Australian Government
Department of Health and Aged Care
Office of the Gene Technology Regulator

19 June 2024

Summary of Licence Application DIR 205

CSIRO has made an application under the *Gene Technology Act 2000* (the Act) for Dealings involving the Intentional Release (DIR) of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) into the Australian environment.

Project Title	Limited and controlled release of canola genetically modified for increased abiotic stress tolerance[1]
Parent organism	Canola (*Brassica napus* L.)
Genetic modifications	
Introduced genes and modified traits	• A gene from yeast[2] conferring abiotic stress tolerance • *pat* gene from soil bacterium *Streptomyces viridochromogenes* as a selectable marker conferring glufosinate herbicide tolerance
Genetic modification method	*Agrobacterium*-mediated transformation
Principal purpose	To evaluate the performance of the GM canola plants under field conditions with and without irrigation
Previous releases	None in Australia and overseas
Proposed limits	
Proposed use of GM plants	No use in human food or animal feed proposed
Proposed locations	Up to 3 sites per year in New South Wales and South Australia
Proposed release size	Up to a maximum planting area of 1.5 hectares (ha) for each site in the first year and 2 ha for each site in the subsequent years
Proposed period of release	May 2025 – December 2030

Proposed Controls include measures to:

- restrict access to the trial site by people and animals
- limit outcrossing to non-GM plants through the use of pollen traps, monitoring zones and isolation zones
- ensure GM seeds and plant material are contained during transport and storage in accordance with the Regulator's guidelines
- ensure that GM plants do not remain after harvest through regular inspection of the trial sites and destruction of any GM plants found before flowering.

[1] The title of the project as supplied by the applicant is "Limited and controlled release of *Brassica napus* (Canola) genetically modified for increased physiological growth in response to abiotic stresses".

[2] Details about the identity and source of the introduced gene in the GM canola lines are the subject of an application for declaration as Confidential Commercial Information (CCI) under section 185 of the Act. This information will be made available to the prescribed experts and agencies that will be consulted on this application. CCI is not available to the public.

Consideration as a limited and controlled release (field trial)

This application is considered to be a limited and controlled release application under section 50A of the Act, as the Regulator was satisfied that:

- its principal purpose is to enable the applicant to conduct experiments; and
- the applicant has proposed limits and controls that are of a kind that the Regulator is not required to consult before preparing the consultation version of the RARMP.

Next steps

The Gene Technology legislation sets out what the Regulator must do, as well as what the Regulator can or must consider, before deciding whether or not to issue a licence for this application.

The Regulator's staff will prepare a consultation version of the Risk Assessment and Risk Management Plan (RARMP) considering aspects of the application including the proposed limits and controls in accordance with the legislation.

The Regulator will seek comment on the consultation RARMP from the public, as well as a wide range of experts, agencies and authorities. The public and experts will be invited to provide submissions on the risks to human health and safety, and on risks to the environment from the proposed release.

At this stage, the consultation RARMP is expected to be released for comment in **mid July 2024**.

After consultation, the Regulator's staff will finalise the RARMP, taking into account advice on relevant matters. The finalised RARMP will form the basis of the Regulator's decision whether or not to issue a licence. The consultation and final versions of the RARMP and associated documents will be available on the OGTR website when they are released.

Other information available from the OGTR website:

- documents on genetic modification methods and selectable marker genes
- information on Australia's national scheme for regulation of gene technology
- information on the DIR application process.

Please use the contact details below, if you

- would like a copy of the application. Please include the identifier DIR 205.
- have any questions about the application or the legislated evaluation process
- wish to register on the mailing list.

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