OECD CONFERENCE ON THE ENVIRONMENTAL USES OF MICRO-ORGANISMS:

An Overview of the State-of-the-Art and Implications for Biotechnology Risk/Safety Assessment

26-27 March 2012 – Paris, France

The object of the Conference is to inform policy makers, regulators and specialists of the use of genetically modified organisms in terms of environmental aspects (biosafety and risk assessment).

The conference will cover developments and the state-of-the art of environmental microbiology, as it is applied for biotechnological purposes, and the role of genetic engineering of micro-organisms intended for use in the environment, now and in the near future.

The conference is organised by the OECD Working Group on Harmonisation of Regulatory Oversight in Biotechnology (WGHORB), with the support of the OECD Cooperative Research Programme.

- **Venue**
  OECD Conference Centre, 2 rue André Pascal, Paris, France (www.oecd.org/conferencecentre)
- **Conference Topics**

Monday 26 March 2012		
8:50-	**Opening remarks and practical arrangements**	
9:20-11:05	**Session 1: Use of micro-organisms in agriculture**	
	• Use of micro-organisms as biofertilizers. Present and future use of transgenic micro-organisms. • Use of micro-organisms for phytosanitary purposes. Present and future use of transgenic micro-organisms. • Issues in risk assessment of the deliberate release of transgenic micro-organisms for agricultural applications.	Luis Gabriel Wall, *Universidad Nacional de Quilmes, Argentina* David M. Weller, *Washington State University, USA* Dirk van Elsas, *University of Groningen, Netherlands*
11:20-13:05	**Session 2: Use of micro-algae for production purposes**	
	• Need and risks of using transgenic micro-algae for production of food, feed, chemicals and fuels. • Introduction to commercial-scale micro-algal cultivation for bioremediation of flue gas and waste waters: Implications of strain selection, culture system and process technologies for end-product development. • Issues in risk assessment of the use of micro-algae for production purposes.	René H. Wijffels, *Wageningen University, Netherlands* Kirsten Heimann, *James Cook University, Australia* Mark Segal, *Environmental Protection Agency, USA*
14:30-15:40	**Session 3: Use of micro-organisms for bioremediation**	
	• Designing bacteria for the environment: from trial-and-error to earnest engineering. • Risk assessment and case studies on the intentional release of micro-organisms into the environment. Challenges to commercial use.	Victor De Lorenzo, *Centro Nacional de Biotecnología, Spain* Andy Ball, *Flinders University, Australia*

16:00-17:10	**Session 4: Use of micro-organisms in cleaning products**	
	• Overview of microbial cleaning products in use; the potential role of transgenic micro-organisms as microbial cleaning products. • Microbes in cleaning products - regulatory experience and challenges for risk assessment.	George Arvanitakis, *Health Canada, Canada* Armin Spoek, *Inter-University Research Centre for Technology, Work and Culture, Austria*
17:10-18:00	Q&A Session	
Tuesday 27 March 2012 (Announcement at 8:50 a.m.)		
9:00-9:15	**Presentation about the CRP**	Leena Finér, *the CRP's Scientific Advisory Body member (Finnish Forest Research Institute), Finland*
9:15-10:25	**Session 5: Environmental applications of microbial symbionts of insects**	
	• Use of bacterial symbionts for the control of insect-borne disease. • Fighting malaria with engineered mosquito symbiotic bacteria: from bench to field.	Iñaki Iturbe-Ormaetxe, *Monash University, Australia* Marcelo Jacobs-Lorena, *Johns Hopkins School of Public Health, USA*
10:45-12:30	**Special Session: Considerations for environmental risk assessment of the deliberate release of engineered micro-organisms**	
	• Next generation sequencing-based metagenomics for monitoring soil microbiota. **Summing Up** ▪ Emerging issues in environmental risk assessment of micro-organisms identified during the Conference. ▪ Review of risk assessment considerations that have been put forward. ▪ Overarching issues in the environmental risk assessment of deliberate release of transgenic micro-organisms. • Prospects and potential new biosafety projects for the OECD Sub-Working Group on Micro-organisms (SWG) / WGHROB.	Jongsik Chun, *Seoul National University, Korea* Hiroshi Yoshikura, *National Institute of Infectious Diseases, Japan* Christoph Tebbe, *Institute for Biodiversity, Germany* Pascal SIMONET *Université de Lyon, France* Hans Bergmans, *National Institute of Public Health and the Environment, Netherlands, Chair of the SWG*
13:30-14:30	Q&A Session	
14:30	Closing Remarks	

For more information on the Conference, visit our website *OECD BioTrack Online* www.oecd.org/biotrack, or contact Dr Hans Bergmans, *National Institute of Public Health and the Environment, Netherlands,* hans.bergmans @ ivm.nl or Mr Kazuyuki Suwabe, OECD, kazuyuki.suwabe @ oecd.org

For registration and admittance at the Conference venue, please fill-in the specific form to be sent back by email to Ms Christiana Oladini-James, OECD, christiana.oladini-james @ oecd.org