

Required Report: Required - Public Distribution

Date: November 21, 2024

Report Number: IV2024-0011

Report Name: Biotechnology and Other New Production Technologies
Annual - 2024

Country: Cote d'Ivoire

Post: Accra

Report Category: Biotechnology and Other New Production Technologies

Prepared By: Isaac Yao, Agricultural Specialist and Mariano J. Beillard, Regional Agricultural Counselor

Approved By: Mariano Beillard, Regional Agricultural Counselor

Report Highlights:

On July 26, 2016, Côte d'Ivoire enacted its national Biosafety Law No. 2016-553. This law establishes the groundwork for managing genetically engineered (GE) products. While the country is still in the early stages of adopting agricultural biotechnology, the law sets forth the key protocols for approval, risk management, and labeling of GE products. Côte d'Ivoire is now also aligning its biosafety framework with ECOWAS standards, strengthening its own role within the regional biotechnology landscape. However, Côte d'Ivoire, notwithstanding the enactment of the Biosafety Law 2016-553, has yet to make fully operational the National Biosafety and Biosecurity Commission (CNBIOS), the country's biotechnology apex regulatory authority. Until it does so, the trade in imports of GE products into Côte d'Ivoire is effectively prohibited.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Côte d'Ivoire is gradually advancing in the adoption of biotechnology and genetically engineered (GE) products. It is establishing a robust national biosafety framework to support agricultural biotechnology.

Côte d'Ivoire's commitment to biosafety took off with its 2015 accession to the [Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety](#) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (October 19, 2000).¹ For the country this marks a significant step towards integrating biotechnology into its agricultural practices. This initial step was reinforced with the enactment of its national [Biosafety Law No. 2016-553 \(July 26, 2016\)](#), Côte d'Ivoire's first comprehensive biosafety law.² The law outlines procedures for the import, handling, and regulation of GE products, assigning roles to various agencies to ensure the safe use of these products for both human and animal consumption.

However, Côte d'Ivoire, notwithstanding the enactment of the **Biosafety Law 2016-553**, has yet to make fully operational the National Biosafety and Biosecurity Commission (CNBIOS), the country's biotechnology apex regulatory authority. Until it does so, imports of GE products into Côte d'Ivoire are effectively prohibited.

Côte d'Ivoire of late has been intensifying efforts to harmonize its own national biosafety framework with regional regulations set by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).³ This alignment ultimately seeks to facilitate the safe movement of GE products across ECOWAS community members' borders, while ensuring compliance with regional biosafety standards.

Public perception of GE products remains limited, with significant gaps in educational outreach, particularly in rural areas. Public acceptance of GE products, going forward, will largely depend on the government's ability to provide accessible and accurate information on the safety and benefits of biotechnology. Enhanced engagement and collaboration between the Ivorian government and biotechnology stakeholders will be crucial for building trust and raising awareness. Such efforts are essential for fostering a more informed population; one that is prepared to embrace the benefits of agricultural biotechnology and contribute to the sector's sustainable growth.

¹ See, United Nations – Treaty Collections, at: https://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=IND&mtmsg_no=XXVII-8-a&chapter=27&clang=en.

² See, Côte d'Ivoire, Droit de la République de Côte d'Ivoire, located at: <https://www.droitci.info/files/72.07.16-Loi-du-26-juillet-2016-portant-regime-de-biosecurite.pdf>.

³ The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS; also known by the acronym CEDEAO in French and Portuguese) is a regional political and economic union of fifteen countries of West Africa. Collectively, the countries comprise an area of 5,114,162 square kilometers (1,974,589 square miles) with an estimated population of over 424 million. The 15-member states include: Benin; Burkina Faso (suspended); Cape Verde; Gambia; Guinea (suspended); Guinea-Bissau; Ivory Coast; Liberia; Mali (suspended); Niger (suspended); Senegal; Sierra Leone; and Togo.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: PLANT BIOTECHNOLOGY 4
PART A: PRODUCTION AND TRADE 4
PART B: POLICY..... 5
PART C: MARKETING 9
CHAPTER 2: ANIMAL BIOTECHNOLOGY 10
PART D: PRODUCTION AND TRADE 10
PART E: POLICY..... 10
PART F: MARKETING 11
CHAPTER 3: MICROBIAL BIOTECHNOLOGY 12
PART G: PRODUCTION AND TRADE 12
PART H: POLICY..... 12
PART I: MARKETING 13

CHAPTER 1: PLANT BIOTECHNOLOGY

PART A: PRODUCTION AND TRADE

a) Research and Product Development

FAS Abidjan (Post) is not aware of any genetically engineered (GE) products being researched at present in Côte d'Ivoire.

b) Commercial Production

At present, in Côte d'Ivoire there is no commercial production of GE products.

c) Exports

Not applicable. There are no known exports of GE products.

d) Imports

Côte d'Ivoire's [Biosafety Law No. 2016-553 \(July 26, 2016\)](#), is a regulatory framework passed by the Ivorian parliament, that outlines the requirements for importing GE products.⁴ According to article 23 of this law, GE product imports are permissible, but these must first count with a formal request submitted to the National Biosafety and Biosecurity Commission (CNBIOS).⁵ However, it's important to highlight that the CNBIOS is not fully operational, effectively prohibiting for the time being the import of GE products into the country. In the future, once the CNBIOS is fully operational and a request for authorization is made, it will review the application and forward it to the Ministry of Environment (MOE). The MOE will then have a 90-day period to assess and decide whether the product should be allowed entry into the country. For the authorization of GE products, the approval process will require the submission of specific information to the CNBIOS, including:

- Data on the taxonomy, ecological and reproductive behavior of the GE organism and its derived products.
- Information about the exporter, recipient organization, vector, and the introduced gene.
- Details on the risks of gene transfer to other organisms, accidental dissemination, and intended use.

All GE plants and their derived products will require to be properly labeled and packaged. The product or accompanying documentation must also clearly display the phrase: "This product contains genetically modified organisms."

⁴ Law No. 2016-553, adopted on July 1, 2016, and published on October 13, 2016, establishes the critical legal framework for biosafety in Côte d'Ivoire. It aims to protect health, safety, and the environment from risks associated with modern biotechnology, covering the import, export, commercialization, and use of genetic engineering and its derivatives, as well as the development of vaccines and pharmaceutical products derived from recombinant DNA technology.

⁵ The National Biosafety and Biosecurity Commission (*Commission Nationale de Biosécurité et de Biosûreté* – known also by its French acronym CNBIOS).

Once approved, GE products must undergo a quarantine period before they can be distributed, marketed, or used for other purposes. The **Biosafety Law No. 2016-553**, however, does not specify the exact duration of the quarantine period.

e) Food Aid

Côte d'Ivoire is recipient of U.S. Government (USG) food aid; specifically receiving food security assistance through the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) [McGovern-Dole Food for Education Program](#).⁶ There is no reported instance of genetically engineered food products being imported through this food security assistance.

f) Trade Barriers

Côte d'Ivoire does not restrict trade premised on biotechnology; ultimately, it adheres to what is specified in the **Biosafety Law No. 2016-553**. It is important to highlight, that for GE products to be authorized for import, the CNBIOS will need to become fully operational. Until so, the trade in products derived from genetic engineering is effectively blocked.

PART B: POLICY

a) Regulatory Framework

In June 2015, Côte d'Ivoire's accession to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, marked a key step in its commitment to biosafety regulations. Subsequently, in July 2016, the Ivorian Parliament enacted the **Biosafety Law No. 2016-553**, which provides a comprehensive legal framework for managing the country's biosafety landscape.

This Ivorian legislation is designed to ensure the safe and efficient distribution of genetically engineered products within the country, reinforcing regulatory oversight, as well as facilitating responsible biotechnology practices across the whole of Côte d'Ivoire.

There is no regulatory distinction made between GE plants containing deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) and those that do not. Nor is there any sort of regulatory distinction made between GE plants considered versus non-living. There is no limitation imposed on the number of approvals/authorizations to be made. Nor is GE product re-registration required; however, the Ministry of the Environment must be informed of any changes regarding the release of GE products to protect human health and safeguard the environment.

⁶ The USDA/Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) funded McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program helps support education, child development and food security in low-income, food-deficit countries around the globe. The program provides for the donation of U.S. agricultural commodities, as well as financial and technical assistance, to support school feeding and maternal and child nutrition projects. McGovern-Dole projects around the world aim to reduce hunger and improve literacy and primary education, especially for girls. FAS-funded food assistance projects are subject to independent evaluation and results are published to the [Development Experience Clearinghouse](#) maintained by the U.S. Agency for International Development. See, USDA/FAS at: <https://fas.usda.gov/programs/mcgovern-dole-food-education-program>.

TABLE 1: Côte d'Ivoire, Legal Terms and Definitions

Legal Term (French)	Legal Term (English)	Laws and Regulations	Legal Definition (English)
<i>Organisme Génétiquement Modifié</i>	Genetically Modified Organism (GMO)	Biosafety Law No. 2016-553; articles 3, 4, 8, 11, 12, 14, 18 to 27, 32, 34 to 36, 38, 41, 46, 49, 50, 52-53.	Any biological entity or organism whose genetic material has been altered using modern biotechnology.
<i>Organisme Vivant Modifié</i>	Living Modified Organism (LMO)	Biosafety Law No. 2016-553	Any GMO in its living form; capable of natural reproduction and propagation in the environment.
<i>Dissémination</i>	Dissemination	Biosafety Law No. 2016-553; articles 3, 14 to 16, 24, 26, 29, 32, 46, 49.	The release of a GMO, or its derivatives into an environment other than the laboratory or greenhouse.
<i>Confinement</i>	Containment	Biosafety Law No. 2016-553; articles 3, 7, 12, 15, 46.	Any physical isolation using appropriate equipment and facilities and/or biological isolation utilizing organisms whose ability to survive or reproduce in the environment is limited, to effectively restrict the contact of these GMOs or derived products, with the external environment and their impact on the environment.
<i>Biosécurité</i>	Biosafety	Biosafety Law No. 2016-553.	Any measure aimed at avoiding risks arising from modern biotechnology on biological diversity, human and animal health, on the environment and on social activities and economic practices.
<i>Biosûreté</i>	Biosecurity	Biosafety Law No. 2016-553.	The technological and practical principles of containment put in place to avoid accidents and unintended exposure to pathogens or toxins.
<i>Biotechnologie Moderne</i>	Modern Biotechnology	Biosafety Law No. 2016-553.	a) The application of invitro techniques to nucleic acids, including deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA), and the direct introduction of nucleic acids into cells or organelles. b) Cell fusion of organisms that do not belong to the same taxonomic family, that overcome the natural barriers of reproductive physiology or recombination and that are not techniques used for conventional breeding and selection.

Political Factors: The primary goal of Côte d’Ivoire’s **Biosafety Law No. 2016-553** is to establish a robust framework for ensuring the safety of genetically engineered products in the country. In developing this policy, the Ivorian government has sought to:

- Guarantee the safety of GE products for the public health and the environment.
- Protect the country’s biodiversity and ecosystem from potential risks from GE products.
- Ensure that policy is compatible with local applications and ethical standards.
- Align the biosafety law with regional and sub-regional agreements, including the Economic Community of West African States’ (ECOWAS) biotechnology.⁷

Côte d’Ivoire, Institutions Responsible for Implementing the Biosafety Law No. 2016-553: Côte d’Ivoire’s **Biosafety Law No. 2016-553** tasks the National Biosafety and Biosecurity Commission and the National Biosafety Observatory (ONBIOS) with implementing the law’s stipulations.⁸ However, neither the CNBIOS, nor the ONBIOS are yet fully operational. Nonetheless, approval from the CNBIOS is a prerequisite for the use of GE plants or their derived products in Côte d’Ivoire. The specific authorization criteria for GE products, however, has been established through a decree issued by the Ivorian government’s Council of Ministers. It is important to point out, that for imports of GE products to be authorized, the CNBIOS will need to become fully operational. Until so, the trade in products derived from genetic engineering is effectively blocked.

The National Biosafety and Biosecurity Commission is the designated regulatory authority responsible for biotechnology activities. The CNBIOS is to evaluate applications for the authorization of imports of GE products; a determination to authorize an import is to be science-based. The CNBIOS aims to issue a determination within 90-days from the submission of the authorization request. During the evaluation process, the CNBIOS will undertake the following key actions:

- Notify transboundary movements of GE products.
- Request additional information from the notifier as necessary.
- Handle appeals from exporting parties and or notifiers regarding decisions.
- Engage with the notifier on matters of confidential information.

Once the CNBIOS reviews the submitted application for importation, the same and its findings are to be remitted to the Ministry of Environment. The MOE is required to provide a determination within 90-days of receiving the CNBIOS notification. The ministry counts with the option of informing the applicant of the need for an additional 60-day extension to accommodate the approval process, if deemed necessary. However, if the ministry does not respond within the initial 90-day period, the application is automatically considered declined. In certain cases, the MOE may require the applicant or recipient to modify the conditions under which GE products are disseminated. If necessary, the MOE counts with the authority to suspend or revoke GE product approvals.

⁷ This [ECOWAS regulation](#) provides a regional framework for managing biotechnology risks, promoting a coordinated approach among member states. It establishes principles, prevention measures, and responsibilities related to the use, transit, and cross-border movement of bioengineered products, supports regional biodiversity conservation, and health protection.

⁸ Côte d’Ivoire’s National Biosafety Observatory (*Observatoire National de Biosécurité* – known also by its French acronym ONBIOS).

According to the **Biosafety Law No. 2016-553**, article 26, “any genetically modified organism (GMO) or its derivatives must undergo a quarantine period before being disseminated, commercialized, or used for any other purpose.” However, the specific duration of this quarantine period for GE products has not yet been defined or specified.

The National Biosafety Observatory is an independent entity tasked with:

- Facilitating the public’s participation in biotechnology discussions.
- Promoting transparency in the monitoring and evaluation of issues related to GE products.
- Encouraging informed, public involvement in biotechnology policy decision-making processes.

b) Approvals/Authorizations

At present, no GE crops (i.e., for industrial, food, or feed use) have been officially approved or registered in Côte d’Ivoire for their open cultivation, import or export.

c) Stacked or Pyramided Event Approvals

There are no additional approvals required for stacked or pyramided events.

d) Field Testing

Currently, FAS Abidjan is unaware of any active field trials in Côte d’Ivoire. However, the country allows field testing of GE products, provided authorization is granted by the relevant authority. Confined field trials are classified into four security levels, that is, dependent on the potential risks posed to human and animal health, as well as to the environment.

For trials categorized under security levels 2 to 4, strict coordination and monitoring with the competent authority is required throughout the process. In contrast, for security level 1 trials, only a certificate of approval from the CNBIOS is needed to authorize the field trial.

e) Innovative Biotechnologies

The **Biosafety Law No. 2016-553**, article 3 stipulates that GE animals fall under the same regulations and guidelines as those for GE plants.

f) Coexistence

The **Biosafety Law No. 2016-553** ensures the coexistence of GE and non-GE crops.

g) Labeling and Traceability

In accordance with the **Biosafety Law No. 2016-553**, any GE products intended for deliberate release, import, or export must be appropriately packaged and labeled. The phrase “this product contains genetically modified organisms” must be clearly displayed either on the product’s label or on an accompanying document, ensuring transparency and compliance with biosafety regulations.

h) Monitoring and Testing

Côte d'Ivoire's **Biosafety Law No. 2016-553** does not stipulate any details on monitoring and testing for GE traits.

i) Low level Presence (LLP) Policy

Côte d'Ivoire lacks an LLP policy.

j) Additional Regulatory Requirements

There are no additional regulatory requirements.

k) Intellectual Property Right (IPR)

All GE and derived products in Côte d'Ivoire can be marketed if authorized by the Ivorian government.

l) Cartagena Protocol Ratification

March 12, 2015, is Côte d'Ivoire's accession/approbation date for its adoption of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (CPB); the entry into force date is June 10, 2015.

m) International Treaties/Fora

Côte d'Ivoire is member of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), World Trade Organization (WTO), and of *Codex Alimentarius* (Codex).

n) Related Issues

Nothing significant to report.

PART C: MARKETING

a) Public/Private Opinions

The general population is largely unaware about GE plants and animals. Biotechnology in Côte d'Ivoire is just starting to take hold. Public and private opinions about the adoption of GE products have not been fully developed.

b) Market Acceptance/Studies

Post is not aware of any market studies ongoing in Côte d'Ivoire.

CHAPTER 2: ANIMAL BIOTECHNOLOGY

PART D: PRODUCTION AND TRADE

a) Research and Product Development

Genetic engineering research for animals is not taking place in Côte d'Ivoire. Post is not aware of the development of bioengineered animal products taking place.

b) Commercial Production

There is no commercial production of GE animals, insects, birds, or fish in Côte d'Ivoire, nor is there commercial production of cloned animals.

c) Exports

Côte d'Ivoire does not export any GE animals, animal clones, or products from these animals.

d) Imports

Côte d'Ivoire does not distinguish between plant and animal biotechnology imports.

e) Trade Barriers

It is important to highlight, that for GE products to be authorized for import, the CNBIOS will need to become fully operational. Until so, the trade in products derived from genetic engineering is effectively blocked. There are no additional known regulatory requirements impacting trade.

PART E: POLICY

a) Regulatory Framework

The regulatory framework for animal biotechnology is the same as that for plant biotechnology.

b) Approvals/Authorizations

There is no limitation imposed on the number of approvals/authorizations.

c) Innovative Biotechnologies

The **Biosafety Law No. 2016-553**, article 3 stipulates that GE animals fall under the same regulations and guidelines as those for GE plants.

d) Labeling and Traceability

There are no regulations detailing requirements on labeling or the traceability of GE animals and products, including cloned animals.

e) Additional Regulatory Requirements

There are no additional regulatory requirements.

f) Intellectual Property Rights

No specific regulations exist on IPR for animal biotechnology.

g) International Treaties and Fora

Côte d'Ivoire is member of the Food and Agriculture Organization, the World Trade Organization, and of Codex.

h) Related Issues

Nothing significant to report.

PART F: MARKETING

a) Public/Private Opinions

The general population is largely unaware about GE plants and animals. Biotechnology in Côte d'Ivoire is just starting to take hold. Public and private opinions about the adoption of GE products have not been fully developed.

b) Market Acceptance/Studies

Nothing to report.

CHAPTER 3: MICROBIAL BIOTECHNOLOGY

PART G: PRODUCTION AND TRADE

a) Commercial Production

Nothing to report.

b) Exports

Nothing to report.

c) Imports

Côte d'Ivoire imports products that may contain microbial biotech-derived food ingredients. Most of the microbial derived products are imported under a common harmonized tariff system (HS) code, which makes effective tracking of each product difficult.

d) Trade Barriers

It is important to highlight, that for GE products to be authorized for import, the CNBIOS will need to become fully operational. Until so, the trade in products derived from genetic engineering is effectively blocked. FAS Abidjan is not aware of other trade barriers that may affect the trade of microbial biotech-derived food ingredients or processed food products containing microbial biotech derived food ingredients.

PART H: POLICY

a) Regulatory Framework

The regulatory framework is the same as that for plant and animal biotechnology.

b) Approvals/Authorizations

Approval/authorization procedures are different from that of plant and animal biotechnology.

c) Labeling and Traceability

Same as that of plant and animal biotechnology.

d) Monitoring and Testing

Same as that of plant biotechnology.

e) Additional Regulatory Requirements

There are no additional regulatory requirements.

f) Intellectual Property Rights

Same as that of plant biotechnology.

g) Related Issues

Nothing significant to report.

PART I: MARKETING

a) Public/Private Opinions

The general population is largely unaware about GE plants and animals, and microbial biotechnology. Biotechnology in Côte d'Ivoire is just starting to take hold. Public and private opinions about the adoption of GE products have not been fully developed.

b) Market Acceptance/Studies

Nothing to report.

Attachments:

No Attachments