

2. Support for the Implementation of the Draft National Biosafety Framework for the Czech Republic

The Implementation Project started in 2006 and ended in 2011. The Project aims to assist in implementation of adopted measures within the biosafety framework in the country through the enhancement of cross-sectoral cooperation, amendment of legislation, enforcement of administrative measures and enhancement of information sharing and public awareness. The Ministry of the Environment serves as the National Executing Agency. The National Coordinating Committee (NCC) assists in coordination of scheduled activities and consists of representatives of authorities and institutions responsible for biosafety policy, regulations and monitoring and of other important stakeholders (Ministry of the Environment, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Health, Customs Administration, universities, research institutions, biological farmers, NGOs represented by Greenpeace).

The following implementing activities were focused on the above mentioned five components of the National Biosafety Framework:

Biosafety Policy

- Meetings with authorities to reflect the biosafety issues in important strategic documents.
- Discussions with experts and stakeholders on identified problems.
- Survey of information to be used as background documents for the country strategic and policy documents and regular updating of this survey.
- Drafting and amending strategic and policy documents.

Regulatory regime

- Surveys of needs to amend existing national biosafety legislation in line with international commitments of the Czech Republic.
- Participation in international meetings on biosafety regulatory principles and other related meetings.
- Two national meetings on implementation of CPB with participation of regional experts.
- Drafting amendments of relevant Acts and Decrees.
- Meetings on new commitments following the new regulatory amendments.

Handling requests for permits

- Technical equipment (software, hardware) for improvement of administrative system.
- Measures to facilitate submission of requests and consequently the administration on dossiers.
- Regular meetings of the Czech Commission for the Use of Genetically Modified Organisms and Genetic Products.
- Enhanced information and technical background for the Czech Commission for the Use of Genetically Modified Organisms and Genetic Products.
- Revision of existing procedures and practice in the light of latest developments and presentation on the website.
- Training on required procedures.

Monitoring of environmental effects and enforcement

- Improvement of methodology and guidelines for sampling and detection of GMOs.
- Training of inspection personnel.
- Workshop on monitoring of possible GMOs release into the environment.
- Equipment of designated laboratories and training of personnel in line with required standards.
- Monitoring of GMOs and their possible effects on the environment and health carried out by the authorized state institutions.

Public information, participation, awareness

- Workshops for the public and schools to raise awareness of biosafety related issues.
- Dissemination of information through media (newspapers, magazines, special publications) and

websites.

- Promotion of education on biosafety at schools.
- Publications on biosafety and related issues for decision-makers, experts, public and schools.
- Meeting of the Czech Commission for the Use of Genetically Modified Organisms and Genetic Products open for the public once a year.
- Project final workshop.

Activities aiming at the Project implementation started to be developed since September 2006. The joint workshop with the Slovak Republic to launch the Project was held on November 8-9, 2006 in Prague, with participation of the UNEP experts. During the Project implementation numerous workshops and trainings were organized – for officials, experts, public and educators. Regular meeting with authorities and authorized experts were held (NCC, Czech Commission for the Use of Genetically Modified Organisms and Genetic Products) and contact with different stakeholder were developed. Gained experience was shared in international meetings (side-events during COP/MOP, regional workshops, posters in conferences).

The Project was supported (through co-financing) by the Ministry of the Environment, Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Health. Results were regularly reported to the UNEP offices in Geneva and Nairobi (half-year progress reports, quarterly financial reports).

List of workshops organized within the UNEP/GEF Projects and the publications edited are available on the webpage of the Ministry of the Environment – in Czech and in English (national BCH).