

Voluntary Report – Voluntary - Public Distribution

Date: March 10, 2022

Report Number: RP2022-0013

Report Name: Philippines Streamlines Biotechnology Regulations with Revised Joint Department Circular

Country: Philippines

Post: Manila

Report Category: Biotechnology - Plants and Animals, Climate Change/Global Warming/Food Security, Grain and Feed

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Report Highlights:

On February 15, 2022, the Philippines approved the revised Joint Department Circular No. 1 (JDC), streamlining the regulatory policy governing plant biotechnology. Signed by five Department Secretaries, the document was published in two newspapers on March 8, 2022, and will go into effect 15 days later. The reforms are expected to shorten the timeline for approvals significantly and greatly reduce compliance costs for commercializing genetically engineered crops. Passage of the revised JDC again highlights Philippine leadership in biotechnology, following its approval of Golden Rice for commercial propagation in 2021. The science-based policy will foster agricultural innovation to help the country address Sustainable Development Goals of zero hunger (SDG 2) and climate action (SDG 13).

Background

On February 15, 2022, the Philippines approved the revised [Joint Department Circular No. 1](#) (JDC), signed by the Secretaries of the Department of Science and Technology (DOST), Department Agriculture (DA), Department of Environment and Natural Resource (DENR), Department of Health (DOH), and Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG). This follows a multi-year review of the prior [JDC of 2016](#), which itself replaced [DA Administrative Order No. 8](#) of 2002. The revised JDC was published in two newspapers on March 8, 2022 and will go into effect 15 days later.

Regulations updated to comply with Ease of Doing Business Law

The revised JDC provides the regulatory policy for importation, handling and use, transboundary movement, release into the environment, and management of genetically engineered plants and plant products. The agencies reviewed the JDC to modernize the process and reduce bureaucracy, making note to comply with the [Ease of Doing Business Act](#) (EODB). The law mandates timelines for government tasks depending on the complexity, with compliance enforced by the [Anti-Red Tape Authority](#).

Highlights of the revised JDC

1. Creation of the Joint Assessment Group (JAG) to evaluate applications for field trial, commercial propagation, and direct use, replacing the previously sequential review by the five departments.
2. Biosafety approvals for direct use and commercial propagation will no longer require renewals after five years of safe use. Biosafety permits will remain valid unless revoked.
3. The individual steps to process an application are shortened in compliance with the EODB. The overall timeline is reduced from 85 working days (which in practice was considerably longer) to under 70 working days.
4. Stacked events will no longer require a separate approval if the single event components already have existing biosafety permits.
5. Adding a presumed approval of the JAG's decision on an application if a department is absent the meetings.

New biotech policy to support Philippines' Sustainable Development Goals

The revised JDC will facilitate the review and approval of safe technologies that can help the Philippines' SDG goals of Zero Hunger and Climate Action. Building on the success of Golden Rice, which will support improved nutrition, agricultural innovations such as Bt eggplant can assist farmers with climate resilient crops that require fewer inputs.

For more information on Philippine biotechnology, see the [2021 Annual Biotechnology Report](#). More information on Golden Rice is available in [this report](#).

Attachments:

No Attachments.