

Project Evaluation Series

[16/2024](#)

# Terminal evaluation of the project “The Implementation of the National Biosafety Framework in accordance with the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety”

Project code: GCP/SRL/066/GFF  
GEF ID: 5720

**Management response**

Terminal evaluation of the project "The Implementation of the National Biosafety Framework in accordance with the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety" - Management response					07/2024
Evaluation recommendation	Management response Accepted, Partially accepted or Rejected	Management plan			
		Actions to be taken, and/or comments about partial acceptance or rejection	Responsible unit	Time frame	Further funding required (Y or N)
<p><b>Recommendation 1.</b></p> <p><i>To government implementing partner:</i></p> <p>Ensure that the Biosafety Act is made legal as urgently as possible. The wide-ranging impacts of the Act not being legal are well documented in this report. Even though the project did not develop the Biosafety Act, the sustainability of a majority of project investments depends on its enactment and implementation.</p>	Accepted	Ministry of Environment to follow up on the enactment process	Biodiversity Secretariat, Ministry of Environment and Central Environmental Authority (CEA)	End of 2023	No
<p><b>Recommendation 2.</b></p> <p><i>To FAO:</i></p> <p>The FAO to consider convening a strategic level forum by the end of 2022 with participation of a diverse range of stakeholders involved in this initiative, and those with limited involvement to date but who should be more closely engaged in the future. This is to discuss the findings of this evaluation and implications at the national scale, in particular, what key steps and commitments should be taken collectively to build on current achievements and address the identified fundamental barriers towards meeting bio-safety goals. This would help to avoid what appears to be an important risk, fragmentation of outcomes into different sectors and that will undermine the aim of this project to establish a national level mechanism to meet the obligations on the CPB.</p>	Accepted	Discussion among FAO, Ministry of Environment and other key stakeholders	FAO & Biodiversity Secretariat, Ministry of Environment	2024	Yes
<p><b>Recommendation 3.</b></p> <p><i>To FAO and government implementing partner:</i></p> <p>The NCCB should be strengthened to become proactive in resolving critical project issues (such as capacitating the NCA, ensuring the masterplan is funded and that SCA's have the requisite internal processes and capacities to implement the RM guidelines) and ensuring sustainability of project</p>	Accepted	NCCB to meet and discuss on having regular meetings and utilizing the project outputs.	Biodiversity Secretariat, Ministry of Environment	End of 2023	No

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<p>outputs such as BCH and knowledge and training material produced. The PSC and PTF should have both paid much more attention to the sustainability aspects of the project during the post mid-term review period, supporting the PMU not just to complete outputs but to ensure demonstrate outcome level results and continuity of those outputs.</p> <p><b>Recommendation 4.</b> <i>To project developers and FAO:</i> Given the absence of dedicated monitoring and evaluation capacity embedded in the PMU or accounted for in the technical consultancies this has seriously impeded the project's ability to create necessary baselines and collect relevant data to report back on indicators. FAO should ensure in future projects that sufficient monitoring and evaluation capacity is allocated to suit project need and complexities, and in place at an early stage to allow timely development of monitoring and evaluation plans and systems, baselines and other essential provisions. Strong baselines are required to measure change in capacity development projects. Therefore, project development or inception stage must carry out objective capacity assessment for all institutional and individual capacities that the project seeks to transform.</p>					
<p><b>Recommendation 5.</b> <i>To government implementing partner:</i> The willingness and capacity of the CEA as the NCA should be examined closely and in the event of the CEA being unable to fulfil its intended role, alternatives need to be put in place. The Ministry of Environment should have a plan B if the CEA's role as NCA is not fulfilled even when the Biosafety Act is finally enacted.</p>	Accepted	Biodiversity Secretariat, Ministry of Environment and Central Environmental Authority (CEA) to discuss on the implementation of obligations under the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety	Biodiversity Secretariat, Ministry of Environment and Central Environmental Authority (CEA)	End of 2023	No

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<p><b>Recommendation 6.</b></p> <p><i>To FAO and government implementing partner:</i></p> <p>Further training is needed to bring the SCAs to the required level of competence to handle biosafety and GMO/LMO topics in their own mandates. Continued capacity building is required across all SCAs, with preferably agreements within SCAs on retaining trained staff. The absence of intra agency transmission of knowledge and skills obtained through the project is a serious issue that needs to be addressed in future projects. This is somewhat beyond the control of a project (reasons have been identified before) but ought to be identified clearly and strategies adopted to reduce its impacts as much as possible in donor funded projects</p>	Accepted	<p>Request universities and other entities working on modern biotechnology to provide information related to the GMO/LMO that they are working on especially, indicating the safe use of them.</p> <p>The Reference laboratory at the Agricultural Biotechnology Center to conduct training of new scientists and enforcement officers (e.g. NPQS, Food safety, seed certification, etc.)</p>	Biodiversity Secretariat, Ministry of Environment and Central Environmental Authority (CEA)	Post enactment of the Biosafety Act	No
<p><b>Recommendation 7.</b></p> <p><i>To FAO and government implementing partner:</i></p> <p>Sustained awareness programmes are needed. The Ministry of Environment needs to formulate plans to 1) continuously maintain the BCH and update its information, b) use the high-quality awareness and training material produced by the project and c) secure financing from the regular ministry budgetary provisions for the continuity of biosafety related awareness. In particular an updated status assessment of the levels of public awareness and continued high impact campaigns to improve public engagement is recommended</p>	Accepted	Biodiversity Secretariat, Ministry of Environment and Central Environmental Authority (CEA) to conduct awareness workshops to public sector.	Biodiversity Secretariat, Ministry of Environment and Central Environmental Authority (CEA)	Post enactment of the Biosafety Act	Yes

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<p><b>Recommendation 8.</b></p> <p><i>To project developers, FAO and government implementing partner:</i></p> <p>Engage private sector and other stakeholders such as NGOs, media, etc. as much as possible, avoiding the pitfalls of conflicts of interest that may ensue. Many of the awareness programmes were one-off and this is obviously not adequate for a very technical subject area like biosafety and biotechnology, which is also evolving very rapidly.</p>	Accepted	Biodiversity Secretariat, Ministry of Environment and Central Environmental Authority (CEA) to conduct awareness workshops to private sector, NGOs, media and other key stakeholders.	Biodiversity Secretariat, Ministry of Environment and Central Environmental Authority (CEA)	Post enactment of the Biosafety Act	
<p><b>Recommendation 9.</b></p> <p><i>To project developers, FAO and government implementing partner:</i></p> <p>During project preparation phase, when carrying out the context analysis, and baseline situation, a more thorough review of the biotechnology related developments should be carried out. Building linkages with this project's outcomes and outputs with ongoing biotechnology research and promotion programmes of the government and private sector may have ensured greater level of sustainability to the outputs of the project. This will also increase the pool of well qualified and competent in-country scientists who can contribute much to the specialized subject area of biosafety and biotechnology but are currently operating outside of the project ambit.</p>	Accepted	Discussion among the National Science Foundation (NSF), Biodiversity Secretariat, Ministry of Environment, CEA and other key stakeholders involved in biotechnology related work.	NSF, Biodiversity Secretariat, Ministry of Environment and CEA	2024	Yes
<p><b>Recommendation 10.</b></p> <p><i>To project developers, FAO and government implementing partner:</i></p> <p>It is recommended that a new phase of the project is developed to support continued capacity development of the key government agencies, NCA and SCAs. This is essential for the sustainable and effective use of the current project's technical outputs, (Biosafety Masterplan, Draft Administrative Guidelines, RA Methodology, etc.) which are of high quality but would not be sustained beyond project period unless supported externally. A another</p>	Partially accepted	The need for another project should be assessed after enactment of the Act, which will provide a clear understanding on the requirement of specific areas (e.g. enforcement) to implement the obligations	FAO, Biodiversity Secretariat, Ministry of Environment and CEA	Post enactment of the Biosafety Act	Yes

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phase would enable the project to overcome the critical gaps mentioned in this report and ensure that the products and processes of the first project are seamlessly integrated into a new project that will enable Sri Lanka to fully meet the requirements of the CPB while reaping benefits of modern biotechnology.		under the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety.			
<p><b>Recommendation 11.</b></p> <p><i>To the government implementing partner:</i></p> <p>It is recommended that periodic programmes or activities that are required as part of obligations to the CPB be carried out even in the absence of a regulatory framework. These types of activities are best if they engage the SCAs, the upgraded laboratories, connect with awareness raising campaigns so that a continuous engagement of major stakeholders is established.</p>	Accepted	Biodiversity Secretariat, Ministry of Environment and Central Environmental Authority (CEA) to carry out periodic programs or activities.	Biodiversity Secretariat, Ministry of Environment and Central Environmental Authority (CEA)	Post enactment of the Biosafety Act	Yes
<p><b>Recommendation 12.</b></p> <p><i>To the FAO and government implementing partner:</i></p> <p>It is recommended to develop activities to investigate environmental risks from GMOs/LMOs on a scenario or case analysis basis, especially given Sri Lanka's biodiversity rich status.</p>	Accepted	This is only pertaining to the GMOs/LMOs used in laboratory research since they are not being cultivated and imported according to the national competent authority.	Biodiversity Secretariat, Ministry of Environment and Central Environmental Authority (CEA)	Post enactment of the Biosafety Act	Yes

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