**Update Report 1, June 2016**

**Report on the Implementation of Awareness Raising and Training Workshops for Staff on the Integration of Biotechnology and Biosafety in Programmes and Practices in Institutions of Higher Education and Training in Swaziland**

**MESA Implementation Committee**

**UNIVERSITY OF SWAZILAND**

**1**. **INTRODUCTION**

At the completion of phase 1 of the project titled “Integration of Biotechnology and Biosafety in programmes and processes of higher education and training institutions in Swaziland” in 2014 the University of Swaziland (UNISWA) and the Swaziland Environment Authority (SEA) entered into another partnership to implement phase 2 of the project. The implementation of phase 2 is supported by funds authorised by the original MoA of September 2013. Implementation of the phase 2 activities, which mainly involve conducting awareness and training workshops, started in January 2016. The implementation process was anticipated to end in the month of May 2016. However, due to challenges of scheduling the workshops in the various institutions the completion of the project has been delayed. Table 1 below indicates the schedule of the awareness raising and training in the various institutions of higher education and training in the country. The implementation is done by the MESA Implementation Committee (MIC) on behalf of UNISWA. The MIC was established by UNISWA management in January 2011 and was placed in the Academic Development Centre of the University with a mandate to mainstream environment and sustainability issues in programmes and processes of UNISWA. Biotechnology and Biosafety are among the key environmental and sustainability issues hence they are also of concern to the MIC. The main goal of the project is to raise awareness among staff in tertiary institutions and equip them with basic knowledge of Biotechnology and Biosafety issues for them to mainstream such in programmes and practices in their institutions. The workshops also seeks to expose staff to the National Biosafety Act promulgated in 2012. Institutions of higher education and training are better placed to transfer the awareness and basic understanding to their students who graduate to become enlightened citizens who then become teachers, lawyers, artisans and other professions As a provision in the SEA – UNISWA MoA, the MIC is required to periodically submit update reports of project implementation to the collaborating partner i.e. SEA. Therefore, this report is in fulfilment of the MoA requirement.

The report below presents an update on the implementation of the awareness raising and training project in the various institutions in the period from January 2016 to May, 2016. The report also includes the financial report of the project at the end of May 2016.

**Table 1 Phase 1 activities, outputs and timelines**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Institutions** | **Dates** | **Expected number of Participants** | **Actual number of participants** | **Percent** |
| 1. **University of Swaziland**  * *Kwaluseni Campus* * *Luyengo Campus* * *Mbabane Campus* |  |  |  |  |
|  | 80 | n/a | n/a |
|  | 50 | n/a | n/a |
|  | 40 | n/a | n/a |
| 1. **Christian Medical University** |  | 30 | n/a | n/a |
| 1. **Gwamile-VOCTIM** | **May 27, 2016** | **30** | **41** | **136.7** |
| 1. **Limkokwing University** |  | 30 | n/a | n/a |
| 1. **Ngwane Teachers’ College** | **May 16, 2016** | **40** | **50** | **125.0** |
| 1. **Southern Africa Nazarene University** | **March 15, 2016** | **50** | **55** | **110.0** |
| 1. **Swaziland College of Technology** | **March 23, 2016** | **40** | **60** | **150.0** |
| 1. **William Pitcher Teachers’ College** | **March 30, 2016** | **40** | **40** | **100.0** |
| **TOTAL** | | **430** | **246** | **57.2** |

**Already undertaken**

Still to be undertaken

1. **UPDATE ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE TRAINING WORKSHOPS**

**2.1 Resource Persons**

The MIC relied on local expertise (as resource persons) in the implementation of the workshops. The following experts were engaged as resource persons for the workshops undertaken to date: *Prof A.M. Dlamini, Prof C.N. Magagula, Dr M. Mlipha, Ms C.Z. Dlamini and Mr N.S. Shongwe*. The workshop programmes and presentations were structured such that the participants were exposed to basic understanding of biotechnology and biosafety issues, the salient provisions of the National 2012 Biosafety Act as well as basic approaches to mainstreaming Biotechnology and Biosafety issues in institutions’ curriculum and practices (Appendix 1).

* 1. **Status of implementation of the workshops**

Prior to the commencement of the workshops the MIC secretariat visited all the targeted institutions of higher education and training mainly to introduced the workshops as well as solicit for appropriate dates for institutional workshops. The visitation was undertaken against the backdrop that the whole project was introduced to leadership of the institutions in an awareness raising workshop that was held at Esibayeni Lodge on December 05, 2013 where 16 leaders of institutions of higher and training participated. Table 1 above indicates the status of implementation of the awareness raising and training workshops in the various institutions by the end of June 2016. To date five institutions have been covered out of eight (note UNISWA with three faculties still outstanding). This indicates an encouraging return considering the congested almanac of the institutions. Actually finding times to schedule the workshops was a challenge at UNISWA because of the lengthy period of class boycott and closure of all the three campuses in semester 2 of 2015/16 academic year. The Christian Medical University and Limkokwing are yet to inform to the MIC about appropriate dates to conduct the workshops. It is encouraging that the workshops were successfully undertaken at the five institutions as depicted in Table 1 above.

* 1. **Highlights of the workshops**

From the workshop evaluation forms the participants (who were mainly lecturers and administration staff) in all the institutions found the workshops to be highly beneficial professionally while also informative and helpful to them as citizens of the country. They mentioned that they fully understand what biotechnology and biosafety is while they mentioned that it was their first encounter with some issues in modern biotechnology.

Several issues were raised by participants including their concern that the awareness raising workshops appeared to be promoting use of biotechnology products especially Genetically Engineered Products commonly known as GMOs . However, they appeared satisfied that the resources persons were not in any way linked or tasked to promote use of GMOs. However, there was a general resentment of consumption of GE products while they appeared fascinated by the modern biotechnological techniques and products. They also appreciated the measures taken to control influx of GMOs through the National Biosafety Act of 2012. The participants also appreciated the exposure to the concept of mainstreaming as well as the mainstreaming approaches presented during the workshops. Interesting issues raised by the participants include use of biotechnology techniques in breeding livestock and plants; modern biotechnology techniques such as cloning and tissue culture, benefits of biotechnology, issues of liability in case something goes wrong with the use of modern biotechnology, issues of labelling of GE products in shops as well as status of integration of biotechnology and biosafety and mainstreaming in institutional programmes and policies. Detailed outcomes of the workshops as well as issues raised will be compiled after the analysis of all the evaluation forms completed by the participants before and after the workshops.

* 1. **Level of participation**

The attendance to the workshops was impressive. As indicated in Table 1 above all five institutions where the workshops have been undertaken recorded 100% and above attendance rates. This is quite impressive though putting a strain on the budget. To date the workshop has reached out to 246 participants of the anticipated total of 430 participants. This represents 57.2% of the total anticipated participants.

* 1. **Outstanding work**

The MIC is yet to implement the three outstanding workshops at the University of Swaziland, Christian Medical University and Limkokwing University of Creative Technology by August 2016. The MIC Secretariat intends to revisit the Christian Medical University, Limkokwing and University of Swaziland to pursue the issue of dates for the workshops. Moreover, the MIC has resolved to engage an intern to analyse the evaluation forms submitted by the participants to compile a comprehensive evaluation report of the implementation of the workshops to date. The intern would be engaged for a period of 2 weeks.

1. **MEETINGS**

The MIC continues to hold meetings for deliberations on the project implementation. While the committee used to meet every month, due to low level of funding, the committee now meets once every two months. The last MIC meeting was held on May 12, 2016.

1. **FINANCIAL REPORT**

Table 2 below presents the income and expenditure report of the phase 2 of the project titled “Integration of Biotechnology and Biosafety in programmes and processes of higher education and training institutions in Swaziland”. The report indicates the financial status of the project at the end of May 2016. The expenditure does not include charges of services provided by the University such as photocopying, transport and others. These are included periodically when the details arrive from the relevant offices. It must be noted that all expenditures follow the institution’s procurement procedures as well as lines of approval and such funds are audited by the University periodically. The report portrays availability of adequate for the project to be accomplished.

**Table 2 Income and Expenditure report**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
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| **PHASE 2: IMPLEMENTATION OF AWARENESS RASING AND TRAINING WORKSOPS** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **BUDGET ITEMS** | **BUDGETED AMOUNT (E)** | | **EXPENDITURE (E)** | | | | | | | **BALANCE**  **REMAINING (E)** | | |  | | | | |
|  |  | | **Jan-Mar** | | **Apr-Jun** | **Jul-Sep** | | **Oct-Dec** | |  | | |
| **MIC Meetings** | 111, 720.75 | |  | | 3, 940.00 |  | |  | | 7, 780.75 | | |  | | |
| **Workshops Facilitation** | 67, 350.00 | |  | | 33, 243.00 |  | |  | | 34, 107.00 | | |  | | |
| **Stationery** | 3, 330.00 | |  | | 918.55 |  | |  | | 2, 411.45 | | |  | | |
| **Refreshments** | 72, 000.00 | | 7, 595.25 | | 11, 862.76 |  | |  | | 52, 541.99 | | |  | | |
| **Travelling** | 25, 000.00 | |  | | 1, 780.68 |  | |  | | 23, 219.32 | | |  | | |
| ***Total Budget*** | ***179, 400.75*** | | ***7, 595.25*** | | ***51, 744.99*** |  | |  | | ***120, 060.51*** | | |  | | |
| **TOTAL BUDGET** | **179, 400.75** | | **TOTAL EXPENDITURE: E59, 340.24** | | | | | | | **120, 060.51** | | |  | | | |
| **1**This amount is the remaining balance carried over from the phase 1 and it caters mainly for MIC meetings |  |  | |  | | |  | |  |  |  |  | |  |  | | | |
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