

Title: Training workshop on Bhutan Biosafety Clearing House (BBCH)

Training workshop on ‘National biosafety repository tools’ is ongoing in Paro from 3-5 March 2020.

Bhutan is signatory to Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (CPB) and as an obligation, CPB emphasizes on the need of establishment of national BCH as an information exchange platform. Bhutan Agriculture and Food Regulatory Authority (BAFRA) under the Ministry of Agriculture and Forests is the national competent authority to implement Biosafety Act of Bhutan 2015. In order to engage biosafety regulators, academia and food importers for exchange of scientific, technical, environmental and legal information on living modified organisms (LMO), BAFRA is revamping the BBCH (which was previously managed by National Environment Commission Secretariat). The revamping of the existing national Biosafety Clearing House website is carried out with the financial and technical support of FAO involving the BCH expert Prof. Ruel V Maningas. Updated BBCH includes new features for registering information, forums for online discussion, updated biosafety news and biosafety information repositories, such as FAO-GM Foods Platform, OECD Biotrack database etc., which will enable stakeholders and regulators to get information at one go for better decision making.

The workshop is attended by officials from BAFRA field officials, Biosafety Technical Working Group members and participants from National Environment Commission, Food Corporation of Bhutan, Karma Feed and National Seed Centre. The objectives of the training workshop are to:

1. obtain information and access to global biosafety information repositories such as BCH, FAO GM Foods platform and OECD BioTrack tool
2. be able to find / locate relevant information in the context of Bhutan, using the case studies through group sessions using global biosafety information repositories
3. obtain step-by-step instructions on how to register national information on the national BCH tool and BCH central portal

