



PRESS RELEASE & INVITATION

5th November 2007

BIOSAFETRAIN TRAINS NEMA ENVIRONMENTAL INSPECTORS ON GMO BIOSAFETY RISK ASSESSMENT

BiosafeTrain – a biosafety and ecological risk assessment project ran a course titled: **“Introduction to GMO Biosafety Risk Assessment”** at the Panafric Hotel, Nairobi. The course, which ran from 5th to 10th of November 2007, was offered to the National Environmental Management Authority, Kenya (NEMA) environmental inspectors in order to equip them in the handling and assessing of GMOs

The training was officially opened on 5th November by the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources Hon. David Mwiraria, EGH.

The Course

The course was designed to teach participants basic skills on how to use scientific data to draw balanced conclusions regarding the biosafety and ecological risk assessment of Living Modified Organisms (LMOs). This was done through lectures, demonstrations, group work on case studies, and discussions and participants shared their experiences on biosafety risk assessment.

The Cartagena Protocol on LMOs requires transparent, scientific, case-by-case biosafety (risk) assessment with special consideration for the receiving environment. Consequently, African countries need the capacity to do all elements of researching, generating and testing LMOs.

Background

BiosafeTrain aims to build capacity in Eastern Africa by providing the countries with the ability to make autonomous decisions regarding the use of biotechnology through capacity building in biosafety.

BiosafeTrain is collaboration with scientists from University of Nairobi and Kenya Agricultural Research Institute in Kenya, Makerere University in Uganda, University of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania, and the universities of Aarhus and Copenhagen in Denmark.

The programme is an Enhancement of Research Capacity (ENRECA), funded by DANIDA, and started in December 2004. Phase 2 begins in December 2007.

During this period, BiosafeTrain aims to improve existing infrastructural capacity by upgrading existing biosafety or biotechnology facilities. Currently, construction facilities are underway in Uganda and Kenya. An additional block is being built to the existing biosafety-level 2 glasshouse at the Kenya Agricultural Research Institute in Nairobi, Kenya. This new block is specifically designed to be insect-proof to allow biosafety work using arthropods. While an Arthropod Quarantine and Biosafety Laboratory was built and is being equipped at Kabanyolo Campus, Makerere University, Uganda. This will be the second such facility in East Africa. BiosafeTrain offers MSc and PhD fellowships on agricultural and environmental impacts of GM plants, through joint African- Danish supervision at local universities. In Phase 1,

10 students were offered MSc and PhD fellowships in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. The project will also develop a training program where students and other relevant persons from East African countries can receive practical training on GM plant biosafety.

Ends

For more information, please contact

Joy Owango

Communications Manager
BiosafeTrain Project University of Aarhus,
Faculty of Agricultural Sciences
Flakkebjerg Res Ctr., Slagelse, Denmark
East African Office: Gecaga Institute Bldg.,
Chiromo Campus, University of Nairobi
Landline: +254 (0)20 4777132/4777118
Cell: +254 (0)733 792316
Email: joy.owango@agrsci.dk
Website: www.biosafetrain.dk