

Ecosystem Effects of Novel Living Organisms (EENLO): A Federal Research Initiative

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The purpose of the EENLO initiative is to generate knowledge, through an effective and integrated approach, on long-term ecosystem effects of NLOs, in order to strengthen the sound scientific basis for policies on, decisions about, and management of NLOs. A NLO is a living organism, bearing a trait novel to that species, whose genetic make-up has been influenced by any of a variety of means known as “biotechnology,” as per the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999 (1). With Environment Canada as the lead department; this initiative is centred on the establishment of an interdisciplinary network of researchers from across Canada, both within and outside the federal government, generating and sharing knowledge and ideas about the ecosystem effects of NLOs in collaboration with regulators, policy makers, and the general public. In order to coordinate the networking and facilitate communication and collaboration among academic and government researchers, policy makers and regulators working with EENLO related issues, an online community of practice (CoP) has been established.

Biotechnology derived *Bt* cotton, potatoes and corn are approved for environmental release, and *Bt* corn is widely used in Canada (2). Several areas have been identified as being in need of further research to enable decision makers to make more informed choices regarding the responsible deployment of these NLOs. The EENLO initiative seeks to address such knowledge gaps in generating and managing ecosystem information through its proposed seven research themes organized under foundational research, impact research and risk reduction research.

References

1. **Canadian Environmental Protection Act.** 1999. Retrieved October 15, 2005, from <http://laws.justice.gc.ca/en/C-15.31/text.html>
2. **Canadian Food Inspection Agency.** Retrieved October 15, 2005, from www.inspection.gc.ca/english/sci/-biotech/enviro/monarce.shtml

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