regulators.

During 2007 and 2008, two regional training courses were carried out in Kenya and the Philippines (country groups 1 and 2). Two more training courses are planned for 2009 in Chile and South Africa (country groups 3 and 4). It is estimated that by the end of 2009, 120 GM food researchers, developers and regulators from 28 countries will have been trained.



## EXPERIENCE GAINED AND THE WAY FORWARD

- Issue-specific multicountry training programmes proved to be a very effective tool to fill technical knowledge gaps, to create networks of technical expertise, and to enhance SSC.
- The ToTs approach helps to face the rapid turn-over of officers in regulatory bodies and to ensure sustainability in the long term. It will be replicated in future training programmes.