

4.27 Philippines



4.27.1 Philippine Biosafety Guidelines (1990)

The Guidelines covers research, development, production/manufacture involving biological materials especially where genetic manipulation is involved or where there is introduction of exotic or imported plants, microorganisms or animals.

The Guidelines is applicable to all research, production and manufacturing work and/or institutions in the country, whether public or private, national or international engaged in genetic engineering work.

The Guidelines covers work involving genetic engineering, and activities requiring the importation, introduction, field release and breeding of non-indigenous or exotic organisms even though these are not GM.

Its contents include the national policies on biosafety; organizational structure of biosafety committees; procedures for evaluation of proposals with biosafety concerns; procedures and Guidelines on the introduction, movement and field release of regulated materials; and physico-chemical and biological containment and procedures.

4.27.2 Guidelines on Planned Release of Genetically Manipulated Organisms (GMOs) and Potentially Harmful Exotic Species (PHES) (1998)

The Guidelines establishes criteria for deliberate release of GMOs and potentially harmful exotic species into the Philippine environment. It excludes from its coverage work performed under contained conditions; accidental releases from contained facilities; use of pharmaceutical, processed food, animal feed, industrial, and other products that are already being regulated by other departments, agencies or instrumentalities of the Philippine government; work involving organisms which result from natural reproduction or the use of traditional breeding practices; and such other activities as the National Committee on Biosafety of the Philippines may in future declare to be excluded.

The Guidelines establishes criteria for evaluating the release of GMOs and potentially harmful exotic species into the open environment. It excludes from its coverage work done in the laboratories and greenhouses; accidental releases from contained facilities; use of pharmaceutical, processed food, animal feed, industrial and other

products that are already being regulated; work involving organisms which result from natural reproduction or the use of traditional breeding practices; and, such other activities as the National Committee on Biosafety may in the future declare to be excluded.

4.27.3 Administrative Order No. 8: Rules and regulations for the importation and release into the environment of plants and plant products derived from the use of modern biotechnology (2002)

The Order covers the importation or release into the environment of:

- (a) Any plant which has been altered or produced through the use of modern biotechnology if the donor organism, host organism, or vector or vector agent belongs to any of the genera or taxa classified by the Bureau of Plant Industry of the Philippines as a plant pest or is a medium for the introduction of noxious weeds; or
- (b) Any plant or plant product altered or produced through the use of modern biotechnology which may pose significant risks to human health and the environment based on available scientific and technical information.

It provides for the approval process and requirements for importation for contained use, field testing, propagation or commercialization, importation for direct use as food or feed or for processing, and delisting of regulated articles. It also provides that no regulated article intended for contained use shall be allowed for importation or be removed from the port of entry unless duly authorized by Department of Agriculture/Bureau of Plant Industry upon the endorsement of National Committee on Biosafety of the Philippines.

The Order also requires mandatory risk assessment of GM plants and plant products prior to importation or release into the environment. As per the procedures, experiments must first be conducted under contained conditions, then the products tested in field trials and finally when all safety and bioefficacy data are obtained, the product is reviewed for commercial release. Risk assessment is done according to the principles provided for by The Protocol.

4.27.4 National Biosafety Framework for the Philippines (2006)

The Framework covers all activities related to the development, adoption and implementation of all biosafety policies, measures and Guidelines and in making decisions concerning the research, development, handling and use, transboundary movement, release into the environment and management of regulated articles. The Framework also covers products of modern biotechnology, exotic species and invasive alien species.

The National Committee on Biosafety of the Philippines and concerned departments and agencies may apply, when allowed by law, the principles, mechanisms and processes developed and implemented under the Framework to similar problems such as addressing the issue of exotic species and invasive alien species. Where appropriate, they may adopt the administrative and decision-making systems established in this Framework.

The objectives of the Framework are to strengthen the existing science-based determination of biosafety to ensure safe and responsible use of modern biotechnology for the benefit of the Philippines and its citizens; enhance the decision-making system on the application of products of modern biotechnology to make it more efficient, predictable, effective, balanced, culturally appropriate, ethical, transparent and participatory, and serve as Guidelines for implementing international obligations on biosafety.

Source:

1. *Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Protected Areas and Wildlife Bureau. 2004. The National Biosafety Framework for the Philippines. Quezon City, Philippines. p 77.*
2. *Ms. Julieta Fe Estacio, Technical Secretariat Office of the Undersecretary for R&D, Department of Science and Technology, National Committee on Biosafety of the Philippines DOST Building, Gen. Santos Avenue Bicutan, Taguig City, Metro Manila, Philippines, 1630. email: jce.komen@planet.nl; jfle@dost.gov.ph; irma@dost.gov.ph (Personal Communication)*