Norwegian Ministry
of Climate and Environment

The Environment and LMOs: Access to information and public participation in Norway

Side-event

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Basics

- Norway is a Party to the Aarhus Convention and the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety

- Norway's Act on the right to environmental information and public participation requires that
  - The authorities must have general environmental information available and accessible to the public
  - Anyone may receive environmental information from the authorities on request

- A public hearing is required when preparing legislation, plans or programmes that may impact the environment significantly

Basics (contd.)

- In a democracy, access to information and public participation are key

- Norway aims for
  - a high degree of **transparency**
  - **broad involvement** from the public sector and civil society in environmental policymaking
  - and provides for the participation by civil society representatives in major international foras (COP16 = 2)

LMOs/GMOs and the public

Norwegian Gene Technology Act § 12 on freedom to information

The following information shall always be made public:

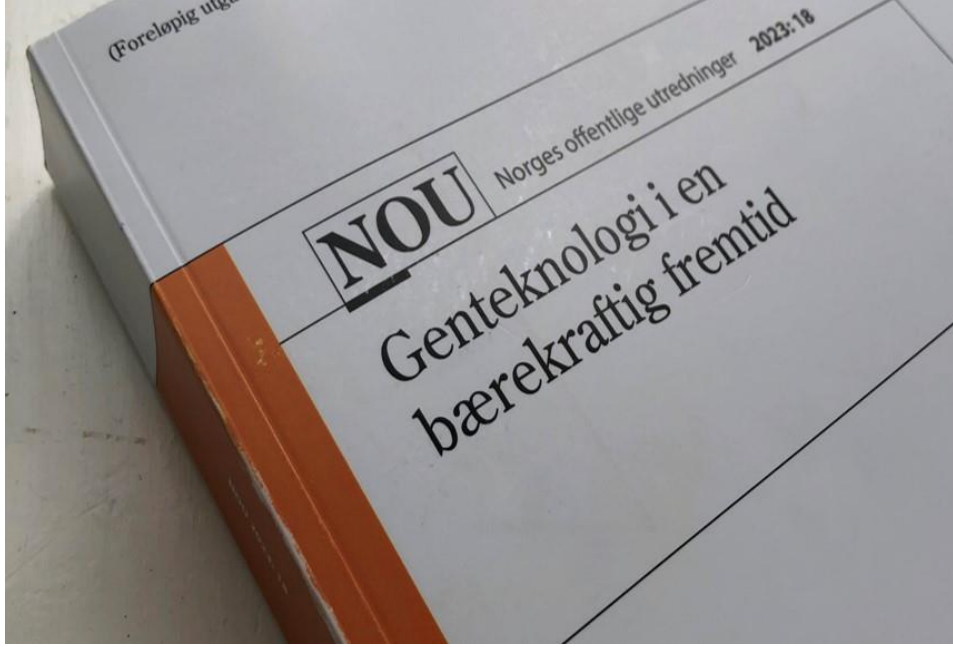
- **Description** of the GMO
- Name and address of **user**
- **Purpose** of the use
- **Location** of use
- Methods and plans for **monitoring** and **emergency response**
- **Assessments** of foreseeable effects

LMOs/GMOs and the public

Norwegian Gene Technology Act § 13 on public consultation:

- The deliberate release of GMO shall always include **public consultation**
- The decision on when to hold a public consultation shall be **published**
- The public consultation shall be held **before** a decision is made
- Public consultation must be carried out in a way that ensures that the general public and interest groups are given **access to relevant information** and a real opportunity to make their opinions known

Public participation, recently….



- An Official Norwegian Report (NOU 2023:18 Gene technology in a sustainable future) was published last year
- A public hearing was carried during a three month period, in order to collect views
- Various interest groups, companies, organizations and private persons submitted their views (260 submissions)
- All entries were made publically available
- This now feeds into the policy making process

(on how to regulate genome edited organisms)

To conclude – and on the new pocket guide

- Norway has a regulatory framework in place and mechanisms that facilitate access to information and public participation

- Norway welcomes the new pocket guide

- This pocket guide may increase public awareness and participation

- It is also a timely reminder for the authorities, it may lead to increased transparency, enhance trust and quality of decisions

Thank you for your attention!

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