

Some selected publications

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GenØk - Centre for Biosafety



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GenØk – Centre for Biosafety is engaged in research, advisory services and capacity building related to biosafety. The centre focuses in particular on the environmental and health related consequences of the application of new bio- and nanotechnology (biosafety). GenØk was founded in 1998 and is a non-commercial and independent research institute located in the research environment at the University of Tromsø and the Science Park.

GenØk is the national centre for biosafety in Norway and works closely with Norwegian authorities on issues related to biosafety.

International collaboration

The head office is based in Tromsø (Norway) but the centre is also represented in Trondheim (Norway), Christchurch (New Zealand), Geneva and Zurich (Switzerland) and Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia). GenØk is part of a national and international co-operative network, which encompasses recognized Norwegian and international research institutions and groups, as well as independent NGOs.



Research

GenØk's research projects are focusing on three potential impact areas related to development and use of new bio- and nanotechnology:

- Human, as well as animal health and nutrition (e.g. vaccine, food and feed safety).
- The environment and natural resources (biodiversity, ecosystem integrity, agriculture, forestry, aquaculture).
- Sustainable innovations and outcomes (assessment of risk, uncertainty and other ethical aspects).

The research projects are based on cell culture, organismal and food-web models, employing strategies and methods from functional genomics, molecular biology, ecology, social sciences and bioethics.

Consultancy

As a national centre for biosafety, GenØk carries consultancy duties to, and offers advisory services for, national and international regulatory authorities, and other interested parties, on issues related to new bio- and nanotechnology. GenØk staff members are also frequently represented in national and international committees related to biosafety.

Capacity building

The aim of the GenØk-initiated Gateways Institute Program is to establish a global network of genuinely independent research institutions serving as regional biosafety centres. GenØk is currently working with partners in China, Zambia and South Africa.

GenØk has been carrying out capacity building projects related to genetic engineering and genetically modified organisms in developing countries since 2003:

- The centre organizes biosafety courses in Tromsø, as well as regional courses in developing countries.
- In co-operation with the University of Tromsø an online course in biosafety is offered and plans for MSc. and PhD. programs are being developed.
- In 2007 the centre published a book called Biosafety First – Holistic Approaches to Risk and Uncertainty in Genetic Engineering and Genetically Modified Organisms.
- Together with Centre for Integrated Research on Biosafety in New Zealand GenØk has developed the BAT (The Biosafety Assessment Tool), a free Internet based service that provides forecasts, practical advice, checklists and access to literature on trends in development and products with biosafety implications.

