

**ENVIRONMENT DIRECTORATE  
JOINT MEETING OF THE CHEMICALS COMMITTEE AND  
THE WORKING PARTY ON CHEMICALS, PESTICIDES AND BIOTECHNOLOGY**

**Working Group on the Harmonisation of Regulatory Oversight in Biotechnology**

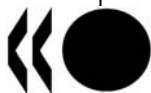
**REPORT FROM THE SECRETARIAT**

**24th Meeting of the Working Group on the Harmonisation of Regulatory Oversight in Biotechnology,  
OECD Headquarters, 7-9 June 2010**

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This document provides an update on the activities of the Working Group since the 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the Working Group (October 2009). It also summarises the situation with respect to resources of the Working Group.

- ACTION REQUIRED:*** *The Working Group is invited to:*
- i) take note of the progress; and*
  - ii) agree to provide extra-budgetary contributions to support its work.*

## **NEW OECD MEMBER: CHILE**

1. Chile finalised the accession process and became a Member of the OECD as from 7 May 2010. The Organisation is now composed of 31 Members.

## **GREEN GROWTH STRATEGY**

2. Following the Green Growth Declaration endorsed in June 2009 by the ministers from OECD countries as well as Estonia, Israel and Slovenia [C/MIN(2009)/ADD1/FINAL], a Green Growth Strategy is being developed as an horizontal project involving the whole Organisation. A Unit was established, under the leadership of the Green Growth Strategy Co-ordinator, reaching a total of nine persons as of April 2010.

3. Green growth is considered relevant during as well as after the crisis, addressing urgent challenges including the fight against climate change and environmental degradation, enhancement of energy security, and the creation of new engines for economic growth. The OECD Green Growth Strategy aims to bring together economic, environmental, technological, financial and development aspects into a comprehensive framework. An interim report on the progress was delivered on 27 May 2010 for the OECD Ministerial Council Meeting (MCM): “Green Growth Strategy Interim Report: Implementing our Commitment for a Sustainable Future” and is available in English, French and Chinese, including an Overview in eight languages, at [www.oecd.org/greengrowth](http://www.oecd.org/greengrowth) / [www.oecd.org/croissanceverte](http://www.oecd.org/croissanceverte).

4. In this framework, it would be interesting if the contributions of modern biotechnology to greener growth (e.g. less use of chemicals, more sustainable production of commodities, fibre and wood) could be identified and highlighted. Specific resources would be required for the purpose.

## **CHANGES IN THE SECRETARIAT**

5. In January 2010, Daniel Garley moved to the Directorate for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs after he had been posted for a couple of months in another section of Environment, Health and Safety Division, Environment Directorate. Charis Feeney-Orchard has succeeded to his post since the beginning of November 2009. The Biosafety Team now includes Peter Kearns, Yukihiko Fukase, Bertrand Dagallier and Charis Feeney-Orchard. When communicating with the Secretariat via e-mail, it would be helpful to keep everyone on copy.

## **NEW PROTECTED WEBSITES FOR THE WORKING GROUP AND THE TASK FORCE**

6. In line with a general decision at OECD level to replace the old “CWS” password-protected websites by more recent technology using the “Clearspace” system, the sites dedicated to the activities of the Biosafety Working Group and the Food Safety Task Force were reorganised and migrated to the new spaces from February to April 2010. The Secretariat created the new pages by identifying the appropriate sections and categories to be developed, and had to move all useful files one by one with harmonisation of titles and relevant choice of “tags”. This exercise provided also the opportunity for “cleaning” parts of the previous sites which are no longer necessary, while updating information and making the necessary archiving.

7. For the sake of clarification, the work developed by both WG and TF bodies (Molecular Characterisation Project, common outreach activities and participation in international events, etc.) was filed in a distinct page. As the access to these protected pages was directly connected from now to the list of participants managed in the internal OECD system, the files corresponding to delegates’ entries (names and contact details) were carefully checked and updated.

8. The new sites will allow delegates to comment to draft documents directly by using the system and such comments would be easily visible and traceable for all other participants. Several options are offered, that can be complementary: a) add a written comment to a document, b) insert changes in the Word files with the “track change” system, or c) submit a new document proposing a modified text. These options should improve the clarity and the traceability of the drafting process, and hopefully constitute a time saving as the comments will be made by delegations on the sites without needing to go through the Secretariat. The system will be explained during the Working Group and Task Force meetings in June 2010.

### **THE WORKING GROUP**

9. Consensus Document on the Biology of Bananas and Plantains (*Musa* spp.) [ENV/JM/MONO(2009)43] was published in November 2009 and has been available at the BioTrack online.

### **THE TASK FORCE FOR THE SAFETY OF NOVEL FOODS AND FEEDS**

10. Consensus Document on Compositional Considerations for New Varieties of Cassava (*Manihot esculenta* Crantz): Key Food and Feed Nutrients, Anti-nutrients, Toxicants and Allergens [ENV/JM/MONO(2009)44] was published in November 2009 and has been available at the BioTrack online.

11. Three Consensus Documents on Compositional Considerations for New Varieties of the following crops had been forwarded to the Joint Meeting of the Chemicals Committee and the Working Party on Chemicals, Pesticides and Biotechnology until 28 May 2010:

- Sorghum (*Sorghum bicolor* (L.) Moench) : Key Food and Feed Nutrients and Anti Nutrients
- Sweet Potato (*Ipomoea batatas* (L.) Lam.): Key Food and Feed Nutrients, Anti-nutrients, Toxicants and Allergens
- Papaya (*Carica papaya* L.): Key Food and Feed Nutrients, Anti-nutrients, Toxicants and Allergens

Based on its approvals, the three documents above will be declassified soon.

### **THE RESOURCES**

12. The OECD programmes on Harmonisation of Regulatory Oversight in Biotechnology and the Safety of Novel Foods and Feeds have, from their inception, been supported primarily though extra-budgetary resources.

13. Both programmes are largely driven through a lead-country approach. As a result, member countries make significant in-kind contributions on the programmes. The financial value of in-kind contributions is obviously difficult for the Secretariat to estimate. These contributions are made in different ways, such as drafting and making input into Consensus Documents, providing consultants for advancing work, hosting meetings and workshops, and sending experts to attend meetings.

14. The participation of non member economies also depends on these contributions because the resource from OECD’s Global Forum on the Knowledge Economy, which is the main resource for their participation until now, has been very limited.

15. In order to provide a stable financial basis for the programmes and to ensure that the Work Programme can be continued, it is important that member countries continue to provide extra-budgetary contributions.