

Biosafety Facilitating Tool: a Biosafety Capacity Building Initiative for the Implementation of the Cartagena Protocol

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Background

Non-appropriate frame conditions, like the lack of human and institutional capacity, transparent decision-processes, an enforcing legislation and public awareness often hamper the development and implementation of an appropriate biosafety framework in developing country Parties.

Public acceptance and understanding and the commitment, confidence and competence of parties involved, is generated by elaborating and implementing biosafety frameworks, considering the needs and capacities in the partner countries.

Any attempt to develop biosafety capacity has to take into account existing social, economic and political frame conditions and has to be built on a broad participation and in a transparent manner. It is necessary to have a scientific risk assessment based on the Precautionary Principle, which addresses differentially potential adverse impacts on environment, human health and social and economic structures. This has to be built on national human and institutional capacity.

Aim of the initiative

By perceiving biosafety capacity development as a continuous and interdisciplinary process and by reflecting scope and objective of the Cartagena-Protocol we offer our assistance in elaborating and implementing biosafety frameworks. The Biosafety Facilitating Tool (BioFACT) simplifies this process.

It understands policy development, legislation, assessment procedure, institutional and human capacity as equally important elements of an integrated approach. Consequently, BioFACT intends to

- * assist in defining the state-of-the-art within a given country,
- * suggest a participatory mechanism for the formulation of biosafety policy,
- * comment on the minimum requirements of an legal and administrative infrastructure,
- * provide advice and scientific knowledge on the development of risk assessment procedures based on the Precautionary Principle,
- * enable and to facilitate decision-making,
- * determine benefits, objectives and limitations of monitoring procedures,
- * formulate evaluation criteria for assessment of biosafety policy.

The Biosafety Facilitating Tool addresses policy-makers, government-, industry- and NGO-representatives, scientists, trainers and teachers.

Activity and instrument

Among others, BioFACT involves the development of a Biosafety Capacity Building Instrument, which recognises the participatory development of national policy, legislation, administration and risk assessment procedure and the development of institutional and human capacity as equally important elements of an integrated approach.

In its first extension phase, BioFACT consists of:

- * a document, providing orientation, background information and explanations on suggested exercises (including hyperlinks to an off-line library and the Internet)
- * a set of transparencies and training-modules, to be used in education and extension, workshops, seminars and training courses

- * an off-line library with relevant Internet-documents including: national and model biosafety guidelines and publications on policy development, biosafety management and risk assessment
- * a database, providing a "biosafety-profile" of UN-member countries
- * a list of relevant (electronic) publications and Internet-links for further information
- * commented case studies, as examples for monitoring, assessment and reviewing procedures

BioFACT is extensible in terms of scope and content. Its participatory and facilitating structure is hoped to invite suggestions, ideas and feedback in future workshops and seminars.

Developed by: BioTechConsult

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On behalf of the German Federal Ministry for
Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)