



REQUEST FOR COMMENTS ON AN APPLICATION FOR ENVIRONMENTAL RELEASE (OPEN FIELD CULTIVATION) AND PLACING ON THE MARKET OF DISEASE RESISTANT GENETICALLY MODIFIED CASSAVA IN KENYA

The National Biosafety Authority (NBA) is the competent Authority mandated to regulate all activities involving genetically modified organisms (GMOs). Under the provisions of the Biosafety Act No. 2 of 2009, section 19(4) and Biosafety (Environmental Release) Regulations of 2011, regulation 12(1) (2), the NBA hereby announces to the public the receipt of an Application for consideration for a possible environmental release (open cultivation) and placing on the market of genetically modified cassava that is resistant to Cassava Brown Streak Disease (CBSD), a common viral disease present in Kenya.

The application was submitted by **Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organization (KALRO)**. According to the applicant and based on data obtained from research conducted so far, the cassava has high levels of disease resistance as a result of the genetic modification. Farmers and consumers will benefit from CBSD resistant cassava as a result of increased cassava root quality and marketable yield.

The Application is currently undergoing a science-based review process conducted by NBA, together with relevant regulatory agencies and independent experts, to ascertain that the genetically modified cassava is safe to human and animal health as well as to the environment. The key aspects considered in the food and feed safety assessment include, but are not limited to, nutritional composition, and assessment of safety of any new proteins. The environmental safety evaluation of the cassava looks at its potential to become a weed or invasive to natural habitats, the potential impact of cross-pollination with conventional cassava as well as wild relatives, altered production potential, and potential impact on non-target organisms and biodiversity.

The general public is hereby requested to participate through submitting written comments on this application to NBA. The comments should reach the undersigned not later than 30 calendar days from the date of this publication.

Thereafter, the Authority will make a final decision on the application based on environmental and food safety assessment, socio-economic considerations, comments from relevant regulatory agencies, independent experts and relevant comments received from the public.

In the event that the Authority decides to approve open field cultivation and placing on the market, the due processes governing any further testing, official release and commercialization of the cassava seed and plant varieties in Kenya shall apply as per the existing national policy, legislation and guidelines for handling genetically modified crops and new crop varieties.

Further information on the Application, guidelines for public participation, and the submission form can be accessed through the Authority's website www.biosafetykenya.go.ke or physically at the NBA offices (Nairobi, Mombasa, Namanga and Busia) during normal working hours.

Please send your written comments by mail to;

**Chief Executive Officer,
National Biosafety Authority,
PCPB Building, Loresho, off Waiyaki Way
P. O. BOX 28251-00100, NAIROBI
Or by Email: ercassava2020@biosafetykenya.go.ke**

Deadline for written submissions: 14th June 2020

ONLINE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION FORUM

Due to the COVID 19 pandemic, public participation forum on this project shall be held online via Zoom. All stakeholders and general public interested to participate in the online meeting should indicate their working emails and telephone numbers within 21 days from date of this publication to ercassava2020@biosafetykenya.go.ke. NBA shall contact them and share the online link and SMS Code to facilitate participation in the public forum. Comments and Questions related to this project can also be sent via SMS to cellphone number **+254 713 854 132** on or before the deadline.

Participation is open to all members of public.