

PHASE 2 TOOLKIT MODULE: CONSULTATION AND ANALYSIS FOR THE NBF

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UNEP-GEF Toolkits for the Development of National Biosafety Frameworks



Foreword

On 11 September 2003, the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety entered into force. Between September 2003 and April 2005, 119 countries have answered this call and have ratified or acceded to the Protocol, one of the fastest ever rates of ratification for any international environmental agreement. This high level of participation has brought with it a high demand for capacity building for effective implementation of the CPB from many countries where the introduction, and safe use, of Living Modified Organisms (LMO) biotechnology is new to both national governments and to the general public. UNEP believes that, for the success of the Cartagena Protocol, it is crucial that countries are assisted in building their capacity to implement the Protocol.

This unprecedented demand for capacity building assistance has presented a challenge to CPB Parties, and for this reason, UNEP welcomed the adoption by the Council of the Global Environment Facility in November 2000 of the GEF Initial Strategy on Biosafety, which aimed to assist countries to be prepared for the coming into force of the Cartagena Protocol. One of the components of the Initial Strategy is the UNEP-GEF global project on the Development of National Biosafety Frameworks. This project started in June 2001 and is assisting over 100 countries to develop a draft for a national biosafety framework.

UNEP, in its capacity as an Implementing Agency of the GEF, has been providing administrative and technical assistance to the countries participating in the Development Project through its team of Regional Coordinators, and through the organization of regional and sub-regional workshops. In addition the UNEP Biosafety Unit has coordinated the production of four toolkits that provide guidance on the main steps in the development of a national biosafety framework. Revised versions of the toolkits, incorporating lessons learned from the early participating countries are presented here in this publication as part of the overall efforts that UNEP is making to the successful implementation of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety.

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PHASE 2 TOOLKIT MODULE: CONSULTATION AND ANALYSIS FOR THE NBF

1. Overview

This is the third module of a toolkit that aims to provide a practical “how-to” guide for countries to assist them in developing and implementing a project aimed at developing their draft National Biosafety Frameworks (NBF), under the UNEP-GEF Project on Development of National Biosafety Frameworks. The toolkit is designed to be flexible and is tailored to meet the diverse needs of different countries, allowing them to select those tools and ideas that are most useful to their situation, needs and priorities. The toolkit is divided into four modules, each addressing one of the phases listed in the national project document:

Phase 0 Module	the vision (or rationale) of the project design, its guiding principles, and the establishment of institutional and management structures.
Phase 1 Module	the instigation of surveys and the preparation of inventories in the different sectors pertaining to biosafety and biotechnology within the country, including their entry into national databases.
Phase 2 Module	the involvement of stakeholders, and the consultation, analysis, and training activities needed to identify the priorities and parameters for the drafting of the National Biosafety Framework (NBF).
Phase 3 Module	the drafting of the NBF, including consultation with stakeholders for their endorsement.

This module covers Phase 2 of a country’s NBF project. During this phase, which focuses on analysis and consultation, the NEA will consult with stakeholders to analyse the information collected during the surveys in Phase 1 to identify gaps and set priorities for the NBF. The results of this phase will include:

- a. Mechanisms for adequate involvement of all stakeholders, including public and private sectors, on issues related to biosafety.
- b. Identification of the components of the National Biosafety Framework, in consultation with all relevant stakeholders

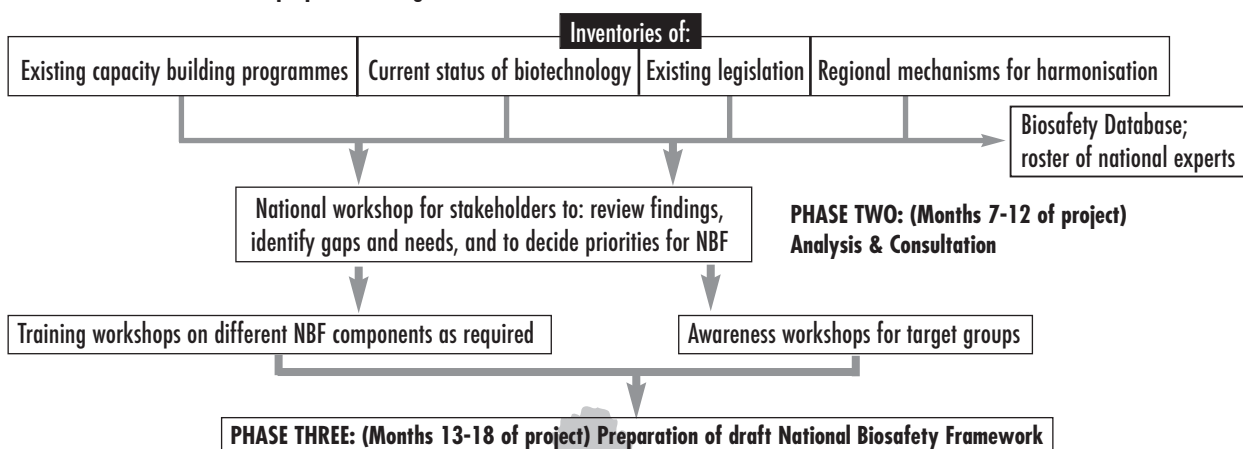
The aim of this Module for Phase 2 is to guide NBF project staff on how to involve the public in analysis of the information collected during phase 1 of the project, and to initiate awareness and education programmes in order to prepare the draft NBF (Figure 1).

This module, in detail, covers the following areas:

- An introduction to public participation
- Creating the conditions for effective public participation
- Who are the stakeholders in the NBF?
- When should the public be involved in the NBF?
- How should the public be involved in the analysis of options for the NBF?
- How should the analysis of the results be carried out in consultation with the public?

Figure 1: Involving the public in the development of NBF

PHASE ONE: (Months 1 - 6 of project) resulting in:



2. Introduction

2.1 The International context for public participation:

Article 23 of the Cartagena Protocol on public awareness and participation states that:

- “1. *The Parties to the Protocol shall:*
 - (a) *Promote and facilitate public awareness, education and participation concerning the safe transfer, handling and use of living modified organisms in relation to the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, taking also into account risks to human health. In doing so, the Parties shall cooperate, as appropriate, with other States and international bodies;*
 - (b) *Endeavour to ensure that public awareness and education encompass access to information on living modified organisms identified in accordance with this Protocol that may be imported.*
2. *The Parties shall, in accordance with their respective laws and regulations, consult the public in the decision-making process regarding living modified organisms and shall make the results of such decisions available to the public, while respecting confidential information in accordance with Article 21.*
3. *Each Party shall endeavour to inform its public about the means of public access to the Biosafety Clearing-House.”*

Therefore, the Protocol not only places a strong emphasis on participation as such, but also on increasing public awareness and education so that people have the relevant knowledge and information so that they are able to participate effectively in decision-making.

Article 23 can be best understood in light of Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration, which states that:

“Environmental issues are best handled with the participation of all concerned citizens, at the relevant level. At the national level, each individual shall have appropriate access to information concerning the environment that is held by public authorities, including information on hazardous materials and activities in their communities, and the opportunity to participate in decision-making processes. States shall facilitate and encourage public awareness and participation by making information widely available. Effective access to judicial and administrative proceedings, including redress and remedy, shall be provided.”

The right to participate in decision-making, and the responsibilities that go with these rights, are enshrined in a number of international conventions and agreements including the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, as well as a number of international environmental agreements. For example, the Aarhus Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters provides Guidelines with respect to GMOs (Annex 1).

2.2 The meaning of public participation:

Participation is a simple word that means “sharing or taking part in”. Participation implies how, and to what extent, people within a society are able to share their views, take part in decision-making, and in carrying out activities as planned.

Participation is about how societies function, and can take place in many different ways, depending on the culture and political context of a society (Figure 2). The degree and type of participation depends on the cultural and political systems of a particular country, on the level of governance (local or national), the type of decisions to be made, and whether there is a genuine commitment to respect and value the contributions of all stakeholders.

Participatory processes also require time. Participation by its very nature is political as it relates to the degree of control that groups and individuals have over issues that affect their lives. As shown in Figure 2, the spectrum of participation can range from top-down approaches, to approaches that empower people to have a real say in decision-making. In most countries, participation in decision-making is somewhere in the middle of the spectrum, i.e. consultation to functional participation, and helps to enhance decision-making.

2.3 Why the need for participation?

The aim of participation is to build partnerships, so that it is possible to harness the collective energy and potential of all stakeholders both in developing and implementing a country’s National Biosafety Framework.

Participants in the sub-regional workshops on public participation concluded that participation in the development of the NBF helps to:

- Promotes **sustainability** through a process of policy development and decision-making that involves all sectors of society, and not just government agencies, thus helping to develop a sense of **ownership** amongst the public as stakeholders;
- **Improved understanding** of the different views held by various stakeholders about the safe use of LMOs through education and awareness resulting from a public debate. The debate would help to highlight both areas of consensus and disagreement between different stakeholders, and assist in **building trust and respect** between different stakeholder groups with differing views;
- Ensure an **inclusive process** that involves all stakeholders so that different social and religious views can be taken into account in developing a common vision and purpose for the NBF;
- Promote **improved decision-making** based on sound information and use of available national resources and expertise, thus helping to minimise risks and possible adverse effects;
- Promote **transparency and accountability** of the government’s decision-making processes for LMOs, helping to build trust in the government and promote public commitment to biosafety;



Types of Participation		Characteristics
Empowering	Empowerment	People are helped to acquire the skills and means to participate through training and access to resources so that they are able to become decision-makers themselves, as well as being able to work through existing and new government decision-making mechanisms.
	Interactive	People take part in the joint analysis of issues and challenges facing their country and in working out ways to tackle these. This form of participation is both a right and a responsibility . It is a systematic way of ensuring informed decision-making for planning and implementation of policies, and developing consensus on the course of action. As stakeholders are involved in analysis and planning, this helps to promote ownership, commitment, and effective use of resources.
Functional	Functional	People are told about the plans of government and are asked to participate in and support the implementation of these plans. The government agency recognises the need for support and contribution from all sectors of the public to be able to achieve its aims, but final decisions are made by the agency on behalf of the public.
	Consultation	This is the most common form of participation practised all over the world, as it is cost-effective and efficient. People are asked to give their views on particular issues or plans. This can be an effective form of participation if the results of the consultation help to form decisions and plans or decisions are changed in light of the inputs from the consultation.
Topdown	Passive	This form of participation is when a government promotes participation by including "people's representatives" on decision-making bodies to approve decisions.

Figure 2: Types of participation

2.4 Creating the conditions for effective public participation

In order to promote participation, a government has to provide an enabling environment that will support participation by all stakeholders. The necessary conditions can be created through applying the following four pillars of public participation:

- **Capacity building** - all stakeholders need the necessary skills and tools to enable them to participate, both in terms of their right to participate in decision-making, and in terms of their responsibility to contribute to the development and implementation of the NBF. The responsibility to participate depends on how their contribution is valued, and whether the public participate on their own terms. This requires capacity building for the public so that they are involved in decision-making, as well as for government officials so that they are able to listen to, and make use of, the contributions from the public. Capacity building would therefore include training for scientists

and officials convening meetings so that they learn about how to engage different publics on their own terms and to respect different types of knowledge. Learning is therefore a two-way process that will lead to the effective implementation of Article 23.

- **Mechanisms for participation** - all stakeholders need to have access to mechanisms within the government's decision-making processes and structures that will allow them to make a contribution. These would preferably build on existing mechanisms within a country, but could also be developed or strengthened through the NBF development process. Article 23 (2) of the Cartagena Protocol requires that Parties endeavour to provide mechanisms for participation in accordance with the Party's national laws and regulations governing public participation in decision-making.
- **Access to Information** - effective participation is dependent on all stakeholders having access to relevant information so that they are able to make decisions based on sound and up-to-date



information. Article 23 requires Parties to the Cartagena Protocol to endeavour to ensure that public awareness and education encompass access to information on LMOs. Parties are also committed to encourage and make easier the flow of information on LMO transfers, handling and use to the public. In this regard, Parties must respect “confidential information in accordance with Article 21”.

- **Transparency and accountability** - the fourth pillar of public participation. This requires that the process and structures of decision-making have to be transparent, i.e. the way in which decisions are made, and who makes the decision, have to be public knowledge. Also the results of decisions taken should be public knowledge as specified in Article 23.

In addition to these four pillars, an enabling environment requires:

- **Time** - effective participation is only possible when sufficient time is allowed within the decision-making processes of government for consultation with the relevant stakeholders. This requires a balance between enabling participation and ensuring that decisions and actions are taken in a cost-effective and efficient manner. It is not possible for government to consult all members of the community on every decision on biosafety. The government therefore has to select those mechanisms that are culturally appropriate and allow for effective participation by the relevant stakeholders in decision-making, implementation and monitoring.

2.5 Who are the stakeholders in the NBF?

A critical question in developing, implementing and monitoring NBFs is “Who participates?”. Therefore the lead agency and/or the NCC have to enable stakeholders to identify their interest or stake in the safe use of LMOs, and to have the opportunity to participate as partners in the process. These stakeholders could include:

- Those government agencies that are likely to be directly or indirectly involved in the introduction and/or use of LMOs;
- Those in the private sector who are likely to be directly involved in the introduction or use of LMOs;
- Groups or individuals whose lives and interests could be directly or indirectly affected by the impacts of the introduction or use of LMOs; and
- Groups or individuals with a particular knowledge related to the safe introduction and use of LMOs.

A useful exercise for the NEA is to carry out a stakeholder analysis (see Phase 1, Annex I). It is important that this is done in a systematic manner to ensure that all stakeholders are identified early on in the development of the NBF so that they are able to make a useful contribution to the entire process. This would also help to clarify the interests and the influence of all the stakeholders in the NBF. In this way, it is possible for the NEA to identify those individuals, groups, institutions and sectors that should be involved in particular activities or plans, as well as clarifying their roles and responsibilities.

From an analysis of the results of the subregional workshop on public participation, the following checklist of stakeholders helps to identify the potential partners in the development of an NBF within a country:

- **National Government agencies** - the agencies listed by participants in the workshops included Environment, Agriculture, Health, Science and Technology, Fisheries, Customs, Trade and Industry, Commerce, Education, Legal Affairs, and Foreign Affairs.
- **Scientific community** - including scientists, professional societies and associations, universities, academic and research institutions.
- **Community-based organisations** - groups of people with common interests such as local people in affected areas, farmers, consumers, women, youth, religious groups, traditional social groups, and indigenous peoples.
- **Religious groups** - leaders of various religions in the country as well as representatives of different religious communities.
- **The independent sector** - this includes national and international NGOs, trade unions, lawyers associations, the media.
- **The private sector** - primary industries (agriculture, horticulture, mining, petroleum), secondary industries (manufacturing, processing, pharmaceuticals, etc), service industries, transport, small businesses, co-operatives, banks, chambers of commerce.
- **Local government** - elected representatives, management staff, field and operational staff, local government institutions.

Box 1: “What contribution can the public make to the NBF development?”

The results of the subregional workshops on public participation, awareness and education indicated that participation by stakeholders in the development of the NBF would help to:

- Determine the baseline conditions in each country with respect to biotechnology and biosafety by collecting information through surveys involving relevant stakeholders;
- Validate/verify information collected in the surveys and to ensure a transparent process;
- Build capacity for information gathering, sharing and data analysis amongst stakeholders;
- Identify country priorities, problems, and needs through the analysis of information collected during surveys;
- Identify a country’s resources, skills and commitment, and collate this information into a database so that it is accessible to all stakeholders;
- Identify potential risks and constraints so that these can be taken into account in formulating NBFs;
- Identify possible social, economic, cultural and environmental impacts of LMOs.



2.6 How should the public be involved in the NBF?

The following provide some guidance on promoting participation in decision-making on biosafety issues. They are derived from practices used by other countries (see Annex 2) as well as the first four subregional workshops on public participation (see Box 2).

Explain biotechnology and biosafety issues

All stakeholders need to understand the importance of biosafety (hence the emphasis on public awareness in the Protocol) so that they can make informed decisions. It is important that the government is also aware of the degree of stakeholder interest in biosafety issues. Remember that different stakeholders may have different expectations as to the purpose of participation in the NBF, and this could lead to future conflicts or disappointments.

Possible ways for the government to do this could include:

- Government officials and elected representatives should meet with different stakeholders to assess the **degree of community interest in biosafety** and **choose appropriate methods for participation**;
- **Agree on key objectives** for the participation process with stakeholder representatives, ensuring that all relevant stakeholders are included (see above);
- Agree and clearly define **roles and responsibilities** for the participatory process and communicate these to all stakeholders;
- **Involve those responsible** for management and implementation of the NBF in the consultation process to assist in building trust;
- Clearly **explain the critical issues** that are being considered, and disseminate relevant information and educational materials on biosafety to all stakeholders, in a form that is understandable to all, and make it clear where further information can be obtained about the NBF;
- **Establish a timeframe** for the consultation process and agree it with the key stakeholders, allowing sufficient time for all stakeholders to respond;
- Be **flexible**, and allow for modification to the timeframe with the agreement of all stakeholders.

Appropriate methods for participation

The choice of the participation method should be a considered decision made in consultation with community and civic leaders. Possible methods include (also see box 2):

- **Public meetings** – at an appropriate venue and time that suits the people to be consulted;
- **Open houses/information days** where members of the community and other stakeholders can meet with government representatives to discuss the relevant issues;
- **Form sub-committees of the Project Steering Committee**, which includes representation by key stakeholders to advise on the views of all stakeholders;
- **Focus group meetings** to discuss specific aspects of the issue in small groups;
- **Individual meetings** between key government officials and representatives and community and private sector leaders;
- **Invitation for written comments** by stakeholders on the issue – this applies particularly to the formulation of the NBF;
- **Letters to key stakeholders** explaining the issue to them and calling for comments;
- **Telephone hot lines or Web sites** that allow stakeholders to make comments;
- **Surveys of public opinion** on the issue, carried out by phone, mail or through personal interviews. These could be through door-to-door surveys or through questionnaires at key public places (markets, parks, meeting places, etc).

Box 2: “How to involve the public”

The first four subregional workshops on public participation organised by the NBF project came up with the following mechanisms for involving the public in the development of the NBF:

- | | |
|--|--|
| • Public hearings | • Brochures and pamphlets |
| • Use of media | • Demonstrations and exhibitions |
| • Set up advisory committees, consisting of stakeholders representatives | • Publish materials in Internet |
| • Workshops, including national workshops | • Mailing lists/emails |
| • Focus groups | • Questionnaires |
| • Seminars | • Open forums |
| | • Theatre groups |
| | • NCC to go out as a team to meet public |
| | • Enlist support of existing leaders |

2.7 How is the analysis of survey results carried out?

Making the information collected during the surveys available to all stakeholders will require:

- Collation of the information collected during the different surveys carried out in Phase 1 and the entry of the detailed information into suitable databases;
- Preparation of summaries of the information collected that highlight the main results;
- Publication of the summaries of results of the surveys in a form that is accessible to all stakeholders, using appropriate language and media;
- Dissemination of results to participants at national consultation workshops;

The information contained in these summarised results will provide a common basis for discussion by all stakeholders.

The next step would be to have an iterative process of national consultations and analysis, to provide an understanding of the different needs and priorities of stakeholders, using survey results to inform discussions. In this way, it would be possible to develop a national vision for biosafety, within the context of national priorities, taking into account the views of different stakeholders. The results of the analysis should then be validated through consultation with different stakeholders through national or local workshops and/or roundtable meetings, focus group discussions, etc (see above). This would help to gain public support for the development of the NBF.

2.8 How are the priorities for an NBF decided?

The first task is to decide on national priorities for the NBF, building on the vision identified during the consultations. This will form the basis of a national policy on biosafety that would guide the formulation of the NBF within the context of overall national policies such as development, biodiversity and biotechnology.

The scope of the NBF will be likely to include not just the transboundary movement of LMOs, but also how biotechnology and biosafety within the country are to be managed. The country may also decide to take into consideration other issues within its NBF such as food safety, labelling, etc.

There will be different views on what priorities should be included within an NBF, and these have to be respected and taken into consideration in developing the NBF, even if it is not possible to include all these views. The process of deciding on priorities will require negotiation and mediation, which could result in consensus on the way forward, or there may be a need to reconcile differences in selecting priorities for the NBF.

2.9 How do you identify gaps and ways to fill these gaps?

The results of surveys, which provide information on the status of biotechnology and biosafety in the country, will need to be compared against the priorities identified above during the iterative process of consultation and analysis. This will help to identify any gaps between “Where are we now” and “Where do we want to go”. The following questions will help to identify the gaps and ways to fill in these gaps:

- Is what we have in place enough for us to put an effective NBF in place?
- If not, then do we have resources within the country to fill the gaps?
- If not, are there resources within the Subregion that will enable us to fill these gaps?
- Do we have to seek resources from outside the Subregion to help us?

The specific areas to be included in the analysis include:

- Capacity building requirements for biosafety within the country;
- Institutional requirements for effective management of biosafety;
- Legislative requirements in terms of an effective regulatory regime for biosafety;
- Administrative systems for handling applications for LMOs;
- Systems for risk assessment and risk management;
- Systems for decision-making on LMOs that take into account other considerations such as socio-economic issues and ethical issues;
- The involvement of the public in the decision-making process;
- Management of information on biosafety, including access and publication of data.

The analysis of gaps and how they are to be addressed will again be an iterative process of consultation, analysis and validation.

3. Conclusion

This second phase of the project on “Development of NBFs” is a critical stage in the process of deciding on the final form of the national biosafety framework for a country. The results of the public consultations and analysis will lead to:

- An increased national awareness of biosafety, specifically on the present status of biotechnology and biosafety in the country;
- An improved understanding of the needs for capacity building and institutional mechanisms for the management of biosafety;
- An improved understanding of the needs and priorities of



different stakeholders so that different views and priorities are taken into consideration in developing the NBF;
A clearer picture of NBF priorities and components, including regulatory regimes and administrative systems.

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Annex

The Aarhus Convention

The Aarhus Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters and its Guidelines on Access to Information, Public Participation and Access to Justice with respect to Genetically Modified Organisms

The Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention) was adopted at the Fourth Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe" in Aarhus, Denmark, on 25 June 1998.

Whereas most multilateral environmental agreements cover obligations that Parties have to each other, the Aarhus Convention covers obligations that Parties have to the public. It goes further than any other convention in imposing clear obligations on Parties and public authorities towards the public as far as access to information, public participation and access to justice are concerned.

"Although regional in scope, the significance of the Aarhus Convention is global. It is by far the most impressive elaboration of principle 10 of

the Rio Declaration, which stresses the need for citizen's participation in environmental issues and for access to information on the environment held by public authorities. As such it is the most ambitious venture in the area of 'environmental democracy' so far undertaken under the auspices of the United Nations." (Kofi A. Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations)

The Aarhus Convention entered into force on 30 October 2001 and progress of ratification is relatively rapid. The first meeting of the Parties took place in Lucca, Italy on 21-23 October 2002. The Meeting adopted a number of decisions, thereby establishing two Working Groups on Genetically Modified Organisms and Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers, respectively. The Meeting also agreed on an innovative compliance mechanism, on rules of procedure and on a number of other issues. Finally, the Meeting adopted the Lucca Declaration in which the delegations recognized that the Signatories have identified the need for, inter alia, more precise provisions with respect to genetically modified organisms.

In particular, the meeting of the parties approved decision 1/4 on genetically modified organisms in which it adopted the Guidelines on Access to Information, Public Participation and Access to Justice with respect to Genetically Modified Organisms and recommends their use by all Parties as a non-binding, voluntary instrument;

The meeting also asked the Working Group on Genetically Modified Organisms to examine and build upon the preparatory work undertaken by the Working Group on Genetically Modified Organisms established under the authority of the Committee on Environmental Policy regarding the possible legally binding options, including a draft amendment of the Convention.

The objectives of the Guidelines are defined in Article 1 and include facilitation and guidance to the practical application of the provisions of the Aarhus Convention relevant to GMOs.

The Guidelines provide a non-legally binding and voluntary framework. They are supposed to be used as examples of good practices and be applied in a flexible manner, taking into account the existing framework in the respective country, its particular situation as regards the uses of GMOs and the specific activity with GMOs.

In articles 3 to 21 the Guidelines deal with *Public participation in decision-making on specific activities with GMOs* and it is recommended that, in principle, public participation should be provided for in decision making procedures in all three areas of GMO applications, and adapted to the specific requirements of these decision-making procedures and uses:



- (a) Deliberate release;
- (b) Placing on the market;
- (c) Contained use.

Without implying that public participation processes should be applied to all decision-making procedures in these areas. The Guidelines recommend that public participation should be provided for, as appropriate, in the following GMO-related decision-making procedures:

- (a) First-time deliberate release into the environment;
- (b) First-time placing on the market;
- (c) Procedures for determining whether sufficient experience has been obtained with respect to deliberate releases of certain GMOs in certain ecosystems and simplified procedures could therefore be followed;
- (d) the contained use of GMOs in a specific installation where in the event of an accident there would be a risk of serious damage to the environment and/or human health.

In articles 6 to 12 the Guidelines address the issue of *Public notice and access to information relevant to public participation*. Providing adequate public notice of a specific planned activity with GMOs is in fact considered the first step in the public participation process. The mentioned paragraphs also provide examples of good practice.

Articles 13 to 21 deal with *Processes for public participation and decision-making*. It is specifically recommended that public participation processes should provide for early participation, when all options are open and effective public participation can take place. Examples of good practice for processes for public participation are provided in the text.

In particular, it is recommended that processes should include reasonable time frames for the different phases and allow sufficient time for informing the public and for the public to prepare and participate effectively during the decision-making on certain specific activities with GMOs and that when the public authorities have taken a decision on a proposed specific activity with GMOs, the public should be promptly informed of the decision. In order to improve public knowledge, public participation and awareness of activities involving GMOs, the public authorities are also encouraged to explore other mechanisms and measures, such as consensus conferences, round-table discussions, stakeholder dialogues and citizens' juries on issues relating to, for example, the risk assessment and risk management of GMOs.

Chapter III of the Guidelines (Articles 22-31) deals with the broader and more general access to information for the public in the context of activities with GMOs and, in particular address the issue of *Collection and dissemination of information on GMOs by the public authorities*. The UNECE secretariat is requested to establish and maintain on the Convention's web site an up-to-date list of web sites, which are considered to be examples of good practice in this area.

Chapter IV (article 32) refers to access to justice in accordance with

article 9 of the Convention and Chapter V (articles 33-35) addresses the issue of the implementation of the guidelines recommending the public authorities to cooperate and assist each other in capacity-building for the practical implementation of the Guidelines. Parties are also committed to monitor and keep under review the implementation of the Guidelines and report on their usefulness and the progress made not later than two years after their adoption.

A list of annexes addressing several important issues is attached to the guidelines: Use of terms (Annex I), Recommended contents of the public notice (Annex II), Information recommended to be available within a public participation process (Annex III), Possible ways for the public authorities to make information on GMOs available to the public (Annex IV) and Possible contents of publicly accessible lists, registers or files on activities with GMOs established and maintained by the public authorities (Annex V),

Further information on the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters are available on the UNECE web site at <http://www.unece.org/env/pp/>



