



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

Global community meeting of the FAO GM Foods Platform

Towards effective risk-based
food safety assessment
and regulatory management

MEETING REPORT

10–13 September 2019
Bangkok, Thailand

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Required citation:

FAO. 2020. *Global community meeting of the FAO GM Foods Platform. Towards effective risk-based GM food safety assessment and regulatory management*. Meeting Report. Rome <https://doi.org/10.4060/ca8945en>

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ISBN 978-92-5-132571-1

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Abstract

In order for Codex Alimentarius Members to share information on the results of Genetically Modified (GM) food safety assessments, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) maintains an online database entitled “FAO GM Foods Platform”. Upon requests from several Members, a global community meeting of the FAO GM Foods Platform was organized from 10 to 13 September 2019 in Bangkok, Thailand. Ninety-nine people from 73 different Platform community members participated in the meeting. This report describes the key points of discussions that took place during the three and a half days of the meeting; these include, but are not limited to, clear benefits of data sharing, and good practices in the process of sharing and utilizing the shared data. While the main purpose of the Platform is to simply share the relevant official data globally, the community of the Platform was recognized as a great value, providing an opportunity for all focal points of the Platform to be able to directly communicate and learn from each other on technical issues around GM food safety assessments, and more importantly, to develop mutual trust among the community members from different countries. The Platform itself has become a model for an effective community of practice, resulting in many collaborative and successful joint activities, including bilateral and multilateral capacity development actions. At the end of the meeting, participants had the opportunity to network through the World Café to identify concrete steps for follow-up actions at the national and regional level.

Keywords: food safety, community of practice, FAO GM Foods Platform, risk assessment, food safety assessment, Genetically Modified Organism (GMO), biosafety, regulatory framework, global community meeting, Codex Alimentarius, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)



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Acknowledgements

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) would like to express its appreciation to the many people who contributed to this report, which is authored by Isabella Apruzzese (FAO Consultant), and prepared and developed for FAO under the coordination of Masami Takeuchi (FAO) under the overall direction of Markus Lipp (FAO) and Sridhar Dharmapuri (FAO). FAO acknowledges the inputs and contributions provided by some of the participants, including Meriem Louanchi (Algeria), Tashi Yangzom (Bhutan), Jennifer Holtzman (Canada), Maia Beruashvili (Georgia), Sharmila Buldewo (Mauritius), Tarasjev Aleksej (Serbia) and Jason Dietz (United States of America). Technical and editorial inputs provided by various FAO colleagues, including Kosuke Shiraishi (FAO) and Yoenten Phuentshok (FAO), are gratefully acknowledged.

Abbreviations and acronyms

DNA	Deoxyribonucleic acid
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GM	Genetically modified
GMO	Genetically modified organism
LLP	Low level presence of GM foods
r-DNA	Recombinant deoxyribonucleic acid
SPS	Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures
UN	United Nations

Executive summary

In order for Codex Alimentarius Members to share information on the results of Genetically Modified (GM) food safety assessments, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) maintains an online database entitled “FAO GM Foods Platform”. The Platform is a source of transparent and reliable data that are not being fully exploited; a reason for that can be found in the limited capacities that some countries have in conducting GM food safety assessments. To provide focal points of the Platform community with the possibility of identifying common solutions and developing procedures that enable an increase of data interpretation capacities, the global community meeting of the FAO GM Foods Platform was organized from 10 to 13 September 2019 in Bangkok, Thailand. Ninety-nine people from 73 different Platform community members participated in the meeting. Prior to the meeting, it was noted that the fact that the global community meeting was to be held had already triggered many focal points to review the Platform, resulting in a rapid increase in the number of data shared on the Platform: 222 new GM food safety assessment results were uploaded between August and October 2019. This highlighted the importance of holding a forum to provide discussion opportunities to relevant national competent authorities on the topic of GM food safety assessments. Furthermore, regular communications and interactions among community members can be an excellent way to increase the level of trust, which is crucial to following the recommendations from the relevant Codex guidelines, particularly to address the low level presence (LLP) issue, which can be addressed by reviewing data on the particular GM event provided by other countries.

According to the former chairperson of the Codex Task Force on Food Derived from Biotechnology, the FAO GM Foods Platform is beneficial because it addresses and mitigates trade problems. Data sharing will also be increasingly important, especially given the fact that more foods derived from modern biotechnology are being developed and produced. Timely data sharing is important for avoiding time gaps in the authorization of GM crops between importing and exporting countries and, thus, LLP situations can be managed in an easier way. Participants demonstrated various options that can be applied to data sharing on the Platform, and it was clear to all that it was straightforward to use the Platform to share data once GM food safety assessment results are in hand. The demonstrations and experiences shared at the meeting were practical and valuable for the less-experienced countries, and they reported that they would now be able to look into the Platform with a full understanding to obtain a reference on which to base their own work.

Another tangible value that the Platform provides is the possibility of connecting countries regardless of their geographical locations. In particular, a mentoring scheme is easily established with those who have full capacity in conducting GM food safety assessments and those who would not be able to even start the process due to their resource or capacity constraints. Such connections can trigger the establishment of bilateral or multilateral collaborations through which capacities may be developed and common problems can be addressed in a way that is time and resources saving. Collaborations can occur in many different ways and FAO’s facilitative support would perfectly suit, by both providing relevant information to focal points and by matching the needs and capacities of Platform community members that intend to start collaborative activities.

Scientific advancements continuously occur, and policy-makers keep changing and rotating, and several participants remarked that constant high-level sensitization and advocacy on the topic are always needed. While cost-effective and collaborative scientific activities can provide a solution for saving time and resources, policy-makers still need to see why this can be better in making informed decisions and financially beneficial. Along with advocacy activities, the formulation of practical communication strategies directed to all possible stakeholders is also needed, with substantial help from social scientists. Participants suggested to FAO to engage with Platform community members to work on such communication strategies, as such guidance would be extremely useful to address serious communication-related issues on the topic. Whether old or new, science and technology applications in food are often sensitive subjects for consumers, and therefore appropriate communications tailored to the target audience would be useful in tackling emerging issues such as “fake news”.

Overall, the meeting has confirmed that the Platform demonstrates its true value when quality datasets are shared in a timely manner. As Codex Members agreed in finalizing the Annex III of the Codex Plant Guidelines, the Platform is functioning exactly how it is supposed to: as a resource repository for GM food safety assessments in possible LLP situations. Participants agreed that the Platform provides opportunities for focal points to identify collaboration activities and to increase the level of trust among community members and their countries. FAO will continue to facilitate information sharing opportunities and to promote the development and advancement of those capacities that are needed to ensure food safety and food security.





Introduction

Overview

In order for Codex Alimentarius Members to share information on the results of Genetically Modified (GM) food safety assessments, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) maintains an online database entitled “FAO GM Foods Platform”. Upon requests from several Members, a global community meeting¹ of the FAO GM Foods Platform was organized from 10 to 13 September 2019 in Bangkok, Thailand. The meeting’s theme was “towards effective risk-based GM food safety assessment and regulatory management”. The meeting agenda is available in Annex 1. Ninety-nine people from 73 different Platform community members participated, with the following regional distribution: 28 percent of participants from CCAFRICA,² 31 percent from CCASIA,³ 11 percent from CCNE,⁴ 11 percent from CCEURO,⁵ 12 percent from CCLAC,⁶ and seven percent from CCNASWP.⁷ The majority of participants (71 percent) were focal points and alternate focal points of the Platform community. The meeting had a good gender balance with 44 percent of participants being male and 56 percent being female. The list of participants is available in Annex 2.

Background

The FAO GM Foods Platform⁸ was developed in 2013 as a simple online platform for Codex Members to share information on safety assessments of foods derived from recombinant-DNA (r-DNA) plants authorized in accordance with the Codex “Guideline for the conduct of food safety assessment of foods derived from recombinant-DNA plants (CAC/GL 45-2003)”.⁹ As of October 2019, 170 out of 189 Codex Members have joined the Platform, but only 23 of them share their GM food safety assessment results, and a commonly cited reason for not sharing these data relates to the limited capacity of many countries in conducting GM food safety assessments.

¹ Meeting website. <http://www.fao.org/about/meetings/gm-foods-platform-global-community-meeting/>

² CCAFRICA: Codex Coordinating Committee for Africa

³ CCASIA: Codex Coordinating Committee for Asia

⁴ CCNE: Codex Coordinating Committee for Near East

⁵ CCEURO: Codex Coordinating Committee for Europe

⁶ CCLAC: Codex Coordinating Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean

⁷ CCNASWP: Codex Coordinating Committee for North America and South West Pacific

⁸ FAO GM Foods Platform. <http://www.fao.org/food/food-safety-quality/gm-foods-platform/en/>

⁹ Codex Guideline. http://www.codexalimentarius.org/download/standards/10021/CXG_045e.pdf



VIPs (from left to right, Argentinean Ambassador in Thailand, Secretary of Food and Bioeconomy of the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries of the Argentine Republic, and ADG-FAORAP) were coming to the meeting

The Platform serves as both a global repository of information and a global community of practice, and is characterized by a domain (food safety), a practice (the GM food safety assessments), and a community (the focal points who fill very similar roles in their respective national contexts). Being part of the community provides focal points with the opportunity to learn from each other by sharing experiences and challenges, and by collaborating to find solutions. It also serves as a convenient reference to find contact information for trading partners in case there is a query on certain traded commodities.

Furthermore, the Platform functions as a tool in cases of low level presence (LLP) of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) and as a source of reliable documents on GM food safety assessment results shared by other countries.

The global meeting was organized – at the request of Codex Members to FAO – to host a face-to-face forum for technical dialogues on GM food safety assessments and regulatory capacity. Codex Members emphasized the importance of establishing various bilateral and multilateral communication channels, and thus, suggested that these should involve all possible trading partners across the globe. They also requested specific technical assistance on how to conduct GM food safety assessments that are in line with the Codex guidelines.

Scope

The main focus of the meeting was on science-based GM food safety assessments and relevant regulatory good practices; therefore, the meeting did not address any related environmental risks nor any socioeconomic and/or ethical issues. The meeting was of a technical nature such that no international decisions or resolutions were formulated. The meeting was held within the context of GM food safety assessments, and was based on internationally accepted principles and consensus as reflected in the relevant Codex guidelines.

Objectives of the meeting

Objectives of the meeting were to provide a forum for Platform community members to:

- establish contacts and build networks that can enable effective technical information sharing;
- increase awareness of the benefits of using the Platform to eventually increase the volume of submitted data and to promote its use as a resource; and



A presentation from Masami Takeuchi (FAO) on the objective of the meeting

- enhance the ability of Platform community members to conduct, interpret and analyse GM food safety assessments in accordance with the Codex guidelines.

The meeting intended to consolidate the international consensus on how to conduct GM food safety assessments as suggested by the Codex guidelines, and it thus focused on technical interpretation. The meeting also aimed at strengthening the capacities of developing countries and at understanding their situations regarding GM food safety assessments. Furthermore, participants discussed how Platform data can be used, analysed and interpreted by community members to eventually advise their policy-makers in making informed decisions.

Structure of the meeting

The meeting was held over three and a half days during which opening remarks, the keynote address and several presentations were delivered. Presentation abstracts are available in Annex 3. Masami Takeuchi (FAO) explained the meeting's objectives and briefed participants on the key features and purposes of the FAO GM Foods Platform. For each presentation session, Kosuke Shiraishi (FAO) provided a brief overview of the current status of the Platform as well as its community. Three working group sessions were also organized, and which aimed at strengthening community dialogue through team-based activities such as themed discussions and presentations. A lively networking session was held on the last day to promote collaborations and the organization of follow-up actions to be continued after the meeting. The results of the working group sessions and the World Café networking activity are available in Annexes 4 and 5, respectively.

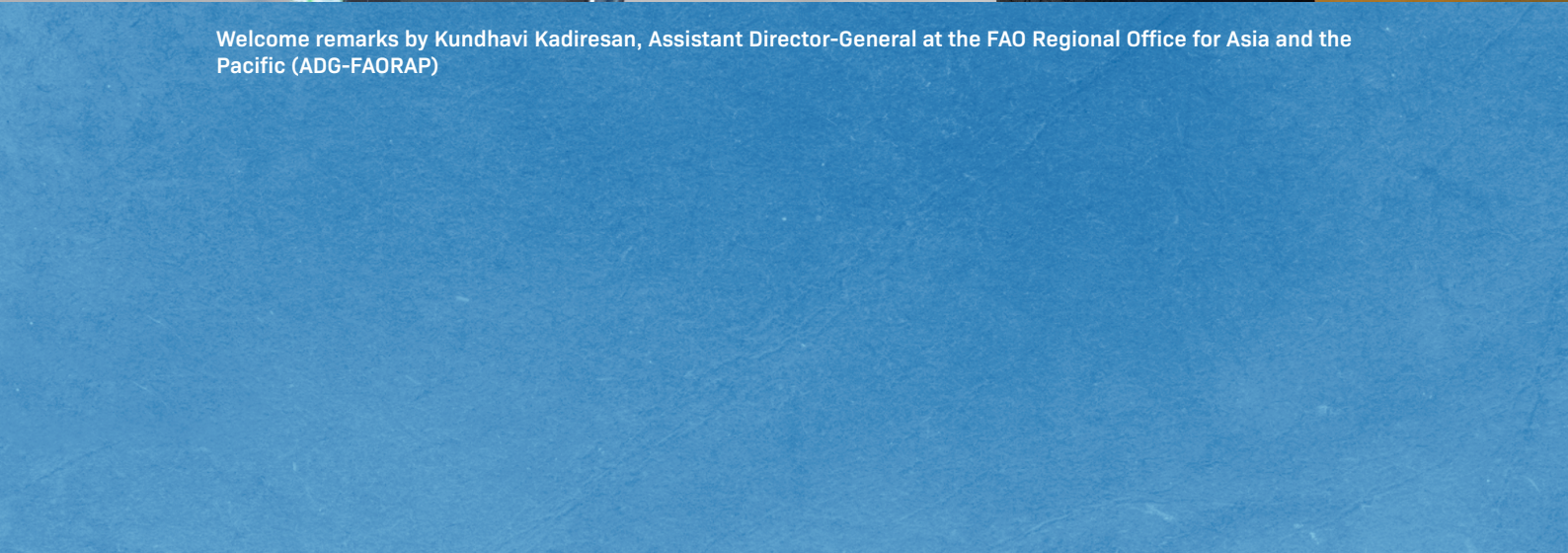
Leveraging the fact that some Platform community members are more advanced and experienced than others in their scientific, technical and/or regulatory development, a key focus of the agenda was to facilitate the sharing of regulatory good practices and lessons-learned in the food safety assessment process. Thus, table settings were organized to have six or seven people per table with different nationalities and capacities for conducting GM food safety assessments. Seating arrangements were changed on the third day of the meeting to promote networking among participants. In addition to the main event, two side events were also organized to discuss aspects of old and new food biotechnologies that are unavailable in the literature. These discussions took the form of two focus group sessions that explored the national contexts of some Platform community members with different regulations and levels of capacity. Selected photos of the meeting are available in Annex 6.



Pictures from working group session 3 held on 12 September



Welcome remarks by Kundhavi Kadiresan, Assistant Director-General at the FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ADG-FAORAP)





Highlights of the meeting

Growing trust in the community of practice

Science is a highly effective tool, however technological applications to food can inspire public debate. Interconnections and discussions are necessary to advance capacities and generate knowledge, as science requires constructive dialogues to build solutions. Kundhavi Kadiresan, Assistant Director-General at the FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, highlighted that food safety is a priority along with food security, and that FAO will continue to encourage information sharing and discussion among Platform community members. The meeting's keynote speaker, Andrés Murchison, Secretary of Food and Bioeconomy of the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries of the Argentine Republic, also highlighted the high value of international data sharing. He remarked on Argentina's support to FAO initiatives in data and information sharing, and promoting international collaboration.

Participants welcomed opportunities to identify common solutions and develop procedures that enable increased data interpretation capacities, and saw regular communication and interaction as ways to address existing trust issues. In fact, a lack of trust is one of the main factors that prevent focal points from using the data shared on the Platform and to contact other focal points; the global meeting was, thus, viewed by participants as a starting point for building trust, which is a primary requirement for data sharing. Once developed, trust opens the pathway for collaboration on common issues, and Platform community members then have the advantage of referring to each other to find common solutions.

Participants also acknowledged the Platform itself as another starting point to improve trust because it is a reliable and transparent source of data and information. In fact, some participants commented that FAO's neutrality and transparency contribute to the fact that the Platform hosts official and trustworthy datasets, which builds trust among community members and elevates confidence levels in both national and international contexts. Furthermore, the Platform provides the basis for capacity building activities, and can be used as a benchmark to understand whether other Platform community members are producing similar results, which can be used as a reliable reference. The fact that the datasets made available on

the Platform strictly follow Annex III of the Codex Plant Guidelines also provides solid accountability of the information.

The face-to-face meeting has similarly increased trust, as was demonstrated by an increase in the number of records shared on the Platform. Between August and October 2019, 222 new GM food safety assessment results were uploaded by six Platform community members, three of which had never shared their data on the Platform before. Tashi Yangzom (Bhutan) said, “This meeting is a huge opportunity for us to interact, network and collaborate to benefit from each other’s experiences”. The information shared on the Platform indeed provided the starting point for interactions during the meeting and thus helped the community of practice grow by creating the possibility for focal points to connect and start collaborations.

Data sharing for trade facilitation

Hiroshi Yoshikura (Japan), former Chairperson of the Codex ad hoc Intergovernmental Task Force on Foods derived from Biotechnology, stated that “we don’t have a trade problem now because the Platform exists”, clearly indicating the concrete benefit of the Platform. The implication is that the Platform not only addresses problems but also prevents them. He further stated that the Platform functions like insurance, and will be increasingly important in the future, especially given the fact that more and more GMOs are being developed and produced. Unnecessary World Trade Organization disputes are being avoided, and information sharing will also be crucial



Participants were listening to the keynote speech delivered by Andrés Murchison.

for the sound development of new technologies and the marketing of emerging products.

When the data are shared on the Platform in a timely manner, LLP situations can be managed more easily. Emily Silk (Canada) explained that LLP is mainly a trade issue rather than a safety issue because by definition product safety has been assessed by one or more country according to the relevant Codex guidelines. The occurrence of LLP is, in fact,

often due to time gaps in authorizations, and should be limited because this might lead to unnecessary rejections, food recalls and/or major economic losses. Prompt data sharing among trading partners can substantially facilitate the management of LLP situations. Some participants commented that the Platform community can help prevent time gaps and possibly help to manage LLP situations. Effective data sharing and the development of trusted relationships are fundamental to addressing LLP situations; therefore, it is important that all community members are capable of interpreting GM food safety assessment data. To do this, cooperation is key.



A presentation from Hiroshi Yoshikura (Japan)

Why we share, and what it takes

During a panel discussion with Emily Silk (Canada), Dorington Okeyo Ogoyi (Kenya) and Martin Lema (Argentina), the usefulness of the data on the Platform for capacity development was highlighted. Dorington Okeyo Ogoyi provided an example of how the data are being used as a source of a significant amount of information in Kenya, and explained that such data are accessible by expert reviewers that review food safety assessment data provided by the developers. In fact, data shared by other Platform community members that have approved similar events can be used as a

guideline for GMO developers and applicants to understand the kind of food safety data requirements in compilation dossiers.



A panel discussion with Emily Silk (Canada) at the left, Dorington Okeyo Ogoyi (Kenya) at the middle and Martin Lema (Argentina) at the right

Jason Dietz (the United States of America, US), Mohamad Afizal Bin Md Tahir (Malaysia) and Peter M. Magdaraog (the Philippines) discussed three ways of sharing relevant data. In each country, data sharing may have different characteristics. For example, in the US, developers first consult with the Food and Drug Administration, the agency that conducts GM food safety assessments, often facilitated



A panel discussion with Jason Dietz (the United States of America, US) at the left, Mohamad Afizal Bin Md Tahir (Malaysia) in the middle and Peter M. Magdaraog (the Philippines) at the second left, facilitated at the second left, facilitated by Masami Takeuchi (FAO) at the left

through meetings with the developer prior to a dossier being submitted. The agency thus has the opportunity to understand what is being developed in the very early stages of development, and developers can use FDA's feedback to make informed development decisions. In Malaysia, the public disclosure of risk assessment reports and the decisions taken occur in a timely manner in three different databases, and dissemination activities occur that involve the use of social media: this helps build confidence and credibility. In the Philippines,

two governmental authorities intervene in the production of the final summary information to be shared, and the resulting document contains the information generated during the approval process. Technically speaking, the ways those three countries share the results of their GM food safety assessments on the Platform are different. For example, the US mainly shares the relevant links to particular webpages where detailed information on GM food safety assessments can be accessed; to date, the US has approximately 177 entries. Malaysia usually uploads relevant files in PDF on the Platform; to date, Malaysia has 38 GM food safety assessment results on the Platform. Focal points of the Philippines prepare a short summary text of GM food safety assessment results, and directly type in the space available on the Platform; as of October 2019, the Philippines has shared 90 entries.

The real capacity development resource provided by the Platform is the possibility of connecting with those who have shared data and to learn from them about their experiences, because the Platform is not only a source of reliable data, but also of current contacts. To make the Platform a fully functional reference tool where data can be shared and retrieved, data production and interpretation capacities still need to be improved. While these aspects still remain challenging, especially in the context of developing countries and in situations where bans exist, considering the contacts on the Platform as data to be used and shared can substantially help the growth of the community of practice.

The Platform is where capacity development and cost-effective collaborations start

Three focal points from African countries – Dorington Okeyo Ogoyi (Kenya), Musa Kwehangana (Uganda) and Christopher Simuntala (Zambia) – presented a joint proposal to develop a collaborative structure for GM food safety assessments. Dorington Okeyo Ogoyi stated that the three of them are connected through FAO and its Platform, and Christopher Simuntala said “we need to start somewhere, and the Platform is a great basis for collaboration”. The contact information for all focal point is available online, so it is extremely easy to build a network through the Platform community. Kenya, Uganda and Zambia began their cooperation with technical training workshops on the process of conducting a GM food safety assessment, and collaborated on issues related to relevant information/education/communication



A panel discussion with Hellen Kajuju Mbaya on behalf of Dorington Okeyo Ogoyi (Kenya), Musa Kwehangana (Uganda), Christopher Simuntala (Zambia) and Jennifer Holtzman (Canada)

(ICE) actions to address negative public perceptions of GM food safety. Irrespective of different levels of experience, there are always common issues that can be addressed together, and collaborations are possible in many ways, be it through the establishment of a common roster of experts or a joint risk assessment. This proposal is open to more countries, and several participants expressed their interests in joining the effort.

Collaborations can also be established without the involvement of international organizations, as was demonstrated by the case of Canada and Australia. Jennifer Holtzman (Canada) presented the experience of a pilot activity to develop a joint pre-market assessment process for GM foods between the two responsible authorities, Health Canada and Food Standards Australia New Zealand. Trust-building exercises were conducted in stages, first by comparing safety assessments on previously approved GM foods, and later conducting parallel reviews of two new submissions. The next step of the pilot consists of conducting a pre-market assessment under the work sharing arrangement.



A panel discussion with Tashi Yangzom (Bhutan) and Martin Lema (Argentina) moderated by Masami Takeuchi (FAO)

In the case of the two bilateral collaborations between Bhutan and Argentina, and Bhutan and Australia, FAO intervened to match the focal points of the Platform community. Tashi Yangzom (Bhutan) and Martin Lema (Argentina) reported on the successful collaboration between their two countries, which resulted in the development of a draft communication strategy and the outline of an incident management plan for Bhutan. Furthermore, the collaboration between Bhutan and Food Standards Australia New Zealand enabled Bhutan to learn how to handle GM food applications by using a precise case study. Both bilateral collaborations were successful and brought concrete results that enabled Bhutan to improve in those areas that were previously identified as needing to be improved.

Having clear and realistic objectives are key requirements to establishing collaborations. In general, the existence of a shared need and a common objective promotes the formulation of efficient plans that can avoid potential pitfalls. The existence of similarities in national backgrounds was seen as an advantage to establishing future collaborations, but this should not be considered a necessary requirement to obtaining positive outcomes. In fact, by clearly identifying what resources can be shared, what exact materials are required, and what common goals need to be achieved, collaborations can successfully occur among countries that do not share the same language, background or capacity.

Bilateral or multilateral collaborations can lead to capacity development and to highly reliable GM food safety assessments that are produced through multi-country joint efforts, and they can save both time and resources. Collaboration goals can range from the advancement of the levels of capacity to the implementation of regulatory frameworks or the improvement of communication mechanisms with relevant people. They can also address problems related to risk communication, or food biotechnology policies and regulations. During the meeting, participants welcomed the opportunity to collaborate with each other, and the experiences shared by some of the speakers provided them with examples of how collaborations can start by using the Platform.

Power of communication

Participants stressed that policy-makers may not realize the substantial amount of financial and human resources required for conducting GM food safety assessments, and thus they ask national competent authorities to conduct rigorous assessments without allocating sufficient funding accordingly. While cost-effective collaborative activities can provide a solution for saving time and resources, policy-makers may still not see why this is better for making resource-friendly, yet science-based, informed decisions.

FAO has been providing technical materials for general advocacy, which can be tailored at the national level to use for communications with policy-makers, but participants stated that focused and constant work needs to be done on a regular basis to effectively communicate with decision-makers. Scientific advancements continuously occur, and policy-makers keep changing and rotating positions; therefore, basic sensitization on the topic needs to be conducted repeatedly.



A presentation from Orachos Napasintuwong (Thailand)

Martin Lema (Argentina) illustrated how social sciences are already making a significant impact to the proper communication of science to all possible target audiences. Such information can be used to formulate effective communication strategies, as was done during the bilateral collaboration between Argentina and Bhutan. In particular, the development of a communication strategy should include the formulation of clear, key messages that convey the information, and identification of the target audience and the appropriate channels to communicate with them. This could eventually help to identify priority actions over non-priority issues. Decision-makers are also consumers, and should be kept informed and educated with the message that there is a scientific way to demonstrate the safety of foods, and that such scientific evidence is being collected internationally, and so is important to collaborate with different countries.

Participants discussed how “fake news” is an emerging problem that can cause misunderstandings around food biotechnologies, and to combat the rapid dissemination of misinformation on the web, it is necessary for national authorities to be present on social media. This could increase the credibility and accountability of relevant government agencies to earn public trust in the role of national food safety authorities that work to ensure food safety, and might be the key for an effective outreach strategy. There is a major need to improve communication related to the safety of old and new food biotechnologies at multiple levels.

The rapid advancement of new technologies and methodologies in producing food may also trigger a need for updates to current regulations. Orachos Napasintuwong (Thailand) explained that Thailand’s position in implementing biosafety legislation and the application of GM technology in agriculture is far behind other countries in the region. Thailand may need to review the current global situation and market signals regarding modern biotechnology and respond more actively, not only because neighbouring countries have already adopted the technology, but also because emerging technology such as gene editing may become more acceptable in the global market.

World Café: Developing practical actions collaboratively

On the last day of the meeting, a World Café activity was organized to encourage follow-up actions, including new country partnerships. During the networking activity, participants were matched in pairs or groups, and they identified some concrete starting points for possible future collaborations. The activity provided participants with the opportunity to discuss first steps. Some proposals are reported below:

1. Participants from Fiji, Papua New Guinea and Tonga agreed to collaborate on the food safety assessment process, and to help each other with the development of biosafety and biotechnology regulatory texts. They also share the common goal of sensitizing concerned agencies and key technical people in their countries.



Pictures from world café session held on 13 September



Pictures from world café session held on 13 September

2. Participants from Angola and Cape Verde, both Portuguese speaking countries, identified a possible collaboration in their mutual support of the dissemination of the Platform's information. Participants speaking the same language can thus overcome language barriers of a multilingual Platform through informal dialogues.
3. Participants from Bhutan, Thailand and the US agreed to informally share materials and information related to the formulation of communication strategies, and to approach the problem by exchanging their experiences. Communication materials related to GM food safety assessments were also discussed by the matched pair of China and Nepal, and by Cameroon, Burkina Faso and Mali.
4. Argentinian participants agreed with the participant from Iraq to share GM food safety assessments of soybean produced by Argentina, Brazil and the US, and start collaborating with Iraq on the decision-making process on the imports of soybean.
5. A participant from Finland offered technical help to Serbia on harmonizing the Serbian system with the one currently used in the European Union.
6. Participants from Montenegro and Bosnia Herzegovina agreed to upgrade their collaborations to develop regional models for raising awareness of the topic's importance, and developing communication strategies, and drafting risk management measures.



A picture from world café session held on 13 September



Pictures from world café session held on 13 September

7. Participants from Lebanon, Kuwait, Qatar and United Arab Emirates will start sharing each other's expertise to prioritize topics in each of their countries.
8. Participants from Eswatini and Malawi agreed with a participant from Zimbabwe that they will share the work that was done in their countries on Bt cotton, while the participant from Zimbabwe will share with them the work that was done on GM pharmaceuticals.
9. Participants from Burundi, Tanzania and South Sudan will work in their countries to assess their respective national situation on GM food safety assessments, and agreed to further identify elements to establish a clear work plan to start collaborating together.
10. Thailand and Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries will start with FAO training on new biotechnologies and their related safety assessments.
11. Participants from the Philippines agreed to share their experience with participants from Madagascar, Mauritius and the Democratic Republic of Congo, and support them with the process of applications review.
12. Participants from Peru, Bolivia and Ecuador agreed to establish permanent communications among their respective agencies.
13. Participants from Algeria and Tunisia agreed to identify their respective national needs for GM food safety assessments and predicted to conduct a workshop meeting together to address those needs that they have in common.

As demonstrated during the World Café, the Platform community of practice has a strong potential for establishing effective partnerships, and such collaborations can be facilitated through the information shared on the Platform interface. Practical contact information is readily available for community members who would like to connect with each other. Platform community members can start sharing their experiences and good practices so that they can immediately address their needs and challenges, while identifying solutions together.



A picture from working group session 1 held on 10 September



Conclusions

The global meeting provided Platform community members with the opportunity to establish contacts and build networks that enable effective technical information sharing. This was possible because of the working group and the World Café networking activities, where participants could discuss their countries' situations regarding GM food safety assessments and any possible emerging issue. Over 50 percent of participants reported that they were able to interact with more than 16 people individually during the meeting. Moreover, the presentations delivered at the meeting increased the awareness of the benefits of having a fully-functional Platform that is complete with up-to-date data, especially those related to trade issues and the management of LLP situations. Participants recognized that the Platform can be a basis for technical communication and capacity building activities, and can be used as a reference tool that can help to increase the understanding of users and stakeholders about GM foods. It can also be used as a tool for advocacy activities. The examples regarding different ways of sharing and using data on the Platform provided participants with additional elements to enhance their ability to conduct, interpret and analyse GM food safety assessments in accordance with Codex guidelines. During the networking activity, many participants identified various national-level activities as follow-up actions to enhance their ability on data production, sharing and interpretation. As a result, between August and October 2019, 222 new GM food safety assessment results were uploaded onto the FAO GM Foods Platform.

The meeting highlighted an interesting reality about mutual trust. Each individual has absolutely no problem building a trusting relationship with focal points from other countries, but when it comes to official communication about GM foods, the situation changes. It was realized, with surprise, that not all GM food safety assessment results are automatically trusted, even if they are conducted in accordance with the Codex guidelines. However, many participants pointed out the fact that all GM food safety assessment results for each GM event indicate exactly the same outcomes, no matter what country has conducted the assessment, as long as they are in line with the Codex guidelines. Thus, the meeting concluded and accepted the reality



A picture from working group session 2 held on 11 September

that trust issues do exist, which may prevent focal points from using the data on the Platform. Participants also agreed that such issues can be addressed through regular discussions. Informal dialogues may also contribute to alleviating language barrier issues that may limit the accessibility of Platform data that are not shared in English. It was also confirmed by many participants that trade issues and LLP situations can be substantially facilitated by the Platform, and in order to ensure that all Platform community members can correctly interpret the data, continuous capacity development, particularly in developing countries, is still needed. Data on the Platform may also provide a reference for less-experienced countries

to understand whether they are progressing in the right direction; therefore, timely data sharing also has an impact on capacity development. Participants welcomed collaborative opportunities on a wide variety of areas regarding both GM food safety assessments and their communication, and they identified some key actions as starting points for possible future partnerships. Such collaborations may also address emerging issues that countries are experiencing, such as fake news or the management of new biotechnologies. All will benefit from regular communication and advocacy efforts.

Participants concluded that collaborations need to start now, and that the Platform is a great starting point. All necessary contact information is already available on the Platform, and it takes little effort to get in touch with other focal points to identify common needs or challenges that could be solved together. Furthermore, collaborations can start regardless of the levels of capacities by setting clear key objectives. Dialogue and interactions not only contribute to the success of collaborative activities, but they also strengthen the community of practice.

The meeting has already contributed to an increase in mutual trust among Platform community members, and this can be further strengthened to improve the quality and quantity of data sharing. The discussions and interactions that took place during the meeting will continue, as they will support the advancement in building capacity and knowledge. For example, during the World Café, 28 groups identified concrete collaborative activities that include training workshops or regional initiatives. The collaborative actions that were agreed to during the networking activity will serve as a basis for solid partnerships, including increasing global levels of capacities. Trust will be essential to achieving efficient and effective data sharing, maximizing the usefulness of the Platform, and enabling the sharing of expertise for mutual benefit. Moreover, national follow-up activities identified during the meeting will

serve as a foundation to develop a national action plan to produce, share and interpret GM food safety assessment results, and to improve the ability to conduct a realistic assessment of national situations, which may also contribute to raising the awareness of the benefits of the Platform.

Meeting participants reported that they would expect to conduct national activities in a targeted way, learning from other countries' experiences and lessons learned. In particular, developing countries have expressed their needs for technical assistance from FAO on risk assessment and risk management framework development. Furthermore, they would like the Platform to be maintained well and possibly improved with new features such as the addition of language indication systems and function to disseminate related communication materials for community members. It was also pointed out by some participants that because other international databases do not emphasize the importance of using the Codex guidelines for GM food safety assessment, it is important that the FAO GM Foods Platform continues to exist. In response to these needs, FAO will continue to maintain the Platform to address the needs agreed on the Codex guidelines and facilitate country collaborations and partnerships through FAO's hand-in-hand initiative, so that members will benefit from this technical community of practice to gain knowledge about food biotechnology. As applications of modern biotechnology are evolving, this will eventually contribute to ensuring food safety and food security at national, regional and international levels.

Agenda of the meeting

Global community meeting of the FAO GM Foods Platform

Towards effective risk-based GM food safety assessment and regulatory management
10-13 September 2019, Sheraton Orchid Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand

Day 1: Tuesday 10 September 2019

TIME	ITEM	
07.30 – 09.00	Registration	Coffee/tea will be served
09.00 – 09.15	Opening session introduction	
09.15 – 09.45	Welcome address	Kundhavi Kadiresan , Assistant Director General, FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific
09.45 – 10.15	Keynote: Promoting good regulatory practices: Global significance of sharing the results of GM food safety assessment	Andres Murchison , Secretary of Food and Bioeconomy, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, Argentine Republic
10.15 – 10.45	Objectives of the meeting, photo session	Masami Takeuchi , Food Safety Officer, FAO
10.45 – 11.00	History of the FAO GM Foods Platform	Masami Takeuchi , FAO
11.00 – 11.15	Summary of the Technical Paper Part I: Current status of the FAO GM Foods Platform	Kosuke Shiraishi , Junior Professional Officer, Food Safety, FAO
11.15 – 11.25	Panel 1: How Canada is using the data on the FAO GM Foods Platform	Emily Silk , Deputy Director, Technical Trade Policy Division, Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada, Canada
11.25 – 11.35	Panel 2: How Kenya is using the data on the FAO GM Foods Platform	Dorington Okeyo Ogoyi , Chief Executive Officer, National Biosafety Authority, Kenya
11.35 – 11.45	Panel 3: How Argentina is using the data on the FAO GM Foods Platform	Martin Lema , Director of Biotechnology, Agro-Industry Ministry of Production and Labor, Argentine Republic
11.45 – 12.00	Q&As	
12.00 – 13.30	Lunch	
13.30 – 14.00	Codex and GM food safety assessment	Hiroshi Yoshikura , Former Chairperson of the Codex Inter-governmental Task Force on Food derived from Biotechnology, Japan
14.00 – 14.15	Country case: LLP situations in Canada	Emily Silk , Canada
14.15 – 14.45	Summary of the Technical Background Paper Part II: capacity issues and emerging needs	Kosuke Shiraishi , FAO
14.45 – 15.00	Plenary discussion on the vision and role of the FAO GM Foods Platform	
15.00 – 15.30	Coffee/tea break	
15.30 – 17.00	Working group session 1: Platform community	
17.00 – 17.30	Wrap up of Day 1	Masami Takeuchi , FAO

Day 2: Wednesday 11 September 2019

TIME	ITEM	
08.30 – 09.00	Introduction to Day 2	Masami Takeuchi , FAO
09.00 – 09.15	Panel 1: Sharing the results of GM food safety assessment on the Platform – the case in the US	Jason Dietz , Senior Policy Analyst, Food and Drug Administration, Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition, United States of America
09.15 – 09.30	Panel 2: Sharing the results of GM food safety assessment on the Platform – the case in Malaysia	Mohamad Afizal bin Md Tahir , IT Assistant Officer, Department of Biosafety, Ministry of Water, Land and Natural Resources, Malaysia
09.30 – 09.45	Panel 3: Sharing the results of GM food safety assessment on the Platform – the case in the Philippines	Peter M. Magdaraog , Supervising Agriculturist, Department of Agriculture- Bureau of Plant Industry, the Philippines
09.45 – 10.00	Q&As	
10.00 – 10.30	Coffee/tea break	
10.30 – 11.00	Summary of the Technical Background Paper Part III: identified challenges and opportunities	Kosuke Shiraishi , FAO
11.00 – 11.20	Regulatory practices for GM food safety assessment, considerations for Thailand	Orachos Napisintuwong , Assistant Professor, Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics, Faculty of Economics, Kasetsart University, Thailand
11.20 – 12.00	Discussions	
12.00 – 13.30	Lunch	
13.30 – 14.00	Cooperation mechanisms Part I: Proposal from three African countries (Kenya, Uganda and Zambia)	Dorington Okeyo Goyi , Kenya Musa Kwehangana , Biosafety Officer, Secretary of the National Biosafety Committee, Uganda National Council for Science and Technology, Uganda Christopher Simuntala , Senior Biosafety Officer, Standards & Technical Liaison, National Biosafety Authority, Zambia
14.00 – 14.30	Cooperation mechanisms Part II: Bilateral collaboration on GM Food Safety assessment in Canada (Health Canada) and Australia (FSANZ)	Jennifer Holtzman , Novel Foods Section, BMH, Health Canada, Canada
14.30 – 15.00	Q&As and instructions for the working group session 2	
15.00 – 15.30	Coffee/tea break	
15.30 – 17.00	Working group session 2: cooperation mechanisms	
17.00 – 17.30	Wrap up of Day 2	Hellen Mbaya , Consultant, FAO

Day 3: Thursday 12 September 2019

TIME	ITEM	
08.30 – 09.00	Introduction to Day 3	Masami Takeuchi , FAO
09.00 – 10.00	Plenary presentation of the working group sessions 1 and 2	
10.00 – 10.30	Coffee/tea break	
10.30 – 11.00	Capacity development needs and actions: A case study on community members' collaborations in Bhutan by Australia and Argentina	Tashi Yangzom , Senior Food Safety Officer, Bhutan Agriculture and Food Regulatory Authority, Ministry of Agriculture and Forests, Bhutan Martin Lema , Argentine Republic
11.00 – 12.00	Plenary discussions	
12.00 – 13.30	Lunch break	
13.30 – 15.00	Working group session 3: emerging issues	
15.00 – 15.30	Coffee/tea break	
15.30 – 16.30	Plenary presentation of the working group session 3	
16.30 – 17.00	Preparation for the Day 4 networking activities	Kosuke Shiraishi , FAO
17.00 – 17.30	Wrap up of Day 3	Hellen Mbaya , FAO

Day 4: Friday 13 September 2019

TIME	ITEM	
08.30 – 09.00	Introduction to Day 4	Hellen Mbaya , FAO
09.00 – 10.00	Networking activities: World Café	
10.00 – 10.30	Coffee/tea break	
10.30 – 11.00	Wrap up of the World Café	
11.00 – 11.20	A brief report from the side event with developing countries	Kosuke Shiraishi , FAO
11.20 – 11.40	Summary of the meeting and a way forward	Masami Takeuchi , FAO
11.40 – 12.00	Closing remarks	FAO
12.00 – 13.30	Lunch and adjourn the meeting	

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Abstracts of the presentations

How Canada is using data on the FAO GM Foods Platform - Emily Silk

Genetically modified (GM) varieties have a high adoption rate for a number of major crops cultivated in Canada. As one of the top five global producers of GM crops, Canada has a lot of data and experience with respect to assessing the safety of GM products. In the interest of helping other countries in their decision-making with regard to GM product approvals and facilitating trade in these products, Canada sees significant value in sharing this data and expertise through the FAO GM Foods Platform.

How Kenya is using data on the FAO GM Foods Platform - Dorington Okeyo Ogyoi

The National Biosafety Authority (NBA) was established through the Biosafety Act No. 2 of 2009, which provides for legal, institutional and regulatory framework for harnessing the benefits of modern biotechnology. The Authority facilitates responsible research in modern biotechnology while minimizing potential risks that may be posed by GMOs to human and animal health as well as adequate protection of the environment. For environmental release applications, the four key areas considered during the decision-making process include: risk assessment (food safety assessment as well as environmental risk assessment), socio-economic considerations, public participation and consultations among regulatory agencies. On food safety, The FAO GM Foods Platform is a very important source of information on food safety assessment data for food safety reviewers, the NBA technical staff and NBA Board which is the decision-making organ. The Platform is also an important reference source during food safety assessment training of various stakeholders. Through the platform, the Authority has shared biosafety regulatory documents, including the Biosafety Act and the various implementing regulation as well as decisions on GMOs. Information in the platform provides guidance to GMO developers and applicants on the kind of food safety data requirements for regulators in the compilation of dossiers. With regards to trade facilitation, the platform will be useful in effective enforcement of the threshold requirement for low level presence once the guidelines are approved.

How Argentina is using data on the FAO GM Foods Platform - Martin Lema

Argentina contributed very actively to the "Codex Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Task Force on Food Derived from Biotechnology" during the elaboration of Codex's Annex III "Guideline for the Conduct of Food Safety Assessment of Foods Derived from Recombinant-DNA Plants" (CAC/GL 45-2003). Annex III is devoted to "Food safety assessment in situations of low-level presence of recombinant-DNA plant material in food", and its Section 3 on "Guidance on data and information sharing" requested the creation of a database for Codex Members to upload information on recombinant-DNA plants authorized in accordance with the Codex CAC/GL 45-2003 guideline. The FAO GM Foods Platform database is the result of such requests embedded in Annex III. From the inception of the Platform, Argentina has welcomed the initiative because we value its potential contribution to avoid food trade issues derived from situations of asymmetric authorizations. In particular, Argentina participated in the FAO "Technical Consultation on Low Levels of GM Crops in International Food and Feed Trade" (2014), organized by FAO after the request of several countries for a multilateral dialogue on the issue of trade disruptions involving low levels of GM crops in international food and feed trade. During that consultation, Argentina insisted that the new database should be supported and kept true to the purpose and specifications derived from Annex III, in order to make the annex workable. Argentina has been an early contributor of database entries and we keep it up to date, for the sake of transparency and openness to collaboration with third countries. In performing our contributions, the database has helped to improve the editorial quality of our Decision Documents, so that they can be clearer to external readers. Internally, we resort to other countries' contributions to the database occasionally in order to compare notes during our processes of GM food safety assessments made according to Codex CAC/GL 45-2003. In addition, we maintain bilateral dialogues or capacity building actions in biotechnology with different countries, and usually we suggest them to take into account the database for its usefulness in the context of CAC/GL 45-2003 and its Annex III. As an early adopter of

biotechnology crops and being mainly an exporter of foods derived from them, Argentina is interested in having other (importer) countries as active users of the database for the purpose of implementing Annex III. However, to this end it is important that Argentina also abide by the same standard and encourages other food-producing countries to do so; that is why CAC/GL 45-2003 was explicitly recognized in our regulation as a guideline in cases of future imports of food containing low level presence of recombinant-DNA plant material still not approved in our country (Argentine Resolution SABI 26/2018). Moreover, Argentina also promoted a similar approach for the whole Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR Resolution MERCOSUR/GMC/RES. Nº 23/19).

Codex and GM foods safety assessment - Hiroshi Yoshikura

The GM Task Force (2000–2003 and 2005–2007) agreed on one principle document, three guidelines (on r-DNA plants, microbes and animals), and three annexes. They are all based on an idea that risk assessments should be based not on process but on products, and does not pursue the absolute safety of foods but safety in comparison with conventional foods (i.e., “food safety assessment”). In the author’s view, two events prompted Codex’s undertaking of the work on low level presence of r-DNA plant material in food: one was the StarLink corn incident in 2000, which resulted in over 300 food recalls and waste; and the other was the World Trade Organization dispute settlement on “approval and marketing of biotech products”, which ruled that sanitary and phytosanitary measures should be based on risk assessment. Work on low level presence (LLP) situation was proposed in 2005 in the second round but the Task Force was unable to reach consensus. In 2006, after long discussion, the Task Force agreed to the scope (i.e., work on r-DNA plant foods that have passed a food safety assessment in one or more countries and are present in foods in importing countries in which the food safety of the relevant r-DNA plants has not been determined as a consequence of asymmetric authorization. It was also agreed that national authorities will determine a level low enough for this annex to be appropriate. The agreed approach to the LLP situation was the food safety assessment by the importing countries (Annex paragraph 2) in exchange of data and information sharing by exporting countries (Annex paragraphs 3 and 27). The Task Force agreed that the annex guideline includes only certain elements of the plant guideline that are relevant for the LLP situation. The record of discussion is available in “Debate on Foods Derived from Biotechnology in Codex” by Hiroshi Yoshikura (<https://www.mhlw.go.jp/english/topics/foodsafety/dna/02-03.html>). The product-based safety assessment using conventional counterpart that was used for r-DNA plants may be useful for risk assessments of products or new technologies, such as gene editing. Information sharing will be crucial for sound development of new technology.

LLP and the FAO GM Foods Platform - Emily Silk

Low level presence (LLP) occurs when small amounts of genetically modified (GM) grain, assessed as safe according to Codex guidelines by at least one country but not yet approved in the importing country, is unintentionally present in grain shipments exported to that country. LLP situations can occur when there is a time gap in the authorization of GM crops between importing and exporting countries, or when developers do not seek authorizations in importing countries. In 2012, Canada established the Global Low Level Presence Initiative (GLI), a group of 15 importing and exporting countries committed to working collaboratively to develop international approaches to managing and preventing LLP. The GLI recognizes that the Codex Plant Guidelines provide an important international standard for safety assessments of GM plants. They also allow for cooperation and information sharing between countries. By extension, the FAO GM Foods Platform community can help prevent time gaps in the authorization of GM crops between importing and exporting countries as well as help countries to manage LLP situations.

Sharing the results of GM food safety assessment on the Platform – the case in the US - Jason Dietz

The United States of America (US) has two primary processes that may be relevant to foods from genetically engineered plant varieties. These processes are a voluntary premarket food safety consultation with the Food and Drug Administration and, where applicable, establishment of a tolerance or tolerance

exemption for plant incorporated protectants (PIPs) by the Environmental Protection Agency. The US shares information with the public about the outcome of regulatory evaluations through agency websites. In addition, once products have completed applicable evaluations they are notified to the FAO GM Foods Platform. To date, the US has approximately 175 entries in the Platform. Transparency around regulatory decisions is important to the US because it allows for predictable domestic and international trade and assures consumers and other governments about the safety of foods.

Malaysia - Good practices in sharing results of GM food safety assessments - Mohamad Afizal Md Tahir

The Biosafety Act 2007 regulates living modified organisms (LMOs) and their products in Malaysia, and the Department of Biosafety (DOB) is the competent agency to implement this Act. It is mandatory for Genetically Modified (GM) food (being a product of LMO), to undergo a GM food safety assessment before it can be considered safe to be used for food, feed and processing and subsequently placed on the market. The National Biosafety Board (NBB) makes these decisions for GM crops (events) based on risk assessments done by the Genetic Modification Advisory Committee in addition to relevant government agency inputs as well as public consultations. After a decision is made for an event, a simplified regulatory procedure is in place in the form of exemption for GM products used for the purpose of food, feed and processing. After an event is approved, anyone else may use the event for food, feed and processing without any need for regulatory procedures with the NBB. Biosafety Act incorporates that all NBB decisions must be disclosed to the public. Therefore, in compliance with the Act, DOB has incorporated public disclosure as part of the procedure in processing NBB decisions. Currently, NBB decisions and risk assessment reports are shared in three different platforms – the Department of Biosafety official website, the Biosafety Clearing House, and the FAO GM Foods Platform. These decisions are further disseminated via the DOB's social media platforms (Twitter and Facebook). As of today, 38 decisions and assessments for food, feed and processing are available in all its platforms. Since the Act was implemented in 2010, DOB has been consistently sharing its decisions and safety assessments. Through this experience, DOB has implemented some good practices to ensure that the proper dissemination of information.

- The information provided is identical and in a format that is simple and organized. Careful scrutiny is given to all information prepared that will be disseminated to the public. This builds confidence and credibility of the information provided through the platforms administered by DOB.
- The dissemination of information takes place in a systematic and timely manner. After a decision is made, it is made available within seven days to all platforms simultaneously. Coordination and prior planning within DOB enables this to be done.
- This duplication of information in several platforms ensures that the information is available at all times regardless of any technical glitches. The availability of the information in other platforms is made known in each platform.
- DOB actively publicizes its official website, its social media platforms and databases administered by DOB. An increased awareness of these mediums will encourage its utilization by the public. DOB always incorporates this information in its presentations in capacity building activities, public awareness activities and public awareness materials (posters, books etc.).
- Commitment (time and resources) by the institute is important to maintain an updated database, website and social media platforms is an important step to ensure that there is sustainability in dissemination of information to the public.

Sharing results of GM food safety assessments on the Platform – the case in the Philippines - Peter M. Magdaraog

In the Philippines, food safety assessment is governed by the DOST-DA-DENR-DOH-DILG Joint Department Circular No. 1 series 2016 (JDC#1 s 2016). The conduct of food safety assessment is anchored from the Codex Guideline for the Conduct of Food Safety Assessment of Foods Derived from Recombinant-DNA Plants (CAC-45-2003). Sharing the results of GM food safety assessments in the

Platform is part of the Philippines' obligation as a Platform Member. Information that is being shared in the Platform is extracted from the reports being made in the process of approval of the GM application. There are two consolidated reports from which such information may be gathered. These reports are from the safety assessments made by all the assessors, including food and feed safety assessors. The first consolidated report prepared by the Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) is where the initial results of the safety assessments are summarized. It contains the detailed data from which the assessor has derived its decision on whether to approve or deny the application. Basic considerations include information on: molecular characterization, toxicity, allergenicity, and nutritional composition. The second report is the Department of Agriculture-Biosafety Committee Technical Report, where the final results of the safety assessments are summarized. It consists of the technical evaluation and recommendations of all the assessors and the summarized justifications for their decision. The information being shared in the platform is mainly extracted from these documents. The BPI Biotech Secretariat extracts the information needed from the technical report for approval by the country's GM Platform focal point before it is uploaded to the website.

Regulatory practices for GM food safety assessments, considerations for Thailand - Orachos Napasintuwong

Thailand has recognized the potentials of agricultural biotechnology since the early 1980s marked by the establishment of the National Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (BIOTEC) in 1983, a significant ground-breaking moment for biotechnology development. In 1922, Thailand was the first country in the region to adopt national biosafety guidelines for both laboratory work and field testing. In 1993, the National Biosafety Committee (NBC) was established. Subsequently, Institutional Biosafety Committees (IBCs) were established by various research and academic institutes throughout the country. The first field trial of a genetically modified (GM) crop was granted to Flavr Savr tomato in 1994, followed by Bt-cotton in 1996, Bt-corn in 1997, and GM papaya in 1997. However, due to intensifying pressure from activists, the government Cabinet prohibited all open field trials of transgenic plants in Thailand until the National Biosafety Law was formulated and implemented in April 2001. Thailand became a member country of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety in 2006. The ban on GM crop field trials was revoked by the government Cabinet on 25 December 2007, under a case-by-case approval by the Cabinet. The requirements were considered restrictive; thus, no GM crops have been approved for field trials since 2003. The draft national biosafety policy for Thailand was produced and submitted to Parliament, but has never been passed into law. The Biosafety Law is perceived by activists as the gateway to deregulate GM commercial production. As a result, after receiving approval from the Cabinet, the draft Biosafety Act was rejected by the Prime Minister in November 2015. In November 2016, the new subcommittee was created to draft a new Biosafety Act, which was completed on 27 December 2016. The draft Biosafety Law is designated to combine with the draft Biodiversity Law, and this draft legislation is still under review by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment and has not been submitted to the Cabinet for approval. There have been several institutional reforms to formulate and implement biotechnology policies. The National Science, Technology and Innovation Policy Office (STI) and BIOTEC introduced the National Biotechnology Policy Frameworks for 2004–2009 and for 2012–2021 that aim to develop strategic planning, establish future research and development, and enhance the country's ability to access new technologies and applications of biotechnology. Under the current economic growth model known as "Thailand 4.0" focusing on inclusive, productive and green growth, agriculture and biotechnology are among focused industries considered as growth engines to enhance the country's competitiveness and economic development. Despite promising policies, GM technology is controversial, and public opinion is disruptive in Thailand. The position of Thailand in implementing biosafety legislation and the application of GM technology in agriculture is far behind other countries in the region. Thailand may need to review the current global situation and market signals to modern biotechnology and respond more actively, not only because neighbouring countries have already adopted the transgenic technology, which could unavoidably cross the border, but also because emerging technology such as gene editing may become more acceptable on the global market.

Cooperation mechanisms Part I: Kenya, Uganda, Zambia - Dorington Ogoyi, Musa Kwehangana and Christopher Simuntala

Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe collaborated with FAO to hold a genetically modified (GM) food safety assessment regional workshop in Kenya from 26 to 28 October 2016. The workshop trained participants on key elements of GM food safety assessment in line with the relevant Codex guidelines. As a follow-up initiative, three national-level activities were carried out in Kenya, Uganda and Zambia in 2017 and 2018, respectively, to outline the technical issues to be addressed. Each country developed a national plan of action. Various recommendations were made by each country and among them; some were common to all three countries, indicating that they could employ a collaborative approach with other interested African countries to address similar needs and challenges. The common needs identified among these countries include:

1. Strengthening the capacity of the regional competent biosafety authorities through the development of focused intervention tools and regulatory instruments to support the commercialization of living modified organisms (LMOs).
2. Enhancing institutional capacity on biosafety at the regional and national competent authorities to achieve a harmonized and well-coordinated decision-making process.
3. Strengthening the capacity of expert reviewers on GM food and feed safety assessment to enable better understanding of the processes of review of GMOs application dossiers and risk assessments.
4. Ensuring that key stakeholders and the general public are better informed on the biosafety regulatory framework and are effectively engaged during the decision-making process.

This proposal focuses on the four broad objectives aimed at achieving regional collaboration towards fully functional and effective GM food safety assessments, with the flexibility to welcome more countries from the region and the continent.

Cooperation mechanisms part II – Collaboration on FAO GM Foods Safety assessment in Canada (Health Canada) and Australia (FSANZ) - Jennifer Holtzman

Beginning in 2013, Health Canada's Food Directorate and Food Standards Australia and New Zealand (FSANZ) established a pilot joint pre-market assessment process for genetically modified (GM) foods, which enables work sharing between the agencies. Following analysis of various options to conduct joint reviews, the chosen format was a work sharing arrangement where one lead agency conducts the pre-market assessment and the other agency peer reviews the assessment. Procedures were established for initiating and conducting work sharing. The two organizations conducted trust-building exercises in stages, first by comparing safety assessments on previously approved GM foods, and later conducting parallel reviews of two new submissions. Industry can now approach Health Canada and FSANZ with candidate products for the next step of the pilot, namely conducting a pre-market assessment under the work sharing arrangement. By leveraging the capacities of each organisation, this work sharing arrangement aims to improve the efficiency and synchronisation of GM food safety assessments.

Capacity development needs and actions: A case study on community members' collaborations in Bhutan by Australia and Argentina - Tashi Yangzom

The Bhutan Agriculture and Food Regulatory Authority (BAFRA), Ministry of Agriculture and Forests under the Royal Government of Bhutan, is the national competent authority to coordinate all biosecurity-related activities in Bhutan. BAFRA is also mandated to implement sanitary and phytosanitary measures, promote food safety measures, and enforce genetically modified (GM) food regulation. In the area of GM food regulation, Bhutan has an enabling institutional framework that includes legislation,

aligned protocols and standard operating procedures. Bhutan has adopted a precautionary policy concerning genetically modified organisms (GMOs), with the aim to conserve its pristine environment and to promote organic agriculture. The Biosafety Act of Bhutan 2015 addresses the regulation of GMOs and their products in the Bhutan. The regulation is harmonized with the existing legislation, and takes into account the country's food security needs. The Biosafety Act prohibits the cultivation, research and development of GM crops in Bhutan; therefore, the possibility of introducing GMOs in Bhutan would be through the importation of food and feed. The GMOs intended for use as food, feed and processing are permitted only after a safety assessment by the Biosafety Technical Working Group has been done, and approval is granted by the National Biosafety Board of Bhutan. As per Bhutan's identified needs and challenges in the area of GM food regulation, FAO provided financial and technical assistance to BAFRA to organize a national training workshop on "GM food safety assessment, risk communication and advocacy programme" from 23–27 July 2018 in Thimphu, Bhutan. Through the training, participants identified areas for improvement in the field of GM food risk analysis, focussing on expertise for safety assessment, detection strategy, and communication. As a follow up to the workshop, facilitated by FAO GM Foods Platform, the following activities were carried out:

1. A national consultation meeting on "GMO communication strategy and incidence response plan" was held on 29 October 2018 in Thimphu, Bhutan.
2. The Communication Strategy on Biosafety (GMOs) and the GMO Incident Management Plan have been developed in collaboration with the Ministry of Production and Labour, Argentina (Mr Martin Lema, Director of Biotechnology, Agro-Industry).

A training workshop was organized on "GM food safety assessment: Using a real case study" was held from 4 to 15 February 2019, in Paro, Bhutan in collaboration with Food Standards Australia New Zealand (Janet Gorst, Senior Scientist).

Results of the working groups

#	Question	Summarized answers
1	What stops you from using other countries' risk assessment results?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The presence of a ban; ▪ Limited capacity in data interpretation; ▪ Data sharing mechanisms need improvements; ▪ Safety assessment reports are often shared in the original language; ▪ No applications ever received; ▪ Limited awareness of the Platform; ▪ Regulations that are too new or absent; ▪ Preparation on risk assessments; ▪ Trust issues.
2	What are the benefits of the Platform community?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ It builds the basis for capacity building; ▪ It can be used as a reference tool; ▪ It might facilitate trades; ▪ It is where communications start; ▪ It works as a transparent, open, reliable source of data, info that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » builds trust and confidence within national context and among different countries; » promotes users and stakeholders' understanding of GM foods; » can be used as an advocacy supporting tool.
3	How can the real "community of practice" be developed?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Through the improvement of the discoverability of materials and data on the Platform; ▪ Through the inclusion on the Platform of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » A database of experts to refer to; » A flagging system for new issues; » Negative results; » A news section; » An open forum; » Videos on best practices; ▪ By increasing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The amount of data available on the Platform; ▪ The number of meetings (either physical or online).
4	Please discuss what you thought about the collaborative approach between Health-Canada and FSANZ (Australia). Would you like to try something?"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conditions identified to which collaboration can be established: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » adaptation to national contexts is needed; » similar background, culture, level of experience, language, goals need to be there; » collaborations should have the support of FAO to advocate with policy-makers; » regular communications must be kept; ▪ Possible reasons not to collaborate: trust issues ▪ Possible benefits of collaboration identified: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Stronger proofs of safety can be obtained; » Similar mechanisms to assess safety can be assessed; » It can be a trading opportunity; » It's a time and resource saving opportunity to increase knowledge and expertise and » It builds trust.

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- 5 Please discuss your thoughts on the proposal from African countries. Is it a good idea? Realistic and feasible? Would you like to join if an opportunity arises?**
- Conditions identified for collaborations:
 - » Adaptation to national contexts is needed;
 - » FAO should advocate for collaborations with policy-makers; promote the engagement of experienced countries; provide an advisory board;
 - » Regular communications must be kept;
 - » Resources to be shared and requirements needed should be clearly identified prior the start of the collaboration;
 - » Similar background, culture, level of experience, language, goals need to be there.
 - Reasons not to establish such kind of collaboration:
 - » It is not sufficiently realistic as financial support should be granted first;
 - » It's a too far situation in the future.
 - Possible benefits that this kind of collaboration may bring:
 - » the opportunity can be taken to establish an international pool of experts;
 - » it can support the improvement of regulatory framework, communication mechanisms and capacities;
 - » it can promote the efficient utilization of resources;
 - » it can support the improvement of regulatory framework, communication mechanisms and capacities.
-
- 6 What possible pitfalls [in cooperation] exist?**
- The existence of differences in capacities, in culture, in regulations, in politics, in language;
 - The possible difficulties in addressing political or conditions changings and in maintaining collaborations active;
 - The divergent scientific views of experts;
 - The establishment of a dependence between collaborating countries;
 - The limited awareness of the public and/or the decision-makers
 - The limited human and financial resources;
 - The possibility that there will be no return on the investment on joint safety assessments;
 - Trust issues.
-
- 7 Discuss and identify 1–3 emerging issues in the area of biosafety.**
- Climate change;
 - Communications:
 - » Fake news and social media;
 - » Risk communication and management
 - » Scientific outreach
 - » Science advocacy to decision-makers
 - Definition, regulation and management of New Plant Breeding Techniques (gene-editing, genome breeding, etc.);
 - LLPs and Stack events;
 - Control of transboundary movements (of GM foods).
-
- 8 List up to three possible works and/or actions necessary to deal with emerging issues or areas at the national level.**
- Advocacy activities on decision-makers to formulate or implement regulations and/or legislation;
 - Developing capacities on NBTs, including guidelines and SOPs;
 - Establishing collaborations:
 - » with other international organizations;
 - » with other countries from the region;
 - Formulating communication strategies:
 - » by making use of social media;
 - » channels of data sharing for scientists;
 - » for different stakeholders;
 - » for the general public.
-

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- 9 Identify 1–3 possible roles that the Platform or the Platform community can play.**
- Provider of:
 - » Communication materials
 - that convey effective messages on GM foods;
 - to conduct risk communication;
 - to support advocacy activities;
 - » Opportunities
 - for countries to meet (physically or online)
 - to consult experts;
 - identify collaboration partners and possibilities;
 - » Reliable information and tools
 - to address NBTs;
 - to understand different country regulations;
 - Fact checker on biosafety news regarding GM foods;
 - Contributor to biosafety research;
 - Producer of an annual report using information reported annually by focal points.
-
- 10 List up to three activities that participants would expect FAO to engage in with regard to identified emerging issues.**
- Coordination of resources mobilization;
 - Support and facilitation of capacity building activities and collaborations among countries;
 - Provision of:
 - » reliable information and communication materials that facilitates understanding of other countries situations about new technologies;
 - » updates and future scenarios of foods derived from NBTs (horizon scanning)
 - Facilitation of meetings/trainings/workshops:
 - » among Platform community members;
 - » on biotechnology, risk assessments, risk management, risk communication;
 - » to develop safety assessment procedures;
 - » to increase data-interpretation capacity;
 - Collaboration with other UN agencies.
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Results of the World Café

Station A: Languages

Which languages are used to (plan to) document GM food safety assessment results?

#	Language	Responses	Number of countries
1	English	Argentina; Armenia; Azerbaijan; Bangladesh; Belarus; Bhutan; Bosnia; Botswana; Burundi; Cambodia; Canada; Egypt; Eswatini; Fiji; Finland; Gambia; Georgia; Guyana; Indonesia; Iraq; Jamaica; Kenya; Kuwait; Lebanon; Lesotho; Liberia; Malawi; Malaysia; Maldives; Mauritius; Montenegro; Myanmar; Nepal; Nigeria; the Philippines, Qatar; Serbia; Singapore; South Africa; South Sudan; Sri Lanka; St. Vincent; Sudan; Tanzania; Thailand; Timor-Leste; Tonga; Uganda; United Arab Emirates; United Kingdom; the United States of America; Zambia; Zimbabwe	53
2	Spanish	Argentina; Bolivia; Ecuador; Peru	4
3	French	Algeria; Burkina Faso; Burundi; Cameroon; Canada; Cote D'Ivoire; Democratic Republic of Congo; Madagascar; Mali; Senegal; Tunisia	11
4	Arabic	Egypt; Iraq; Kuwait; Lebanon; Tunisia; United Arab Emirates; Algeria	7
5	Chinese	China	1
6	Russian	Belarus	1
7	Other	See below	14

Other responses:

#	Other languages	Countries
1	Armenian	Armenia
2	Bahasa	Indonesia
3	Dzongkha	Bhutan
4	Finnish	Finland
5	Swedish	Finland
6	Japanese	Japan
7	Malay	Malaysia
8	Montenegrin	Montenegro
9	Nepali	Nepal
10	Portuguese	Cape Verde, Timor-Leste
11	Serbian	Serbia
12	Thai	Thailand
13	Tongan	Tonga
14	Welsh	Wales

Station B: Number of interactions with other countries

During the meeting, how many people from different countries have you interacted with?

#	Options	Responses
1	>20	26
2	16–20	22
3	10–15	29
4	8–10	8
5	4–7	0
6	1–3	0
7	0	0

Station C: Provision of support/help to other countries

Which areas in GM food safety assessment have you helped other countries, or you would be willing to offer support to other countries? Select as many as you like.

#	Area	Country names	Number of countries
1	Institutional framework for GM food safety assessment	Singapore, Democratic Republic of Congo, Indonesia, Uganda, Mali, Belarus, Papua New Guinea, Sudan, Sri Lanka, Angola, Tunisia, Georgia, Burundi, Tonga, Malaysia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Argentina, Myanmar, Eswatini, South Africa, the United States of America, Canada	23
2	Biosafety policy, laws and regulations	South Africa, Thailand, Indonesia, Argentina, Kenya, Bangladesh, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Qatar, Nepal, Serbia, China, Bhutan, Papua New Guinea, Timor-Leste, Lebanon, Finland, Antigua and Barbuda, Burundi, Lesotho, Sudan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Nigeria, United Arab Emirates, Cambodia, Mali, Sri Lanka, Eswatini, Montenegro, Kuwait, Canada, Ecuador, Belarus, Algeria, Tonga, Peru, the United States of America	36
3	Understanding the principles of GM food safety assessment (comparative approach, substantial equivalence, risk analysis, etc.)	Democratic Republic of Congo, Sri Lanka, Canada, Fiji, Mali, China, Gambia, Cape Verde, Thailand, the Philippines, South Africa, Myanmar, Papua New Guinea, Tonga, Sudan, Uganda, Peru, Indonesia, Argentina, Angola, Singapore, Cameroon, the United States of America, Algeria	25
4	The GM food safety assessment process (interpretation of data in dossiers, checklist, flow of the actions, etc.)	China, the Philippines, Serbia, Mali, Tonga, Lebanon, Papua New Guinea, Eswatini, Bolivia, Argentina, Zambia, South Africa, Algeria, Madagascar, Kenya, Canada, Indonesia, Tanzania, Ecuador, the United States of America	20
5	Understanding the relevant Codex Guidelines	Jamaica, Serbia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Gambia, Kuwait, Guyana, Papua New Guinea, Qatar, Cote d'Ivoire, Sudan, Japan, Argentina, Nepal, Iraq, Ecuador, Sri Lanka, Canada, Tanzania, Bangladesh, Indonesia, the United States of America	22

6	Molecular characterization of GM events	Angola, Azerbaijan, Liberia, the Philippines, Indonesia, Kuwait, Uganda, Thailand, United Kingdom, Senegal, South Africa, Belarus, Madagascar, Burkina Faso, Canada, Zambia, Algeria, Cape Verde, Argentina, Kenya, the United States of America	21
7	Toxicity assessment	The Philippines, Kuwait, Madagascar, Indonesia, Senegal, United Kingdom, Burkina Faso, Tanzania, Canada, the United States of America	10
8	Allergenicity assessment	The United States of America, the Philippines, Mali, Eswatini, Argentina, Uganda	6
9	Risk communication on GM food safety	Nigeria, United States of America, Malaysia, Angola, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mali, Belarus, Grenada, Eswatini, Zambia, Angola, Fiji, Argentina, Kenya, Uganda	15
10	Other	See below	2

Other responses:

#	Country	Other responses
1	Canada	Canada is happy to support other countries in all areas, as domestic resources allow.
2	United States of America	The United States of America would generally be willing to be helpful across these categories as needed and as our resources allow. This could include helping to develop train the trainer materials as our resources allow.

Station D: Areas for bilateral/multilateral collaborations

Which areas in GM food safety assessment do you wish your country would strengthen through collaboration with other countries? Select as many as you like.

#	Area	Country Names	Number of countries
1	Institutional framework for GM food safety assessment	Malawi, Fiji, Peru, Canada, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Serbia, Kuwait, Azerbaijan, Mauritius, Burundi, Indonesia, Cote d'Ivoire, Tonga, Singapore, Mali, Zimbabwe, South Sudan, Egypt, Lesotho, Algeria, Malaysia, Eswatini, United Kingdom, Jamaica, Kenya, Bangladesh, Japan, Papua New Guinea, Bolivia, Maldives, Thailand, Myanmar	32
2	Biosafety policy, laws and regulations	Thailand, South Africa, Maldives, Finland, Cote d'Ivoire, Canada, Zambia, Azerbaijan, Gambia, Egypt, Nepal, United Kingdom, Burundi, the Philippines, Mali, Antigua and Barbuda, Eswatini, Bangladesh, Lesotho, Lebanon, Uganda, Papua New Guinea, Mauritius, Timor-Leste, Bhutan, Fiji, Indonesia, Nigeria, Argentina, Bolivia, Kuwait, Botswana, Cameroon, South Sudan, Tonga, Serbia, Belarus, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Jamaica, Peru.	40
3	Understanding the principles of GM food safety assessment (comparative approach, substantial equivalence, risk analysis, etc.)	Tunisia, Iraq, Guyana, Fiji, Canada, Cambodia, Japan, Botswana, Gambia, Kenya, Cote d'Ivoire, Azerbaijan, Mali, Mauritius, Myanmar, Qatar, Montenegro, the Philippines, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Sudan, Belarus, Indonesia, Zimbabwe, Malaysia, Thailand, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, United Kingdom, Kuwait, Timor-Leste, Algeria, Lesotho, Senegal, Maldives, Zambia, Cape Verde, Tonga, Uganda, Madagascar	38

4	The GM food safety assessment process (interpretation of data in dossiers, checklist, flow of the actions, etc.)	South Africa, Madagascar, Lebanon, Papua New Guinea, Cambodia, Japan, Kenya, Azerbaijan, United Kingdom, Liberia, Canada, Belarus, Democratic Republic of Congo, Fiji, Bhutan, Mauritius, Maldives, Eswatini, Tanzania, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Gambia, Lesotho, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Egypt, Mali, Malaysia, Argentina, Malawi, Cote d'Ivoire, Bolivia, United Arab Emirates, Zimbabwe, Montenegro, Tonga, Botswana, Myanmar, Jamaica, Tunisia, Indonesia, Algeria	42
5	Understanding the relevant Codex Guidelines	Mali, Serbia, China, Cote d'Ivoire, Kuwait, Canada, Mauritius, Myanmar, the Philippines, Argentina, Belarus, Montenegro, Japan, Bhutan, Cameroon, Algeria, Tonga, Lesotho, Egypt, Thailand, Nepal, Cape Verde, Bangladesh, the United States of America, Indonesia, Tanzania, Zambia, Maldives	27
6	Molecular characterization of GM events	Azerbaijan, Canada, Belarus, Serbia, Gambia, Qatar, Mali, Lebanon, South Africa, Argentina, the United States of America, Burkina Faso, Senegal, Papua New Guinea, Fiji, Mauritius, Lesotho, Singapore, Egypt, Cote d'Ivoire, Bolivia, Kenya, Thailand, Indonesia, Sudan, Tonga, Ecuador, Guyana	28
7	Toxicity assessment	Lesotho, Mali, Kenya, Serbia, Japan, Senegal, Thailand, Qatar, Sri Lanka, Nigeria, United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Tunisia, Lebanon, Canada, Papua New Guinea, Fiji, Cameroon, Uganda, Gambia, Mauritius, Algeria, Indonesia, South Africa, China, Cote d'Ivoire, Sudan, Egypt, Argentina, Burkina Faso, Tonga, Belarus, the United States of America, Tanzania	34
8	Allergenicity assessment	Montenegro, Myanmar, Lebanon, Nigeria, Bhutan, Papua New Guinea, Cambodia, Malaysia, Armenia, Angola, Egypt, Antigua and Barbuda, Peru, Mali, Nepal, Maldives, Mauritius, Georgia, Belarus, Zimbabwe, Grenada, Algeria, Tunisia, Eswatini, Zambia, Bolivia, Malawi, Iraq, Angola, Madagascar, Sudan, Liberia, Fiji, Ecuador, Lesotho, Senegal, Guyana, Cape Verde, South Sudan, Qatar, Burkina Faso, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Kenya, Tonga, Sri Lanka, Kiribati, Côte d'Ivoire, Timor-Leste, Kuwait, Uganda	49
9	Risk communication on GM food safety	Montenegro, Thailand, Myanmar, Lebanon, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, Cambodia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Armenia, Angola, Egypt, Antigua and Barbuda, Perú, Mali, Nepal, Maldives, Mauritius, Georgia, Belarus, Zimbabwe, Algeria, Tunisia, Eswatini, Zambia, Bolivia, Malawi, Iraq, Angola, Madagascar, Sudan, Liberia, Fiji, Ecuador, Lesotho, Senegal, Guyana, Cape Verde, Jamaica, South Sudan, Qatar, Burkina Faso, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Tonga, Sri Lanka, Kiribati, Côte d'Ivoire, Timor-Leste, Kuwait, Uganda	49
10	Other	See below	43

Other responses:

#	Country	Other responses
1	Canada	Understanding the relevant Codex Guidelines (Guidelines and principles intent).
2	Montenegro	Risk management and communication, LLP.
3	Thailand	Risk assessment, regulation and legislation for new plant breeding technologies.
4	Myanmar	Risk assessment on GM food derived from plants; Our country required compositional analysis of GM foods, experiments in molecular biology, and application of bioinformatics tools and techniques.
5	Lebanon	LLP situations
6	Nigeria	GM detection techniques
7	Bhutan	Training on communication skill development, introduction to whole process involved in modern biotechnology and new breeding techniques to make risk assessment easy, GMO detection and quantification.
8	PNG	GM Food Safety Risk Assessment.
9	Cambodia	Risk Assessment based on Codex guidelines.
10	Malaysia	Development of detection methods.
11	The Philippines	New plant breeding technologies and when do you need to do the food safety assessment on those new technologies.
12	Armenia	Our country need to provide technical support in all area of expertise in conducting GM food safety assessment; Allergenicity and toxicity testing; Experiments in molecular biology; Compositional analysis of GM foods; Application of bioinformatics tools and techniques; Our country does not have approved necessary; legislations/regulations, it is in the development process.
13	Angola	I also need the support to evaluate the existing infrastructures country wide to support the food safety assessment as well as to set up the sensitization process; Sensitization activities using radio, TV and Internet; personnel training on Biotechnology mainly DNA extraction, PCR ran process; some needed equipment to accomplish the Biotechnology Lab.
14	Egypt	Setting up processes and policies for GM food safety assessment Building capacity of risk assessment areas.
15	Antigua and Bermuda	Accessing peer-reviewed reference materials to conduct food and feed safety assessments.
16	Perú	International regulation on GMOs; Risk assessment of GMOs.

17	Mali	Find scholarships in the field of biotechnology and biosecurity; Training on the assessment of food-related pathogenicity; Training on the assessment of food-related toxicity; Training on the conduct and safety assessment of genetically modified foods; Training on the assessment of food-related allergenicity; Training on food safety assessment and management; Capacity building on techniques and methods of analysing criteria recommended in the food safety assessment; Capacity building on techniques and methods of analysis recommended criteria in the assessment of food risk management.
18	Nepal	Need support on training in GM foods risk assessment procedure, especially on maize and soybean.
19	Maldives	Country situation analysis and the way forward for a food importing country.
20	Georgia	Risk assessment
21	Belarus	Understanding the relevant Codex Guidelines, the GM food safety assessment process (interpretation of data in dossiers, etc.).
22	Zimbabwe	Understanding the principles of GM food safety assessment and the GM food safety assessment process.
23	Grenada	Risk management
24	Tunisia	The GM food safety assessment process (interpretation of data in dossiers, checklist, flow of the actions, etc.).
25	Eswatini	Development of national policy and standard operating procedures.
26	Zambia	We need support for capacity building on risk assessment and risk management of the new Scientific Advisory committee and board when their terms rotate off.
27	Bolivia	Adaptation of the regulatory framework for GM food safety assessment; Mechanisms and tools for establishing biosafety policies and risk assessment; Molecular analysis.
28	Malawi	Interpretation of composition analysis data.
29	Iraq	Food safety risk assessment.
30	Mauritius	Requirements to work with GMOs; Assessment of the adequacy of the existing molecular detection laboratory such that assistance on area F for molecular characterization is either in line with the existing facilities or is done after upgrading of the laboratory; In line with area F on Molecular characterization of GM events, subsequent accreditation of the GM detection tests. Such support to include validation / confirmation of methods, measurement of uncertainties determination, calibration of equipment and how to maintain traceability in the measurements.
31	Sudan	Capacity building on lab rotary analysis.
32	Liberia	GM food safety assessment.
33	Fiji	Technical assistance on building capacity for GM food safety risk assessment.
34	Senegal	GMO risk assessment.
35	Guyana	Session on risk communication by a competent authority.
36	Cape Verde	Better understand Codex standards on genetically modified foods, better understand about the risk of genetically modified foods.
37	Jamaica	Performance of risk assessments.
38	South Sudan	How to advocate for the implementation of the GM risk assessment.

39	Qatar	We may need technical support such as trainings and or standard operating procedures of the allergenicity assessment and any policy documents that we can adopt.
40	St. Vincent and the Grenadines	Screening and testing commodities for low level prevalence of GMOs.
41	Burkina Faso	Capacity building on GM food analysis.
42	Sri Lanka	For FAO to support on capacity building for knowledge development on data on risk assessment for reliability, carried out in another country; For FAO to extend support to design the communication strategy for Sri Lanka considering countries as India/Bangladesh who uses Living Modified Organisms.
43	Tonga	GM food safety assessment.

Station E: Expectations for FAO supports/activities

What would you expect FAO to do to help address your needs immediately after the meeting?

#	Country	Expectation
1	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Capacity building food safety assessment policy, regulations. Alerts on new information, about these areas.
2	Lesotho	Facilitate relevant stakeholder engagement on GM food safety assessment and biosafety issues.
3	Antigua and Barbuda	Generate user-friendly forms of information (flyers, illustrated booklets etc.) targeting varying stakeholder groups (children, general public, regulators, health personnel, etc.); Adjust the Platform so that automatic notifications are sent to members of the community when new material has been uploaded to the Platform; Send out invitations (to members of the Platform community) to "Like" or "Follow" all available social media formats.
4	Qatar	Technical support in the area of risk assessment system methodology.
5	Thailand	Sampling and surveillance system.
6	Botswana	FAO should help with advocacy. Kick start the awareness campaign to help the population understand GMO issues. Create a pool of experts so that all member states can know who to contact when there is a problem; Provide the country with another country (English speaking) that can be its mentor in GM food safety assessment so that the country can have or create a pool of assessors; Would like to be given support in GM food safety assessment through training of trainers or attachment to countries which are advanced in this area so that a pool of assessors can be crated in Botswana.
7	Peru	It would be valuable for FAO representatives to visit Peru, meet with authorities. At the highest political level, with decision-making power, invite the press to meetings and coordinate interviews with media and report transparently; Make GMO studies a priority on the national agenda so that that the population is not confused and clearly knows that transgenic foods are not harmful and can save from famine in many parts of the world and from pesticide contamination. What happens is that are above the scientific base. It will be very difficult for progress in the field of GMO in the country.
8	Bolivia	Technical support to develop capacity for performing risk analysis, regulatory development, molecular analysis and gap analysis.

9	China	Establish a good contact mechanism, organize meeting regularly.
10	Maldives	Gap analysis for inexperienced countries.
11	Fiji	Continued consultation to establish logical framework and the materializing of GM food safety assessment protocols.
12	Eswatini	Technical assistance on development of GM food safety policies; Development of national framework on GM food safety assessment; Technical assistance and funding for stakeholder workshop on GM Platform and food safety; Funding to undertake baseline or situation analysis on GM food products.
13	Sudan	FAO should issue scientific advisory body for technical support and reference.
14	The Philippines	Maintain Platform website.
15	Belarus	Help find the specialists and help organize a seminar for a better understanding of Codex guidelines.
16	United Kingdom	To assist with providing communication materials for the public, media, industry, etc.
17	Guyana	Food safety assessment; Effort for harmonization among the Caribbean community; Framework development.
18	Mauritius	Assist in getting the testing lab functional molecular characterization training including implementation of ISO 17025 in a lab; Setting up the framework with regulations; Safety assessment of GMOs.
19	Canada	Not only match up countries to help conduct assessments but match countries who are using assessments and can teach others how to use; Further establish as trusted source of factual information to help countries wade through/counter misinformation; Create a newsletter/newsfeed (perhaps based on input from countries and media scanning) RE: new collaboration, completed assessments, public opinion/risk communication best practices and other shared expertise/new from the community.
20	Ecuador	Test methods and sampling.
21	Lebanon	Support for updating/adopting national laws related to GM food safety assessment; Technical assistance for implementing GM food safety assessment in terms of protocol, analysis, etc.
22	South Sudan	To coordinate the collaboration within the countries assistance.
23	Burkina Faso	We need contribution to improve our inspection system.
24	Singapore	Provide guidance in terms of knowledge on the technology and health implication of new breeding techniques (e.g. genome editing); Organize meetings/training for countries that have urgent needs in topics like how to conduct safety assessments of GM foods.
25	Zimbabwe	FAO to assist in our initiative step of making sure our risk assessors have the correct knowledge about how GM food safety assessment can be done; FAO can also help by providing a list of countries that are at the same level of understanding as our country as we are willing to collaborate with other countries.
26	Cote d'Ivoire	Establishment of legal framework to evaluate GM foods; Understanding principles of evaluating GM foods.

27	Gambia	Upgrade the GM Platform to send notifications on new materials on the Platform; Facilitate collaboration between countries.
28	Kenya	Maintain the Platform; Biennial community meeting.
29	Madagascar	Capacity building in risk assessment of vanilla.
30	Georgia	Support for detection procedure elaboration.
31	Armenia	We need support from FAO for capacity building and technical assistance.
32	Tonga	Facilitate training of food inspectors on GMO knowledge activities and impact.
33	US	Continue maintaining the Platform as a quality data source; Continue to keep the scope consistent with Annex 3; As needed. Have meetings or webinar to facilitate use of the database; Consult members and coded guidance before making changes; Continue to actively curate the Platform so that it has quality and reliable information.
34	Nigeria	Organize and support on training (match making); Aid more Platform meetings.
35	Bangladesh	Consultation and technical support of awareness regarding GM foods .
36	Sri Lanka	Capacity building; Support for collaborative efforts for GM food safety assessment; Communication strategy.
37	Malawi	Updates on emerging issues; Development of food safety assessment frameworks for the country.
38	Egypt	Support in building capacity of GM food safety assessment.
39	Tunisia	E-learning/webinar to facilitate knowledge exchange; Methodology in risk assessment process.
40	Nepal	Support on organizing the Platform to make interaction and collaboration of regional countries; Organizing orientation/seminar on need of GM food safety assessment to ensure safety of food products derived from biotechnology.
41	Cape Verde	Technical assistance of GM food safety; Technical assistance to understanding Codex GM food standards.
42	Myanmar	To provide support for international expert/consultant in the stage of drafting biosafety law and regulations; To provide the activities for risk based food safety assessment and experts from experienced countries; To facilitate international exchange and linkage regulators; Provide support for hands on practice experience of performing GM risk assessment.
43	Iraq	Support bilateral collaborative with countries which have experience on food safety risk assessment.
44	Senegal	Provide support for GM food safety assessment; Aid to start the programme of GM food safety assessment.
45	Burundi	Update the profile of the country just soon after this workshop because we expect to put actual situation after what we learn.
46	Papua New Guinea	GM food safety assessment capacity training; Collaboration with experts and networking.

47	Mali	Support to: Create website; Create community of biotechnology; Public awareness and government policy and consumers; To have framework; Training on knowledge of GM food safety assessment.
48	Timor-Leste	Improve capacity building about food safety assessment.
49	Indonesia	Organize the activities about GM foods.
50	Thailand	Food safety assessment for new breeding techniques; Environmental risk assessment Platform.
51	Tanzania	Continuing to support the Platform and keep sponsoring the focal pits to effectively participate in the meeting; Capacity building in implementation and interpretation of codex guidelines on GM foods assessment; Funding sensitization workshop to biosafety experts.
52	Jamaica	Offer scheduled capacity building trainings on framework development (biosafety policy review); Trainings on how to interpret assessments provided by exporter countries.
53	Liberia	Technical assistance in GM food safety assessment and detection.

Expectations without country names:

#	Expectation
1	Work towards establishing joint body for risk assessment in area of GMO
2	Technical support and methodology in the area of safety assessment
3	Conduct regional training
4	Facilitate consultation meeting on GMO risk assessment
5	Organize a workshop on novel technology
6	Expand the Platform from only annex
7	Cooperate with other UN agencies and bodies (e.g. RA UNEP system, BCH, AHTEG and SYMBIO)

Station F: Participants' individual follow-up actions

What you will do in the area of GM food safety assessment immediately after the meeting? How can your country start share the data on the Platform with your actions?

#	Country	Follow up action
1	Lebanon	Diffuse the information collected during the meeting to the national stakeholders. Invite them for a brainstorming meeting to check how we can start effectively in the assessment.
2	Burkina Faso	Training on GMO food inspection.
3	Montenegro	Do a survey in order to understand our weakest points and act accordingly; Support of experts in order to understand better what is GE and develop communication strategies and plans.
4	Kenya	To upload more safety assessment documents; Raise awareness about Platform.

5	Guyana	Train locals on the Platform use; Take steps to better coordinate agencies responsible for bio and food safety in Guyana; Pay closer attention to information on Platform and updates.
6	Cameroon	Finding out, reading and understanding about the Platform and other countries; Organize this meeting among Platform community members fairly regularly.
7	Zimbabwe	Make sure the risk assessors in my country have the correct knowledge about how food safety assessment can be done. I hope to achieve this through organization of workshops.
8	Azerbaijan	Biosafety laws and regulations (preparation); The GM food safety assessment process; To prepare some guidelines on GM food safety.
9	Bhutan	Communication skills development training; Training on introduction to whole process involved in modern biotechnology (GMO) and New Breeding Techniques; Training on GMO detection and quantification; Appraise management on the usefulness of the GM Platform on decision-making; Advocate GM Platform to our field officials; Refine existing communication and incident plan.
10	Zimbabwe	As a country that is still at the early stages of carrying out risk assessment, we intend to make sure that the risk assessors know exactly what they are supposed to do. So we hope FAO can assist with experts and experienced Personnel who can assist us in achieving our goal of ensuring that all the risk assessors have the correct knowledge.
11	Malaysia	Raise awareness on the Platform and its utilization by a diverse group of stakeholders; Encourage regular communication (e.g. physical meeting for focal point, policy-makers, risk assessors and risk managers); Participate actively in activities organized by FAO to strengthen the ties of global community on biosafety; Raise awareness among trade partners for use by local agencies if there are any queries on certain trade commodity.
12	The Philippines	Develop risk communication strategies; Sustain face to face meeting to maintain open communication among Platform community members.
13	Indonesia	Create the collaboration, other than regional area and share the information; Mainstreaming the Platform to colleagues.
14	Tunisia	Sharing information with colleagues in management of GMO unit; Meeting of Biosafety National Committee; Action Plan according to the recommendations of the FAO GM Foods Platform; Write a report within 10 days of the meeting.
15	Maldives	Advocate among colleagues and policy-makers.
16	Serbia	Discuss some of the issues from the meeting on COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology) action conference on plant genome editing (October, Novi Sad, Serbia).
17	United Kingdom	To set up a fund that all countries will contribute to. This fund can then be used to organize workshops, training or other meetings.
18	United States of America	I will share the outcome of the meeting with my colleagues to see if there are opportunities for collaborative work; We will continue to help countries consistent with our goals and resources.

19	Malawi	Update the country profile on the Platform.
20	Antigua and Barbuda	Conduct additional training on GM food safety assessment.
21	Montenegro	Write a report and discuss with management on changing the approach we have; Liaise with Biosafety Clearing House and Cartagena Focal Point; Contact the members of the community that I have met and explore opportunities for collaboration.
22	Gambia	Advise government and policy-makers to collaborate with experienced countries with GM policies to have a better understanding of GM foods; Hold meeting with officials back home; Write a recommendation to policy-makers about the importance of having GM-friendly policies.
23	Sri Lanka	Follow up through GM Food Platform on collaboration and sharing information to uplift the present status.
24	Japan	Continued maintenance of the Platform.
25	Cambodia	Introduce Platform to stakeholders in Cambodia; Suggest internal consultation meeting on implementing biosafety law.
26	Papua New Guinea	Follow up on draft Biosafety and Biotechnology Bill; Ensure have trained on GM Food safety assessment; Review and obtaining information from GM Platform.
27	Democratic Republic of Congo	Sensitization; Communication; Formation of group for training on GM Food.
28	Bangladesh	Communication with other countries.
29	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Meeting with Ministry of Agriculture staff (senior management); Report on meeting.
30	Eswatini	Meeting and briefing of my Codex contact point; Organize presentation to stakeholders in Agriculture and Environment; Country experts training on risk assessment; Development of national framework and strategy.
31	Senegal	Begin the programme of GM food safety assessment.
32	China	Organize meeting discussion and update data as soon as possible.
33	Cote d'Ivoire	Stakeholders meeting; Updating of information on the Platform.
34	South Sudan	Follow up on the establishment, collaboration between the countries; Communication.
35	Serbia	Inform our Biosafety Committee about this meeting (Belgrade, Serbia, September); Discuss some issues from this meeting in round table; Enhancing CEE collaboration in know how transfer in biotechnology and biosecurity (Minsk, Belarus, September).
36	Armenia	I will report to my colleagues about this workshop and importance of the collaboration and adoption of biosafety legislation.
37	Georgia	Make a presentation for policy-makers and s risk assessors and make amendments in the country profile.
38	Thailand	Consider organizing a meeting/seminar to explain the benefit of the Platform so hopefully we can upload or safety assessment result onto the Platform soon.

39	Myanmar	Sharing information after biosafety framework and guidelines are operationalized; Finalizing Biosafety framework and drafting biosafety law and regulations; The updated data will be shared on the Platform with each event (framework, regulation).
40	United Kingdom	To follow up with countries that I have engaged with at the meeting by email and carry out any promises (e.g. sharing contacts or documents); To discuss the Platform with my colleagues and how we as the United Kingdom can be more active in engaging with the Platform and other focal points.
41	Mauritius	Sharing of acquired information with relevant stakeholders through reports/ presentation; Advising management about possible collaborations in order to get the detection lab operational; More active at accessing risk assessment reports of other countries and sharing such information; Training of trainers on molecular characterization of GMOs; Implementation of ISO 17025 at the molecular testing laboratory; To request FAO's assist in the setting up of collaboration between Mauritius and more experienced countries.
42	United Arab Emirates	Add translated laws and regulations of countries in the Platform; Share knowledge about GM technologies; Improve toxicity assessment.
43	Sudan	Share food safety assessment for GM crops; Seek advice and collaboration to fulfil gaps in the process; FAO is requested to give training.
44	Iraq	Start meetings with other responsible bodies who are responsible for food safety assessment in Iraq to establish committee to start food safety assessment.
45	United Arab Emirates	Upload more laws on assessment and translate our laws; Knowledge sharing; Training others; Enhancing communication.
46	Zambia	Upload risk assessment data on the Platform.
47	Egypt	Build the institutional capacity; Starting of assessment.
48	Peru	Meet with my director, explain what I have seen at this meeting. Follow up on the issues where we are in competition; Meet with representatives of the ministry of environment or other competent authorities; Always maintain fluid communication with the members of the GMO community to support us; Authorities in the field of GMO in recombinant DNA plants to see if it is feasible to share the scientific information on the Platform.
49	Botswana	Hoping that after this meeting FAO will provide training on GMO food safety assessment so that country can have people who do the assessment and upload; Food safety assessment of GM should not be a one man show, thereafter after receiving training from FAO or mentor, Botswana can conduct assessment and upload.
50	Nigeria	Write a report on the meeting and communicate to all relevant agencies/ stakeholders on the outcomes of the meeting; Update and upload data on the FAO GM Foods Platform.

51	The Philippines	Echo on the outcome of the meeting to our colleagues; Submit recommendations to our decision-makers; Consider updating review once it already has been reviewed by other countries; Update the information provided in the Platform.
52	Ecuador	Communication of risk analysis.
53	Canada	Try to garner more consensus on benefits of the Platform and Community among FAO members to get more support; Build greater awareness about the good things that are happening already (e.g. Kenya/Zambia/Uganda collaboration and Bhutan's progress); Countries are using other countries' assessments (I wasn't aware of before meeting); Outreach with new contacts by email; Continue updating the risk assessments in a timely manner when they are completed.
54	South Africa	Coordination with other countries particularly in Africa.
55	Kuwait	Submit official report; Study gap analysis and benchmark that Kuwait needs towards establishment of GM food safety assessment.
56	Burundi	Contacting all involved and collect all information so together update our profile by sharing the actual situation.
57	Nepal	Interaction and discussion with top management on importance of GM foods safety assessment and of the GM Food Platform.
58	Belarus	I will tell my managers about the meeting and in the nearest future we will share our data on the Platform.
59	Tanzania	Sensitization workshop in biosafety assessment and codex guidelines; Sharing the GM food safety assessment done in my country; Develop list of experts in biosafety issues.
60	Jamaica	Developing an amending correct Biosafety policy draft; Reconvening biosafety Committee to do so; Collaborating with regional countries or any other focal point that may be able to help.
61	Fiji	Collaboration with member countries in the Pacific and with FAO in planning our first meeting awareness program on GM foods.
62	Tonga	Training food safety inspectors on GMO food and GM Food Platform; Initiate regional communication on collaborative development of a regional GMO community.
63	Qatar	Submit an official report to top management; Gap analysis study and benchmark Qatar needs towards establishment of GM risk assessment.
64	Lesotho	Identify relevant stakeholders and gather information on GM food safety assessment, risk management, biosafety issues and gene editing.
65	Nepal	Work on communication and collaboration with focal points of National Biosafety on GM Food safety assessment involving assessors.
66	Timor-Leste	Coordinate with relevant stakeholders to review our activities about our strategy and guideline related to food safety.
67	Liberia	Share with my friend the importance of GM.

68	Thailand	Online forum; Working group established for specific scope such as genome editing; Providing document/meeting report.
69	Singapore	Has already shared some assessments results on the Platform; Singapore will share more results of those events that have assessed in the past few years; Will also continue to share the assessment results on the Platform.
70	Bolivia	Continue contributing to the Platform; Sharing information working group with other countries.
71	Mali	Maintain relations with participants of the GM foods Platform meeting.
72	Algeria	Sharing the results of the meeting with the national Codex Alimentarius commission for setting up perspectives of communication and collaboration with policy-makers on GMOs and GM foods.

Additional follow-up comments without country names:

#	Follow-up action
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sharing the information with my colleagues.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage members that hadn't uploaded record to do so.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultation on GM issue.
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Immediately there is an action for policy-makers of awareness and information; Redaction of the report; National meeting.

Final match ups and follow up actions

#	Matched countries	Follow up actions
1	Papua New Guinea, Fiji and Tonga	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obtain endorsement of respective governments on GMO collaborative initiative; FAO to facilitate workshop on GMO food safety assessment.
2	Burundi, Tanzania and South Sudan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreed to go back and do assessment on the current GM food safety assessment then come up with a clear work plan together; Identify our needs in this area.
3	Jamaica, Antigua and Barbuda and St Vincent and the Grenadines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share draft legislation among the three countries (biosafety policy and individual country policies); Antigua to share food safety assessment with Jamaica and St Vincent.
4	Canada, Maldives and Sri Lanka	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maldives and Sri Lanka to write to Bhutan through SAARC (The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) to perform situational analysis (identify needs); Communicate needs to Canada to see how collaboration may happen
5	Eswatini, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Lesotho	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have biosafety policy and regulations (draft for Lesotho); There is no legal framework for food safety assessment; Need for FAO to link the countries with experts to assist in developing; Eswatini and Malawi has work on Bt cotton (Zimbabwe could learn from the two countries); Zimbabwe has work on GM pharmaceutical (Eswatini and Malawi could learn from Zimbabwe).

6	South Africa, Nigeria and Botswana	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> South Africa and Nigeria to provide technical assistance to Botswana to conduct risk assessment on food. Capacity building initiatives on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identification and detection; Research and development; New breeding techniques; Horizon scanning; Share food safety assessment between the three countries.
7	Bangladesh and the Philippines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Biosafety laws, rules and regulations; GM food quality and safety assessment; Capacity building; Study visits in both countries to share best practices.
8	Timor-Leste and United Kingdom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The United Kingdom will share its labelling regulations and EU GM regulations; Timor-Leste: We also hope to arrange a meeting for training to learn about risk assessment.
9	Thailand with FAO and ASEAN countries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Agriculture, and Cooperatives; Ministry of Public Health; and Ministry of Higher education, Science and Innovation collaborate to plan training for ASEAN network (ASEAN GM testing network); Focus NBTs and safety assessment; Three-day workshop; Genome editing technologies; Safety assessment of NBTs with case study FAO GM Foods Platform.
10	Myanmar, Malaysia, the Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Study the framework of Malaysia; Study the risk assessment mechanisms of Malaysia and the Philippines; Study GM detection mechanisms of Malaysia and the Philippines.
11	Thailand, the United States of America and Bhutan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thailand need risk communication tools so the United States of America and Bhutan will share some information materials; Action: We have to start emailing group for sharing; Share Bhutan's Biosafety law to better understand Bhutan's risk assessment; Thailand, Bhutan and the US will informally share outreach materials for public communication.
12	China and Nepal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate on having a meeting/seminar on GM food safety; Sharing of experience and practice of risk communication on GM foods; Communication and information sharing of policy, regulations and guidelines on GM foods; Sharing of GM Food safety assessment process in China.
13	Kenya, Uganda and Zambia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a required MoU between the three countries; Scientific exchange visits knowledge sharing (understanding systems, benchmarking); Do a proposal for a centre of excellence for GMO detection and engage funders (e.g. US); Do a follow up on the proposal to execute the activities and costing.
14	Argentina and Iraq	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Iraq will be updating its regulation next year to align with the ongoing policy development of regulations. Argentina to share food safety assessments from soybean exporting countries (Argentina, Brazil and the US) with Iraq and collaborate on how Iraq can use their decision making on imports of soybean.

15	Azerbaijan and Japan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Potential collaboration on: ▪ Policy development; ▪ Codex –advice; ▪ Communication with different organizations; ▪ Modern technologies; ▪ Capacity building; ▪ Risk assessment; ▪ Project development.
16	Senegal and Gambia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Laboratory facilities and expertise
17	Cambodia and Singapore	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sharing risk assessment framework; ▪ GMO testing lab; ▪ Sharing with Singapore biosafety law.
18	Finland and Serbia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cooperation in harmonizing Serbian system with EU.
19	Tunisia and Algeria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identification of common needs in the region of North Africa; ▪ Institutional Framework for GM food safety; ▪ Risk assessment especially in food safety assessment process; ▪ Lobbying decision-makers in each of our countries on the importance of GM food safety assessment; ▪ Prediction of the preparation of a workshop meeting between (Algeria Tunisia and other nearby countries in 2020).
20	Liberia and Cote d'Ivoire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Potential collaborative activities on: ▪ GM assessment of food; ▪ Guidelines; ▪ Laws; ▪ Detection of GM foods; ▪ Capacity building in molecular biology.
21	Lebanon, Kuwait, Qatar, United Arab Emirates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Exchange each other's expertise to prioritize research topics in the individual country; ▪ Establish a network starting at individual level; ▪ Sharing information about GM food status and biosafety assessment in each country policy level, research level and technical level; ▪ Networking to build trust towards future collaboration.
22	Madagascar, Mauritius, Congo, the Philippines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Philippines can support in technical aspects such as molecular testing, risk assessment (review of application) provided the funds for movement of experts to the to the recipient country is made available; ▪ The Philippines can share the experience on setting up the framework.
23	Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Upgrade collaborations, develop regional models for raising awareness, communication strategies and risk management.
24	Sudan and Egypt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To adopt the Biosafety law, for Egypt and for Sudan to ensure activation of the law and legislations; ▪ Communication with other regional countries who have experience in conducting risk assessment for GM; ▪ Revitalization for the technical committees and NBC ; ▪ Reassessment for the infrastructure and laboratories and institutions; ▪ Training on basic principles of risk assessment according to the codex guidelines.

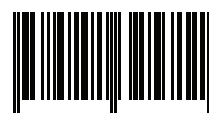
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- 25** **FAO and Guyana**
- FAO Training in the Caribbean (United States of America);
 - Guyana sensitize on the use of the Platform;
 - Check the framework;
 - Collaborate with FAO to coordinate the United States of America training on food safety assessment for Caribbean FPS and AFPS;
 - Guyana FP will check on the current status of the legal framework.
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- 26** **Peru, Bolivia and Ecuador**
- Internal socialization on the objectives and roles of the FAO GM Food Platform in each country;
 - Establish links for cooperation in technical, scientific and regulatory issues with the United Kingdom, Canada, Argentina and others;
 - Establish permanent communication between Peru, Bolivia and Ecuador.
-
- 27** **Angola and Cape Verde**
- Build conditions for the food safety assessment in both countries;
 - Fellowship visit to understand better the reality of both countries;
 - Cooperation between the countries on LLP situation; analysis assessing the laboratory capacity in both countries
 - Help each other on dissemination of Platform information in Portuguese for sensitization of Portuguese speaking countries.
-
- 28** **Mali, Cameroon and Burkina Faso**
- Sharing experience on regulatory frameworks;
 - Field visits in the countries;
 - Organization of raising awareness activities in each country.
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Meeting report: Global community meeting of the FAO GM Foods Platform

The FAO GM Foods Platform is sharing results of the GM food safety assessment that countries have conducted globally. As of September 2019, while more than 170 countries have joined the Platform, fewer than 30 countries have been able to conduct a full risk assessment. A commonly cited reason for not sharing these data largely relates to the limited capacity to conduct the assessment that is in line with the internationally accepted guidelines. Many countries have expressed the need for a face-to-face forum among the Platform members to enable them to have informal yet technical discussions on the issues with not only neighbouring countries, but also trade partners and cross-region collaborators, towards effective risk-based GM food safety assessment and regulatory management.

The global community meeting of the Platform was held on 10-13 September 2019 in Bangkok, Thailand. The participants underlined growing trust in the community of practice, data sharing for trade facilitation and power of communication, and stated that the Platform is where capacity development and cost-effective collaborations start. This final report describes key issues discussed during the meeting, such as the need for collaborative approaches in planning capacity development activities and the effectiveness of a mentoring system to obtain experience-based insights in strengthening the risk assessment process. Approximately 100 concrete steps from 28 country groups have been identified and several good practices shared by experienced countries are highlighted in the report.

ISBN 978-92-5-132571-1



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CA8945EN/1/05.20