



NATIONAL BIOSAFETY AUTHORITY

PUBLIC NOTICE

REQUEST FOR COMMENTS ON AN APPLICATION FOR ENVIRONMENTAL RELEASE AND PLACING ON THE MARKET OF GENETICALLY MODIFIED GYPSOPHILA CUT FLOWERS IN KENYA.

The National Biosafety Authority (NBA) is a State Corporation established through the Biosafety Act No. 2, 2009 to regulate all activities involving genetically modified organisms (GMOs) by ensuring safety of human and animal health and provision of adequate protection of the environment. The Act requires the public and other stakeholders to give their comments whenever an Application for environmental release and Placement on the Market of a GMO is submitted to the NBA.

In compliance with the provisions of the Biosafety Act and Biosafety (Environmental Release) Regulations, the Authority hereby announces to the public the receipt of an Application from Imaginature Ltd for Environmental release and Placing on the Market of genetically modified (GM) Gypsophila cut flowers in Kenya.

Prior to this application, Imaginature Ltd in collaboration with Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Organization (KALRO) conducted confined field trials under the supervision of NBA and Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service (KEPHIS) in Naivasha. Conventional Gypsophila flowers (also called Baby's breath) are predominantly white in colour and are solely used for ornamental purposes. They are not consumed by humans or used as animal feed. These flowers are used as filler materials in flower arrangements and bouquets for in-door beautification.

The GM-Gypsophila has been improved through modern techniques by adding a few genetic elements responsible for new range of colours from dark purple and red to light pink coloration in flowers from a model plant called Arapidopsis. The change in colour of the Gypsophila flowers from white colouration has been done in order to fetch premium price in the international Market. The public is informed that other than the colour change of the flower petals, no other alteration has been introduced in the GM-Gypsophila flowers.

According to the Applicant, the GM-Gypsophila varieties will broaden Kenyan farmers' assortment of products, thus promoting their market position as they will be trading in unique products. Also, the combination of higher price and increased volume are expected to increase farmers annual income from Gypsophila stems. To-date, the GM-Gypsophila has not been approved for commercial growing in any other country and if approved, Kenya will be the first pioneering country in authorizing the production of these varieties. In the first phase, the Applicant is targeting limited production by one company based in Naivasha and the flowers will be exported to the USA among others. In future and depending on market needs and regulatory approvals, other production sites and markets will be explored.

Currently, the Application is undergoing a science-based review process by the NBA together with relevant Regulatory Agencies and independent experts. The review process is meant to ensure that the alteration done on these flowers by the Applicant will not have any adverse effects on humans and animal health or the environment. The Biosafety Act provides that the public participates in the decision making-process through submission of comments to the Authority. It is in this spirit that we request the public to participate by submitting their comments to the Authority through the provided address. The Authority therefore, will make the final decision on the Application based on safety assessments, socio-economic considerations and comments received by the public.

If after all considerations, the Authority approves environmental release and placing on the market of the GM Gypsophila, due process governing variety testing and release for plant varieties shall apply as per the national policy, legislation and guidelines for handling genetically modified crops in Kenya.

All interested parties and persons should submit written comments on this Application using a prescribed public comments form, to reach the undersigned not later than 15th July, 2017.

A summarized application dossier, public comments form as well as guidelines for public participation can be accessed through the Authority's website www.biosafetykenya.go.ke. The full Application dossier is also available on request at the NBA offices during normal working hours in the contact address below.

Please send your written comments by mail to:

**The Chief Executive Officer
National Biosafety Authority
Commission for University Education Complex
Redhill Road, Off Limuru Road
P O Box 28251-00100
Nairobi**

OR

By e-mail: gmgypsophila@biosafetykenya.go.ke

PUBLIC FORUM

A public forum on this application will be held at the Kenya School of Monetary Studies (KSMS), Nairobi on Tuesday, 27th June 2017 at 2.30 pm. All are invited to attend.