

PROF.ATANAS ATANASSOV



CASE STUDY

CEE Biosafety capacity building project

ABI, 19.01.2006

BULGARIA



STRUCTURAL UNITS OF ABI

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY

NATIONAL CENTRE OF AGRICULTURAL SCIENCE (NCAS)

AGROBIOINSTITUTE

BULGARIAN CENTER OF EXCELLENCE IN PLANT BIOTECHNOLOGY

Norman Borlaug Center
NB PSR-DMU

Sub Regional
GMO Center of UNEP

ICGEB
Global Consortium

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY
NATIONAL CENTER FOR AGRICULTURAL SCIENCE

AgroBioInstitute

International Consultative Council

Joint
Projects

Contract
Research

Joint
Ventures

Breeding
Institutes

**Bulgarian
Universities**

Public and
Governmental
Organizations

Bulgarian
Private Business
SME

Foreign Universities
Research Institutes
International
Research Centers
> 50 agreements

International
Public Funding
EU, NATO
ICGEB, IAEA

Private Business
Multinational companies
SME

RESEARCH AREAS

Genetic resources – in vitro gene bank

Functional Genetics

Biotic and abiotic stress

Ecology – GMP, biocontrol

Bioinformatics

Intellectual rights

*Accredited laboratories – genetic authenticity,
phytosanitary status, quality*

AgroBioTech Park

STRUCTURAL ORGANIZATION OF ABI

- **STRUCTURAL
UNITS**



ABI Efforts to collaborate and build synergies

- Dutch Matra Project
- GEF-UNEP Project ‘Implementation of NBF for of Bulgaria’
- EC integrated project **Co-extra**
- PSO project with Dutch government on GMOs placing on the market, Enforcement of Legislation, control measures and distribution of Knowledge (GELUK)
- Cooperation with RIKEN Institute in Japan: “Risk assessment of transgenic tobacco”

MATRA CEE BIOSAFETY CAPACITY BUILDING PROJECT

Topics:

- Characteristics
- Structure and approach
- Activities at national level approach
- Outreach activities
- Main achievements – national level
- Main achievements – regional level
- Main achievements – outreach activities
- Lessons learned – good practices
- Lessons learned – challenges and limitations
- Lessons learned – recommendations for biosafety capacity building projects

WHAT IS MATRA?

MATRA

- Matra is an abbreviation for the Dutch term “societies in transition”, which is a program for Netherlands Ministries of Economic Affairs, Foreign Affairs and the Environment.
- The Matra Programme aims to assist EU candidate member states in meeting the criteria for EU membership through projects dealing with the consequences of implementation of European legislation.

MATRA CEE BIOSAFETY CAPACITY BUILDING PROJECT

CHARACTERISTICS:

- Demand driven: formal request to the Netherlands Government by the Governments of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Czech republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria and Slovenia.
- Aim: assist pre-accession countries in laying a firm foundation for a transparent and workable biosafety system consistent with EC Directives and Biosafety Protocol.
- Multi year: 1 December 1999 – 30 November 2002
- Budget: 700.000 USD

MATRA CEE BIOSAFETY CAPACITY BUILDING PROJECT

STRUCTURE AND APPROACH:

- **Activities at national level**
- **Activities at regional level**
- **Outreach activities**

MATRA CEE BIOSAFETY CAPACITY BUILDING PROJECT

ACTIVITIES AT NATIONAL LEVEL - APPROACH:

- Detailed on site analysis of current situation of the national biosafety frameworks – description of clear targets.
- Repeated ‘hands on’ training workshops on the main components of national biosafety frameworks – trainers were experts from Europe, North America and international organisations

MATRA CEE BIOSAFETY CAPACITY BUILDING PROJECT

OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

- Involvement of experts from Austria, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Finland, France, Netherlands, Sweden, UK, US.
- Collaboration with EC-JRC, CBD-Sec, ISNAR, ISAAA, OECD, UNEP.
- Participation in workshops by participants from Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Russia, Bosnia, Tajikistan, Moldova, Yugoslavia, Brazil, Cuba, Colombia, Namibia, Cameroon, Uganda, Kenya, Nigeria, Ghana, Sudan, Zambia, China, Malaysia, Taiwan, Philippines, Indonesia

MATRA CEE BIOSAFETY CAPACITY BUILDING PROJECT

MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS – NATIONAL LEVEL:

- Contribution to the development of biosafety legislation:
in 1999 only one country (Bulgaria) had provisional regulation in place. Late 2002, 9 countries had adopted biosafety legislation that was large in line with the EC Directives and the Biosafety Protocol.
- Contribution to building national implementation:
repeated ‘hands on’ training workshops on handling requests, risk assessment, public information and enforcement

MATRA CEE BIOSAFETY CAPACITY BUILDING PROJECT

MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS – REGIONAL LEVEL:

- Regional meetings to exchange experience and regional workshops on regulations, risk assessment, public information and enforcement
- Establishment of a CEE Regional Steering Committee to guide project and to discuss regional collaboration
- Establishment of a CEE Regional web site on biosafety with information on national biosafety frameworks (now taken over by BCH) and regional activities.
- Establishment of a well functioning CEE group during the ICCP meetings.

MATRA CEE BIOSAFETY CAPACITY BUILDING PROJECT

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MATRA CEE BIOSAFETY CAPACITY BUILDING PROJECT

LESSONS LEARNED - GOOD PRACTICES

- Detailed expert assessment of existing situation crucial before start of project activities
- Support and training by experts with relevant expertise and substantial experience in the field. Trainers from different countries to show different approaches
- Permanent availability of an expert who can reply immediately by phone or email to questions from the participating countries.

MATRA CEE BIOSAFETY CAPACITY BUILDING PROJECT

LESSONS LEARNED - GOOD PRACTICES:

- Active involvement of Parliamentarians in the workshops (for example Bulgaria, seminar requested by Parliamentary committees)
- Close collaboration with relevant international organisations
- Emphasis on regional and subregional activities and collaboration.
- By end of project, arrangements were made for follow up activities, for example Sweden and Finland to continue projects in the Baltics.

MATRA CEE BIOSAFETY CAPACITY BUILDING PROJECT

LESSONS LEARNED - CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS

- Limited budget (700.000 USD for 3 years) and wide scope of work (10 countries)
- Vulnerable: only one-person full time involved.
- Frequent political changes in these countries – with as consequences
 - 1) delay of legislative process and
 - 2) pledges for continuation were not always kept.

MATRA CEE BIOSAFETY CAPACITY BUILDING PROJECT

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Prior expert assessment of existing situation and targets
- Support and training by experts with relevant expertise
- Repeated training with ‘real life dossiers’.
- Collaboration with relevant international organisations
- Emphasis on subregional approaches and collaboration.

GENERAL VIEW & RECOMMENDATIONS

- **NEED FOR SUBREGIONAL INITIATIVES**
 - BSBA
 - SCANBALT
 - SUBREGIONAL BIOSAFETY PROJECTS
- **NEED FOR GLOBAL INITIATIVES:**
 - PRRI

GENERAL VIEW & RECOMMENDATIONS

BSBA

Foundation Countries:

- Bulgaria (AgroBioInstitute, Sofia), Romania (Agricultural University, Timisoara), Russia (Institute of Plant Biotechnology, Moscow), Turkey (Turkish Seed Association), Ukraine (Institute of Cell Biology, Kiev)
- Goals:
- To create within the Black Sea region, a network of countries with historically similar agricultural needs, priorities and often practices, science based regulations that not only protect the public health and the regional environment, but also stimulate economic development, international trade, modern agricultural practices, modern food and feed production industry, east/west collaborations and the advancement of regional varieties.
- To increase the region's contribution to and participation in the global debate regarding agricultural biotechnology.
- To avoid regulatory and trade practices for Ag Biotech that lead to unnecessary and/or unjustified barriers that encumber commerce and ultimately disadvantage the region.
- To build a system of mutual acceptance of regulatory and safety data for agricultural products improved through biotechnology.
- To build regional human and organizational (including information sharing) capacity to understand and responsibly employ Ag biotechnology.

GENERAL VIEW & RECOMMENDATIONS

SCANBALT

- Concept
The concept is therefore to create a metaregion, ScanBalt BioRegion, within which to develop existing and future clusters, networks, co-operations and co-ordinations between countries with regard to research, education, public services and innovation related to biotechnology.
- Representatives from the members of the Baltic Council:
Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Iceland, Finland, Northern Germany, Poland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Kaliningrad and St. Petersburg have joined ScanBalt, a network of networks to promote borderless biotech in the region.
- Perspectives & Advantages
The Nordic-Scandinavian-Baltic countries are facing two major opportunities:
 - To use biotechnology to increase wealth and health in the century of life sciences.
 - To build an economic dynamo of global prominence based on regional cooperation.
- Vision
- **ScanBalt** will promote knowledge formation, education, research, technology transfer, innovation and economic development within life sciences in order to meet meta-regional needs and increase competitiveness in accordance with **ScanBalt** values.
- **ScanBalt** will be a forum for discussions of the impact of life sciences on society.
- **ScanBalt** will act as a platform and an umbrella for activities within life sciences.

GENERAL VIEW & RECOMMENDATIONS

SUBREGIONAL BIOSAFETY PROJECTS

- As to build and strengthen countries' (from one geographical sub-region) national and sub-regional capacity to assess and manage environmental and feed/food safety hazards as well as socio-economic impacts of transgenic crops. This biosafety capacity will allow public institutions at the national and sub-regional levels to make informed decisions as to the benefits and risks of trade and production of transgenic crops. It will also assist them in determining where, when, and how these crops and their food and feed products may be best utilized to contribute to national development priorities, while ensuring compliance with the CPB.

GENERAL VIEW & RECOMMENDATIONS

THE PUBLIC RESEARCH & REGULATION INITIATIVE (PRRI)

- NEED:

The public research sector has not been represented in a significant or organised way in negotiations on international agreements such as the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety

- PRRI:

Offers a forum for the public research sector to be informed about and involved in regulations and international agreements relevant to modern biotechnology

- PHASES:

- Phase 1: Raising awareness (2004)
- Phase 2: 'Try out' Involvement of public research sector scientists in MOP2 and MOP3 (2005-2006)
- Phase 3: Organised involvement of the public research sector in subsequent MOPs and other relevant meetings (2006-2008)

GENERAL VIEW & RECOMMENDATIONS

PRRI - Biosafety capacity building activities.

1. Informing public researchers about the CPB and involving public researchers in the Meetings of the Parties to the CPB.
2. Informing public researchers about discussions on specific topics under the CPB, the CBD and the Aarhus Convention.
3. Providing information about public research in modern biotechnology.
4. Providing practical guidance for public researchers notifications and risk assessment for releases of GMOs.
5. Outreach to non-English speaking public researchers.

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