Read out of the Virtual Breakout Group Session in Animal Biotechnology ***(Latin American Government Regulatory/Policy Officials)***

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Session Overview

- October 20th, 2020
- Participants:
  - 41 people from 12 countries
  - Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, and Uruguay.

Challenges

What do you see as the biggest regulatory challenges for agricultural and food applications of animal biotechnology?

- **Lack of knowledge** of the technology, in general, and of animal biotech, in particular, by different actors (academics, regulators, politicians and general public).
- **Poor communication** and a consequently poor and **fear-driven public perception**.
- **Absence of political will**, **constant** regulator and legislator **turnover**, and **lack of harmonious work** inside the governmental agencies.
- **Lack** of clear national **GM-animal regulation**.
- **Lack** of stakeholders' **confidence** in the regulatory system.
- **Lack of R&D resources** (for infrastructure, personnel, training).

Challenges

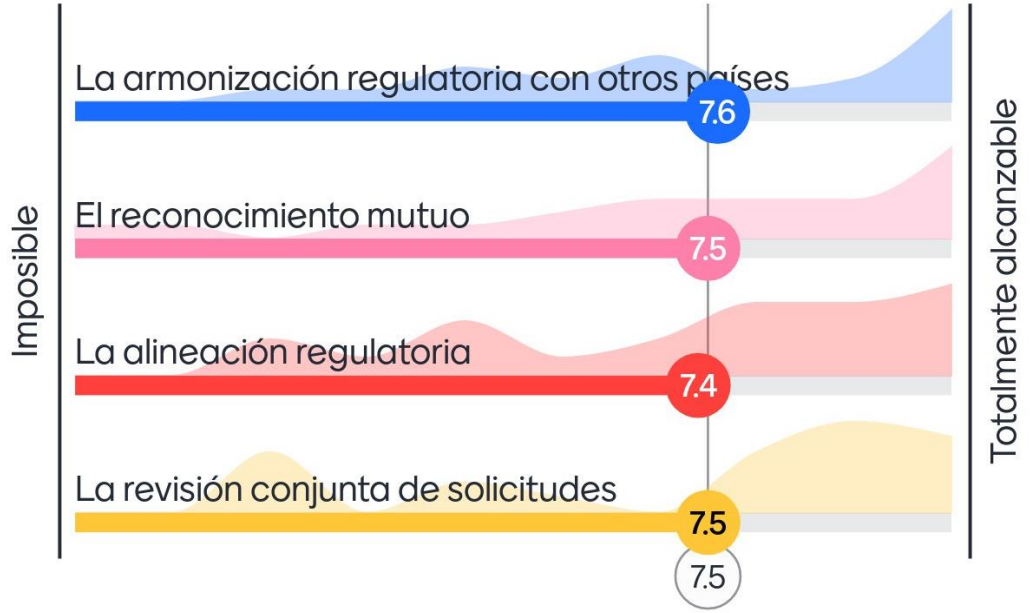
What are recommendations to help overcome these challenges?

- **Education** (starting at school level) and strong and frequent **capacity building** activities oriented mainly to regulators and legislators.
- To improve **communication** of science at all stakeholder levels (scientists, regulators, developers). The communication strategies must take into account:
  - **Partnerships** with academia
  - Focus on **biotech benefits** vs myths
  - Focus the conversation on **economic impacts** of technology adoption
  - **Bring all** stakeholders in the discussion, including consumers, developers, regulators, etc.
- **Update** existing regulatory frameworks, if necessary
- Strengthening **technology transfer**
- **Financing**

Regulatory Cooperation

How do you envision regulatory cooperation in animal biotechnology oversight in your region?

- To what extent is it possible (just neighboring countries, global?)
  - Neighboring countries may be a possibility: Honduras-Guatemala case
  - Regulatory cooperation is a possibility
- What are the main challenges to cooperation and potential regional approaches?
  - Heterogeneity: Different regulatory frameworks in each country
  - Moratorium against GMOs in certain countries
  - Fear of losing sovereignty rights



Regulatory Cooperation

How do you envision regulatory cooperation in animal biotechnology oversight in your region?

- What mechanisms can help improve regulatory cooperation and alignment/compatibility
  - **Establish *Ad Hoc* groups** to provide scientific, communication, and regulatory assessment
  - **Scientists alignment**
  - High level official and decision maker involvement, not only at the technical level
  - **Cooperation**
    - **Data sharing**, (risk assessments), **without losing sovereignty** rights
    - **Information exchange** specially with those countries that are more experienced
    - Establishing **discussion groups** among different countries
    - Implementing joint **capacity building initiatives (based on real case studies/analysis)**
    - **Building confidence**

Scope of Regulation

Does your country exempt any types of genome edited or genetically engineered/modified animals or products thereof?

- **Assess the country´s need for the technology before considering regulations**
- **Assess existing regulations before considering additional regulations**
- **Case by case approach**: focus the discussion, regulation and risk assessment depending on the scope of the animal biotech derived product (food, environmental release, disease control)
- Follow the Cartagena Protocol as guidelines to be adopted and adapted accordingly, for instance consider other countries assessment on environmental release

Preparing for Innovation

What is your country doing to encourage innovation and support developers in the application process?

- Concern for lack of regulatory framework to face new to market products (salmon, mosquitoes)
- Establish scientific direct communication to final consumers to assess public perception before product regulatory assessment and launch
- Capacity building efforts for decision makers
- Taking advantage of COVID virtual environments to communicate simple scientific messaging through virtual platforms

Next steps

Identify potential follow-up activities that would be beneficial within your region

- **Capacity building** activities targeting **different groups of interest**.
  - For example: researchers on regulation and communication
- **Capacity building** efforts focusing on actual case studies.
  - For instance, biosafety committee evaluation for approving GE salmon
- Workshops for training in **public communication**
- **Regulatory workshops**