

Biosafety Public Awareness, Participation & Education in Namibia

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*At the Joint Aarhus Convention/Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety
second round table on public awareness, access to information and
public participation regarding LMOs/GMOs*

15-17 November 2016, Geneva, Switzerland

Outline

- Background
- Public awareness baseline study
- Public awareness strategy
- Integration of public participation in national legislation
- Incorporation of Biosafety in University curriculum
- Public awareness activities
- Challenges and gaps

Background

- ❑ Namibia is a party to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety
- ❑ Biosafety is governed nationally by the Biosafety Act, 2006 (Act no 7 of 2006)
- ❑ National Commission on Research Science and Technology (NCRST) is mandated to administer the Biosafety Act
- ❑ Implementation of Biosafety Act has been expedited since the establishment of the NCRST in 2014
 - ❑ Establishment of the Biosafety Secretariat
 - ❑ Establishment of the Biosafety Council
 - ❑ Development of Biosafety Regulations through a consultative process
 - ❑ Biosafety Regulations gazetted on 1 September 2016
 - ❑ Establishment of the Biosafety institutional framework

Public Awareness Baseline Study



Public Awareness on Biotechnology

Data Analysis of Survey Conducted in Namibia

(Period of Survey: Aug 2013-April 2014)

- The study demonstrated that there was a need for a deliberate public awareness strategy

NCRST Public Awareness Strategy

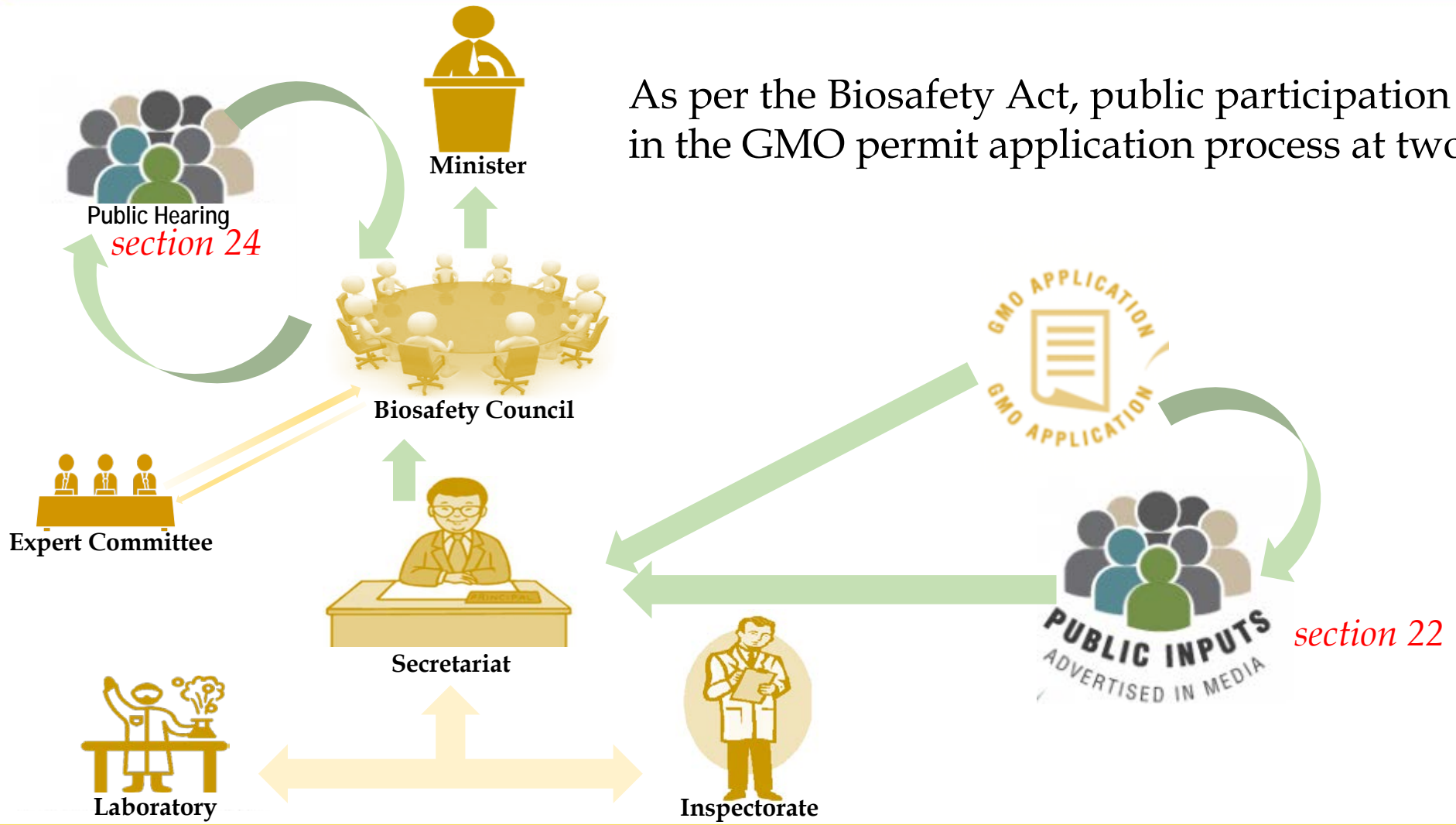
Target Group	ACTIVITIES
Politicians and Policy Makers	Briefing or presentation to politicians when STI committee meets
	Biosafety Implementation Workshop
	Seminars and Panel Discussions
Technical staff and competent authorities	Biosafety Implementation Workshop
	Seminar/public lecture
	Topic specific workshops
Farmers and manufacturers/processors	Biosafety Implementation Workshop
	Appearance on green horizon TV show
	GAP (Food Safety Section)
Education institutions (Primary, Secondary & Tertiary)	Public lectures on various topics
	Seminars
	Cartoon series/animated posters

NCRST Public Awareness Strategy

Media	Bimonthly articles
	Science Communication workshops
	Media briefing(question and answer session)
	Identify media/journalist we can train to always be the one reporting
General Public	Launch Biosafety Clearing House
	Talk of the Nation
	Debate platforms at festivals
	Demonstration at festivals
	Public lectures
	Community Outreach programmes
Roadshow Campaigns	

Integration of Public Participation in National Legislation

As per the Biosafety Act, public participation is incorporated in the GMO permit application process at two stages



Incorporation of Biosafety in University Curriculum

- Biosafety offered as an elective course to Biological Sciences (incl Biochemistry) students at the University of Namibia

CHB3742 BIOSAFETY, BIOETHICS AND IPR

Course Title:	Biosafety, Bioethics and IPR
Course Code	CHB3742
NQF Level	8
NQF Credits	β
Contact Hours:	2 lecture periods per week for 14 weeks and 1 practical session per week for 7 weeks
Continuous Assessment	(minimum of two tests which counts 80% and laboratory component 20%). Examination: 1 x 2hr examination; Final: 50% CA mark and 50% Examination mark.
Prerequisite	Bioenergetics and Metabolism (CHB3731)
Compulsory/Elective	Compulsory

Module Descriptor: Principles of biosafety, bioethics and bio-law: Environmental and food safety Risk assessment, ethics; philosophy; Regulation of human tissue and stem cells; International environmental law; Intellectual property law and the biosciences, Patenting Life; Surveying of Methods and Uses of Animal Biotechnology. Legal and socio-economic considerations regarding biotechnology; human safety; animal welfare; Public policy, regulatory and ethical challenges facing the entrepreneurial biotechnology firm

Training of trainers on awareness creation

- A workshop to bring two trainers from each of all the regions in the country and a basic awareness training workshop for one day (what is biotechnology, what is biosafety? Is biotechnology happening, how old is it as technology, shall we have it in our country? Key issues, how to decide is if it good of not? etc)
- During the workshop, the Awareness survey was shared. The sample size was about 45 but we need to target the whole country with a sample size of 300

Awareness campaign materials

- A cap and T-shirt, 10 of each per region: that is 130 caps and 130 T-shirts were produced for distribution
- Green, White, blue, yellow T-shirts and Caps
- DNA the blue print for life
- “Biotechnology impacts our life”
- Information leaflet (100 per region, 1300 leaflets to be given to the Governors for distributions. It is also ideal to give a leaflet to reachable schools for school children)





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Public Awareness Roadshow

- Road show drama act in Windhoek and video was recorded and is available.
- Ongoing road show dramas are still needed in all major cities of Namibia
- A video that was produced will be air on TV on specified times



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Countrywide Public Information Workshops

INVITATION

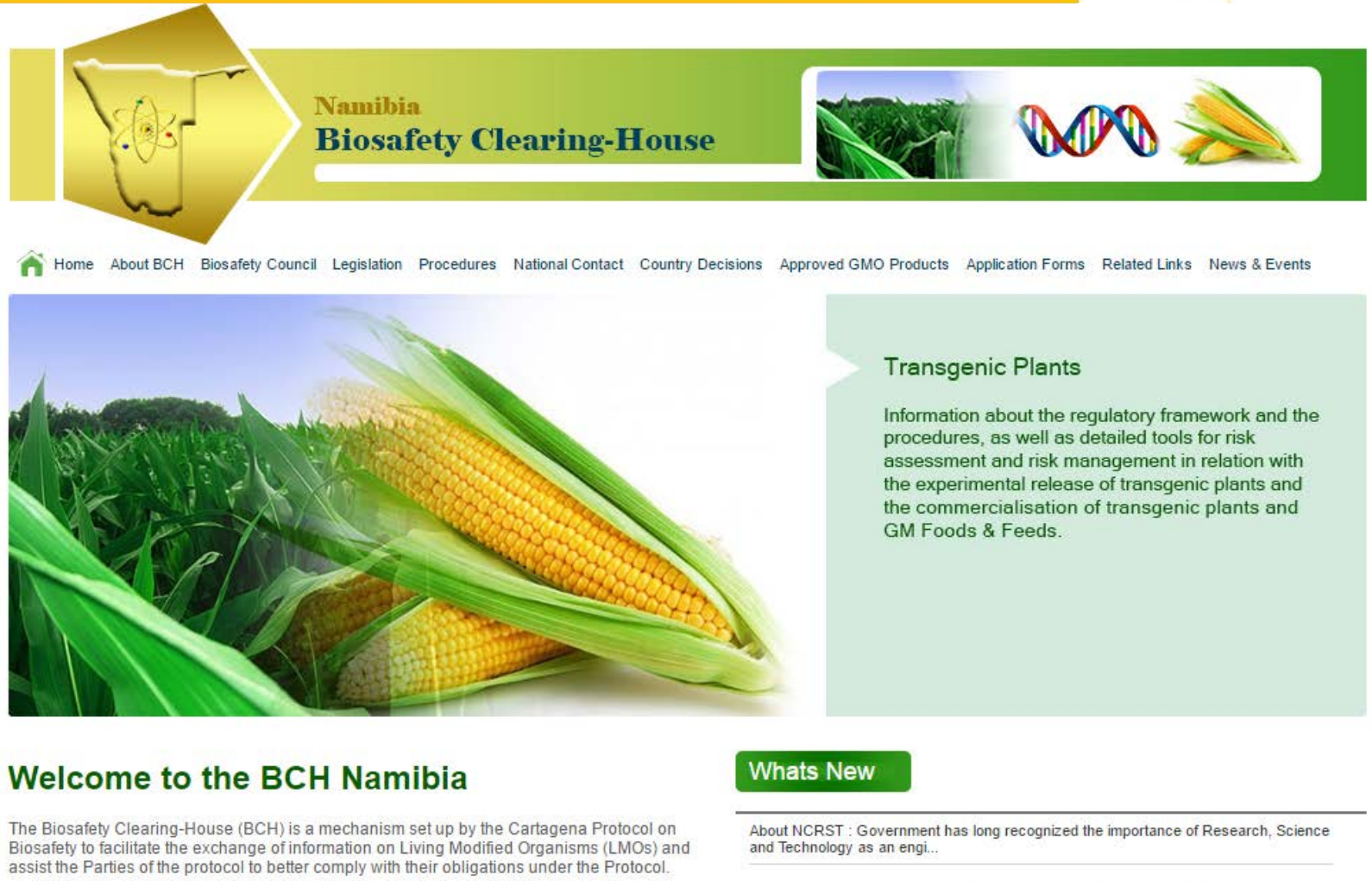
**PUBLIC INFORMATION WORKSHOPS
ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BIOSAFETY
ACT, 2006 (ACT NO. 7 OF 2006)**

REGION	TOWN & VENUE	DATE
Khomas Region	Windhoek - Protea Hotel, Furstenhof	24 October 2016
Otjozondjupa Region	Grootfontein - Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry Boardroom	7 November 2016
Kavango East Region	Rundu - Kavango East Regional Office Auditorium	8 November 2016
Kavango West Region	Nkurenkuru - Nkurenkuru Community Hall	9 November 2016
Zambezi Region	Katima Mulilo - Town Council Chambers	11 November 2016
Hardap Region	Mariental	22 November 2016
//Karas Region	Keetmanshoop	24 November 2016
Oshikoto Region	Tsumeb	6 February 2017
Ohangwena Region	Eenhana	8 February 2017
Oshana Region	Ongwediva	10 February 2017
Omusati Region	Outapi	13 February 2017
Kunene Region	Opuwo	16 February 2017

NB: STARTING TIME - 09H00

National Biosafety Clearing House

- National BCH developed with assistance of UNEP-GEF
- Biosafety Council Members trained on the use of the BCH
- Implementing stakeholders still to be trained



The screenshot shows the website for the Namibia Biosafety Clearing-House. At the top left is a logo featuring a map of Namibia with an atomic symbol overlaid. To its right, the text reads "Namibia Biosafety Clearing-House". Further right is a banner image showing a cornfield, a DNA double helix, and ears of corn. Below this is a navigation menu with links: Home, About BCH, Biosafety Council, Legislation, Procedures, National Contact, Country Decisions, Approved GMO Products, Application Forms, Related Links, and News & Events. The main content area features a large image of corn on the left and a text box on the right titled "Transgenic Plants" which contains information about the regulatory framework and risk assessment. Below the main image is a section titled "Welcome to the BCH Namibia" with a brief description of the BCH's role. To the right of this is a "Whats New" section with a link to "About NCRST : Government has long recognized the importance of Research, Science and Technology as an engi...".

Namibia Biosafety Clearing-House

Home About BCH Biosafety Council Legislation Procedures National Contact Country Decisions Approved GMO Products Application Forms Related Links News & Events

Transgenic Plants

Information about the regulatory framework and the procedures, as well as detailed tools for risk assessment and risk management in relation with the experimental release of transgenic plants and the commercialisation of transgenic plants and GM Foods & Feeds.

Welcome to the BCH Namibia

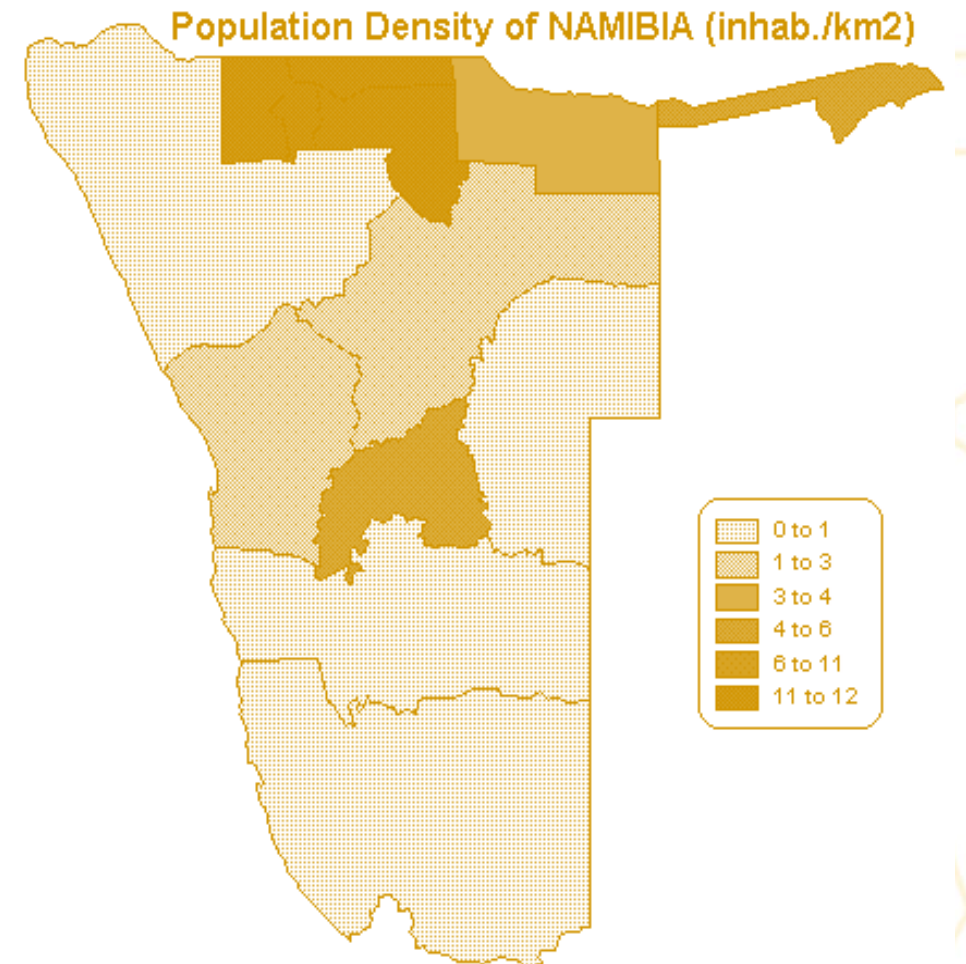
The Biosafety Clearing-House (BCH) is a mechanism set up by the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to facilitate the exchange of information on Living Modified Organisms (LMOs) and assist the Parties of the protocol to better comply with their obligations under the Protocol.

Whats New

About NCRST : Government has long recognized the importance of Research, Science and Technology as an engi...

Challenges & Gaps

- Vast country (825,615 km²) with a sparsely distributed population (2.6 people per km²)
- Limited data connectivity makes it difficult to reach marginalized communities through electronic means
- Difficulty in translating scientific and technical information into local languages (11 different ethnic groups) and costly
- Biosafety to be seen as a priority in the country although it is now being much better understood by the top level



THANK YOU

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