

# NAMIBIA'S CURRENT STATUS ON BIOTECHNOLOGY & BIOSAFETY

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**NCRST**  
NATIONAL COMMISSION  
ON RESEARCH SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

# Introduction

- The National Commission on Research Science and Technology (NCRST) was established in terms of section 4 of Research Science and Technology Act, 2004 (Act no 23 of 2004)
- NCRST was officially launched in April 2014;
- NCRST will be the competent authority → Administer Biosafety Act,
- take over from NABA (Namibia Biotechnology Alliance) → Interim committee)

# Introduction: Administration of Biosafety Act

- The Biosafety Act (Act No. 7 of 2006) provides for measures to regulate following activities w.r.t GMOs;
  - ▣ Research & Development,
  - ▣ Production & marketing,
  - ▣ Transport,
  - ▣ And other uses of GMOs & specified products derived from GMOs;
  
- NCRST has established a Biosafety Council → will be inaugurated 4<sup>th</sup> July 2014;
  
- Biosafety Regulations to the Biosafety Act currently being drafted in consultation with stakeholders.

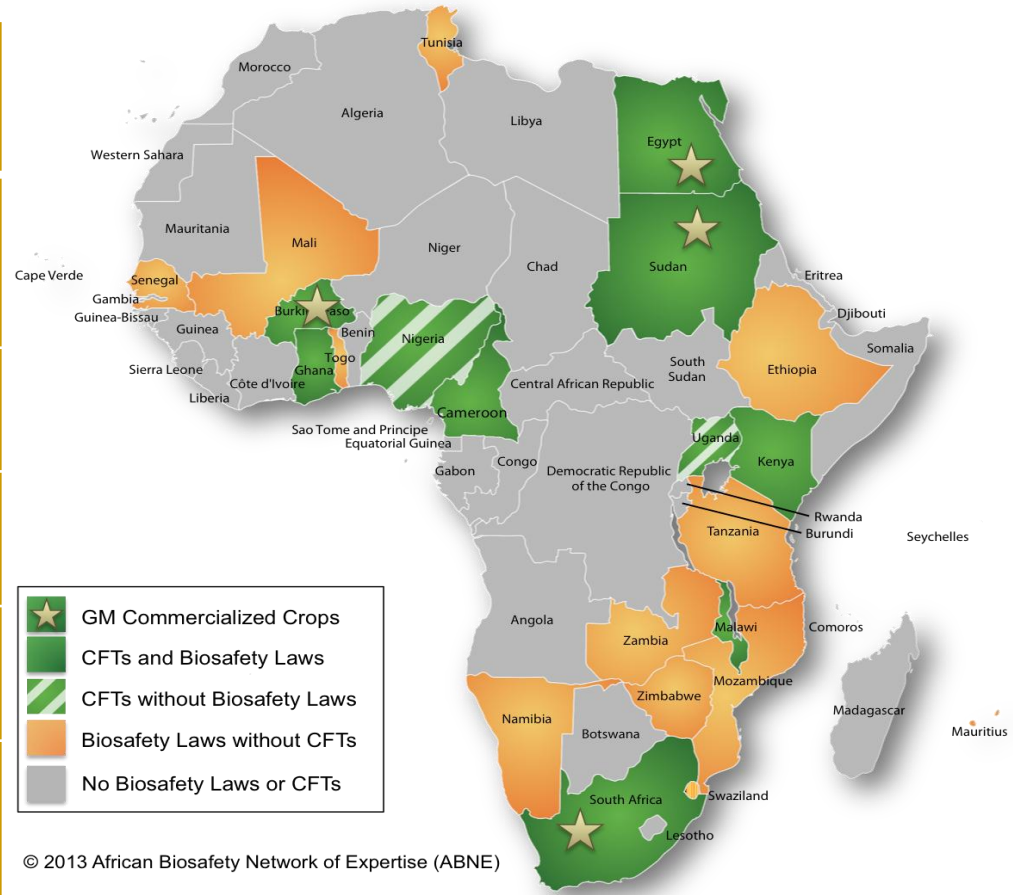
# GMO Testing Facilities

## **Biotechnology Testing and Research Facilities**

- No reference Laboratory for GMOs
- The NCRST plans to establish a GMO testing laboratory → accreditation to ISO/IEC 17025-
- Laboratory required to facilitate full implementation of Namibia's Biosafety Framework.

# Current Status: Biotechnology & Biosafety

Current Status w.r.t	Yes/ No
Draft National Biosafety Framework	Yes
Biosafety Legislation	Yes
Biotechnology/Biosafety Policy	Yes
Approved GM Laboratory	No
Confined Field Trial & General Release Approval	No



Source: African Biosafety Network Enterprise(ABNE)



# Level of Awareness

- Survey conducted (Aug 13 to ) on awareness showed only 38% of participants had heard about GMOs.
- Study also shows that participants did not understand the basics of Biotechnology,
  - E.g. What is a gene
- Most info comes from anti GMO consumer group esp. in absence of fully operational NBF.

## We eat genetically modified maize products

19 Feb 2013 - Story by Irene !Hoaës

Article Views (non-unique): 1681



**WINDHOEK** - Maize meal sold in some shops in Namibia is derived from genetically modified organisms (GMOs), a recent test has revealed.

Moreover, unsuspecting Namibian consumers are being charged at least an 8 percent "GMO free premium" on maize products under the pretext the maize brand does not contain any GMOs. The agronomic industry is operating under an agreement it refers to as the 'marketing agreement' through which the price of maize is fixed.

The Namibia Consumer Trust (NCT) had after years of suspicion of wrongdoing in the agronomic sector, sent some samples of three maize-based products for testing in a lab at the University of the Free State in South Africa.

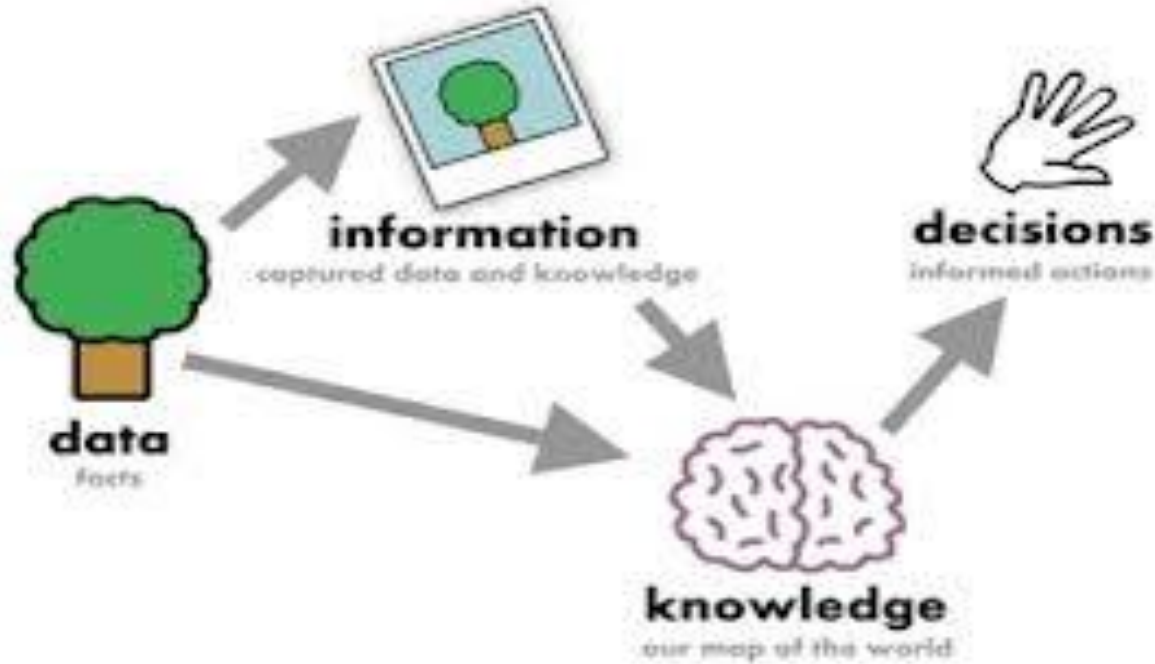
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...the popular White Star Maize...



# Current Problems/issues

- Lack Informed Decision makers on modern Biotechnology
- Lack of Information dissemination → Public, Farmers, Agro processors





# Recommended Approach: Draft Strategy

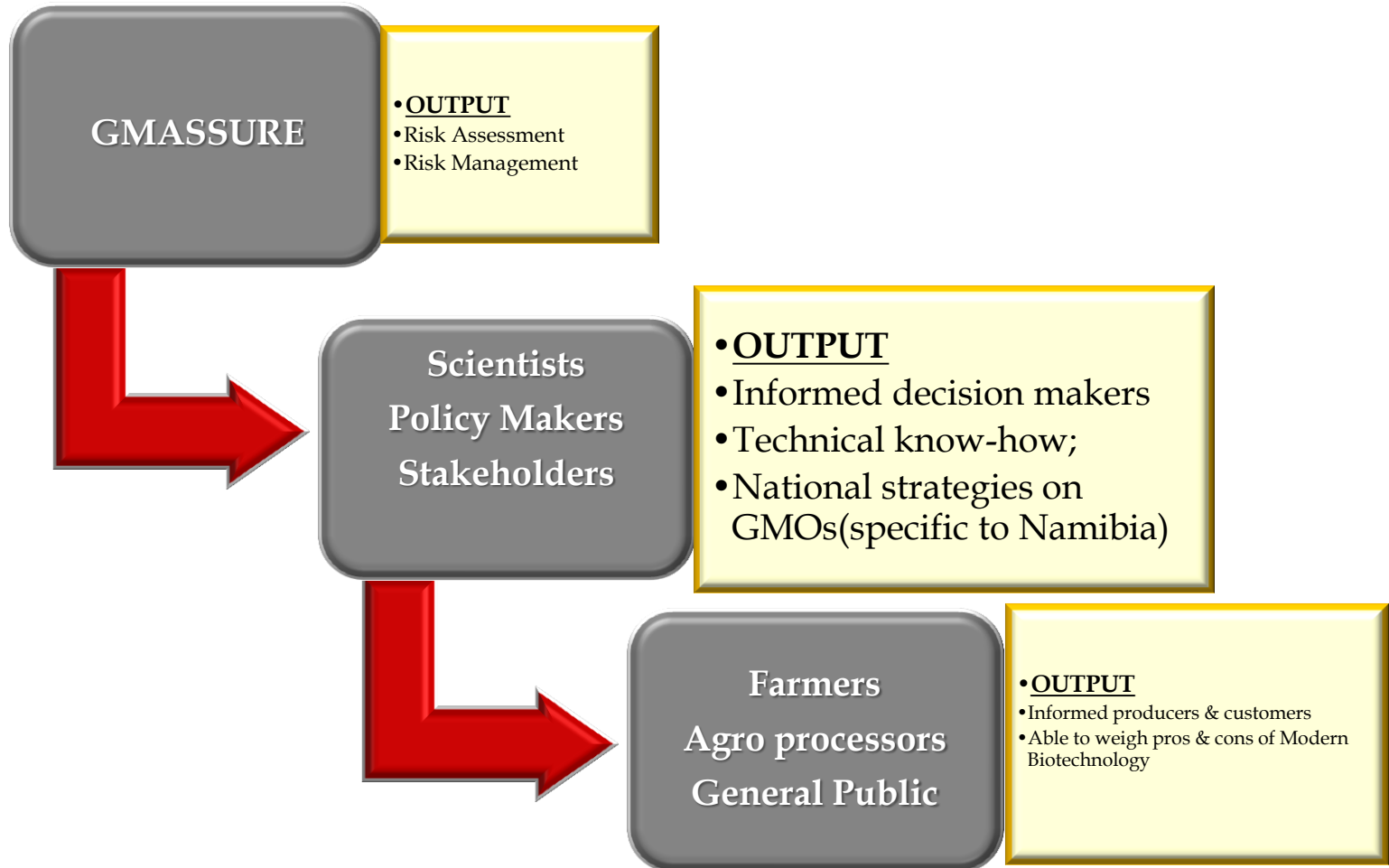
- Awareness raising and Biosafety Information exchange
- Capacity building(human & Institutional);
- Policy and Legal Frameworks
- International & regional cooperation


# Recommended Approach: GMOs Information dissemination

- **Media:** Interactive TV shows (Question & Answer) ;
- **Articles** in paper, accurately weighing pros & cons so public is able to form individual opinions;
- Reassurance of customers choice through **branding** of products;
- Interactive **workshops** with cultural & religious leaders;
- Public Awareness Roadshows

# GMASSURE:

Assuring agricultural and food safety of Genetically Modified Organisms(GMOs) in Southern Africa(GMASSURE)





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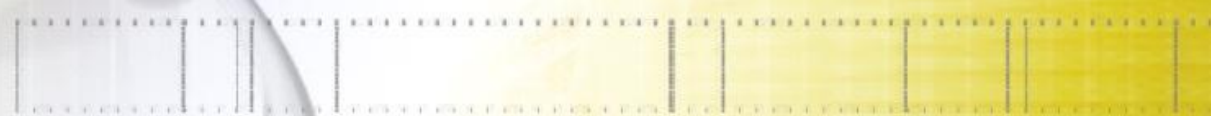
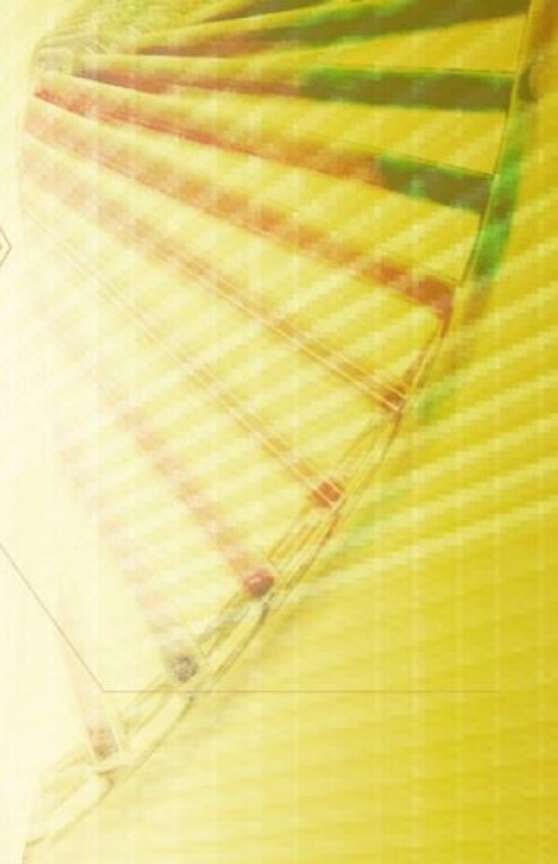
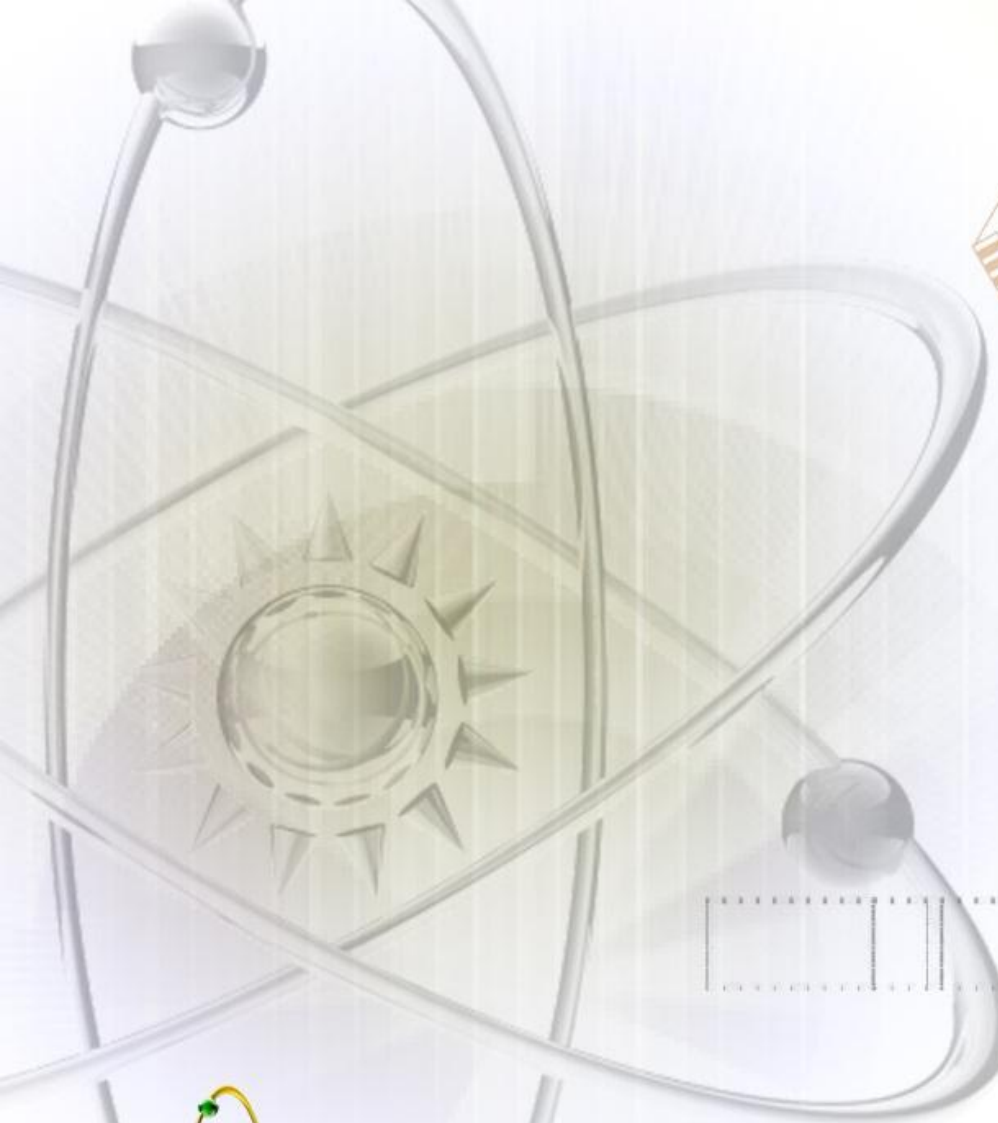
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**THANK YOU FOR  
YOUR  
ATTENTION!!**



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