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Brazilian capacity building experiences in biosafety: Impacts in governance and supporting decision-making

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GMOs are widely spread around the world, and Brazil is now the second producer behind the USA (1). Initially a defined policy in biosafety was put in place by 1995 which was revised in 2005 (2) with the participation of politicians, decision makers, scientific organization representatives, and groups from organized civil society. The main decision body in place since then is CTNBio, comprised of 27 PhD members and their respective alternates who hold a two-year term, renewable for up to two consecutive periods. So, a significant technical capacity had to be gathered and a critical mass had to be prepared. As expertise is gained with practice and experience, it was recognized that capacity-building initiatives were urgent for different levels of audiences. This presentation will show some experiences on how individuals, groups, institutions, and governmental authorities acted to provide training and technical assistance for the decision bodies. There were, and still are, many types of capacity-building activities in place. Different approaches incorporated a variety of forms and disciplines, and many factors were taken into account (e.g., target beneficiaries, effective content for the level of decision-maker's audience, specific needs, and integration and collaboration among the various disciplines and capacity builders). Among such actions, active participation of country experts in international fora was also encouraged. The need for skilled risk assessors demands a continued effort from governmental and non-governmental organizations; so capacity-building has to be a continuous action. Inclusive discussions, robust scientific criteria and methods are some of the key factors that are needed to support evidence-based risk assessment, and they should be part of the content addressed by any reliable capacity building initiatives.