



Federal Republic of Nigeria

Frequently Asked Questions on Biosafety

These Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) have been put together by the NBMA as a result of questions and concerns from the public relying on scientific information on Biosafety and Modern Biotechnology.

1. What is Biosafety?

Biosafety refers to the need to protect human health and the environment from the possible adverse effects of the products of modern biotechnology.

2. What are the functions of the National Biosafety Management Agency (NBMA) in Nigeria?

The National Biosafety Management Agency (NBMA) provides the regulatory framework to adequately safeguard human health and the environment from potential adverse effects of modern biotechnology and its derivatives, while harnessing the potentials of this technology for the benefit of Nigeria. [Read more...](#)

3. Why have there been concerns about Genetically Modified (GM) foods among some public interest groups and consumers?

These concerns are borne out of fears relating to potential adverse impact of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) on human health and the environment. There are also concerns that GM companies may exploit farmers as they must buy seeds every farming season. Others relate to ethnic and religious biases to modern biotechnology. [Read more...](#)

4. If I have questions on Biosafety in Nigeria, whom should I direct my inquiries to?

All questions on Biosafety in Nigeria should be forwarded to the Director General/Chief Executive Officer, National Biosafety Management Agency, National Park Service Complex, Umaru Musa Yar'adua Way, Near City Gate, Abuja, www.nbma.gov.ng, nbma@nbma.gov.ng, +2348180805451. [Read more...](#)

5. What are Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs)?

Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) are plants, animals or microorganisms whose genes or genetic composition have been altered by modern biotechnology techniques or organisms that have inherited traits conferred on their parents by means of modern biotechnology. [Read more...](#)

6. What are the GMO Permits that have been approved in Nigeria?

- Bio-fortified Cassava (Confined Field Trial (CFT)) at NRCRI, Umudike, Abia State.
- Pod-borer resistant cowpea (CFT) at IAR, Zaria.
- Africa Bio-fortified Sorghum (CFT) at IAR, Zaria.
- GM Cassava Mosaic Virus and Brown Streak resistant virus at NRCRI, Umudike, Abia State.
- Nitrogen-Use Efficient, Water-Use Efficient and Salt Tolerant (NEWEST) Rice (CFT) at NCRI, Badeggi, Niger State.
- Herbicide Tolerant/Insect Resistant Maize (CFT) Monsanto Agriculture Nigeria Limited
- Insect resistant cotton (Commercial Release (CR)) Monsanto Company Nigeria Limited. [Read more...](#)

7. What GMOs are in Nigeria?

Officially, there are no GMOs in Nigeria, except those on trials. However, there are some GM suspects in the country, which are being verified.

8. What are genetically modified foods (GM foods)?

Genetically Modified (GM) foods are those foods derived from GMOs as a whole, or ingredients derived from GMOs.

9. Are GM foods safe?

Reputable scientific communities ([WHO](#), [FAO](#), Academy of Sciences [Nigeria/US](#), [EFSA](#)) in various parts of the world have agreed on the safety of all GM foods approved for commercialization. However, no GMO will be allowed into Nigerian markets unless they are confirmed safe by the NBMA even if they are declared safe from the source, or country of importation.

10. What are the processes for obtaining a Permit?

Application forms for permits can be obtained from the NBMA website or the office, completed and submitted to NBMA in person, online or via surface mail.

11. What gives the NBMA authority to be a regulatory body in Nigeria?

The National Biosafety Management Agency Act 2015 confers on the Agency the authority to be a regulatory body on biosafety matters in Nigeria. [Read more...](#)

12. What does the NBMA regulate?

The NBMA regulates the application of modern biotechnology, handling, transport and use of products of modern biotechnology (GMOs) [Read more...](#)

13. What capacity does the NBMA have to carry out its duties?

The Agency has staff that have been well trained both nationally and internationally on diverse biosafety related matters. In addition, the Agency has developed the various regulatory instruments to enhance its capability for its duties. [Read more...](#)

14. What are Confined Field Trials (CFTs)

CFTs are small-scaled restricted field experiments designed for evaluating the performance and collation of data of GMOs in the environment.

15. How does the NBMA confirm that a GMO is safe for consumption?

The Agency ascertains that a GMO is safe for consumption through establishing history of safe use of the GM event, rigorous scientific analysis, as well as certifying the fact that the gene(s) of interest codes for proteins/enzymes that have no homology with known allergens/toxins. [Read more...](#)

16. What is the NBMA doing to ensure that illegal GM foods are not found in Nigeria?

The NBMA has directed stores in Nigeria to obtain Permits from the Agency, as well as register all GM food products with the Agency before displaying them in their stores. Such foods must pass food safety criteria before being registered. [Read more...](#)

17. What facilities in Nigeria have the capability to carry out genetic modification?

The following research institutes have been accredited and their facilities certified, by the NBMA, for genetic modification. Some of the institutes and facilities are as follow:

- i. National Root Crops Research Institute (NRCRI), Umudike, Umuahia.
- ii. Institute of Agricultural Research (IAR), Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria
- iii. Federal University of Technology Akure (FUTA), Ondo State
- iv. National Biotechnology Development Agency (NABDA)
- v. National Cereals Research Institute (NCRI), Badeggi Niger State
- vi. International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA)

18. How does the NBMA notify the public of its activities and any new permits that are granted?

NBMA website (<http://www.nbma.gov.ng>), BCH, Facebook and Twitter pages, publications in national and local newspapers, various information documents and the notice board in the NBMA office. [Read more...](#)

19. What is the next step for GMOs in Nigeria?

The next step for GMOs in Nigeria is the commercialization of safe-proven GM crops/products. [Read more...](#)

20. What do certain terminologies in Biosafety and Modern Biotechnology mean?

These are terms that relate to different chains of thought among various fields of knowledge and could lead to ineffective communication and/or understanding in a given scientific community, except it is adequately interpreted. [Read more...](#)