Klima- og
miljødepartementet

Norway – Access to GMO information, confidentiality of data

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In Norway GMOs are regulated by the Gene Technology Act (1993):

§ 1 Purpose of the Act:

To ensure that the production and use of genetically modified organisms and the production of cloned animals take place in an ethically justifiable and socially acceptable manner, in accordance with the principle of sustainable development and without adverse effects on health and the environment.

Deliberate release of GMOs in Norway:
Always public consultation

Gene Technology Act § 13:

- A public hearing is to be announced and held before a decision is made

- To be carried out in a way that ensures that the general public and interest groups are given access to relevant information

Information flow and public participation in Norway

- The **Norwegian Environment Agency** administer public hearings and makes available information on its website https://tema.miljodirektoratet.no/en/

- Organisations, advisory bodies and interest groups are actively invited to participate and submit comments.

The Norwegian Biotechnology Advisory Board is a key player

- 20 members representing different expertises and interest groups

- Society at large is represented

- Mandated to discuss ethics, societal utilty and a GMO's contribution to sustainable development.

Public participation contributes to access to GMO information

- The responses to a public hearing are examined and taken into account before a decision is made.
- National decisions are published through the Official Governmental Gazette and websites.
- The public has a right to access all final decisions, as well as the terms upon which a decision is made

GMOs and the Aarhus Convention

- What is an acceptable balance between confidential business information and the legal right of citizens to gain access to relevant information?

- **Principle:** As much information as possible should be publicly available

- No stringent guidelines

Mandatory GMO information

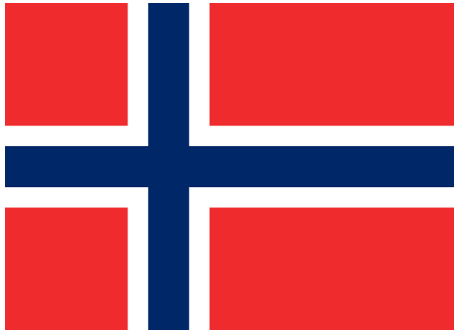
The following shall **always** be available:

- GMO description
- Name and address of user/applicant
- Purpose, use, location
- Methods and plans for monitoring and emergency response
- Assessments of foreseeable effects

Confidential GMO information

- An applicant must justify any confidential parts of an application
- The competent national authority considers whether such information is to be omitted from the public
- Cooperation and coordination with other bodies having a role in the application process is important
- Consulting legal advice concerning questions on confidentiality is helpful, answers may be more straightforward than expected.

Experiences Norway, SUMMARY



- Public participation is mandatory and key in the Norwegian GMO assessment process
- The general public and interest groups are given access to relevant information
- There is a lack of stringent standards for what can be regarded and accepted as confidential business information

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Thank you for your attention!

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