

TERMS OF REFERENCE
CEC ADVISORY GROUP ON GENETIC DIVERSITY OF MAIZE IN MEXICO

The Commission for Environmental Cooperation's Maize Advisory Group is the expert advisory group appointed by the Commission's Secretariat to develop an Article 13 report on issues related to the conservation and sustainable use of maize genetic diversity in Mexico. The report is a response to stakeholders' requests to analyze the possible impacts of transgenic introgression into land races of maize in Mexico. Its purpose is to examine issues related to gene flow, both direct and indirect, from transgenic varieties of maize to Mexican land races and their wild relatives, and the conservation of biodiversity in its center of origin. The Secretariat, under the guidance of the Maize Advisory Group, will develop the report and a set of accompanying recommendations to the governments of Mexico, Canada, and the United States.

The Article 13 report will analyze the likely effects of current and future uses of transgenic maize as compared to non-transgenic maize production upon: a) the genetic diversity of land races and wild relatives, b) agricultural and natural biodiversity, c) human and animal health, d) social values and cultural identity, and e) economic impact.

Our focus is the impacts of cultivation of current and near-term commercial transgenic maize varieties on land races and wild relatives of maize and the possible introgression and effects of transgenes into those taxonomic entities. We will also consider likely future transgenic maize varieties to ensure our analysis serves future policy-making and scientific research.

In considering the effects of transgenic maize cultivation we will seek to identify and assess both the risks and benefits to interested and affected parties and to maize biodiversity in Mexico. Our report will include an analysis and recommendation of possible management options to mitigate or avoid the potential risks and to enhance or realize the potential benefits of transgenic maize cultivation. We will also consider issues relating to the distribution of risks and benefits among affected parties. Such management options may include, but not be limited to, biological and biophysical control, agricultural management practices, trade regulations or restrictions, and the design and use of transgenic varieties. We recognize that such assessments and management strategies need to take into account scientific knowledge, a complex agricultural and social system and inherent uncertainty.

The Maize Advisory Group is committed to the highest standards of scientific accuracy and objectivity, transparency, communication, and participation of stakeholders in the development and review of the Article 13 report. Our aim is to guide the Secretariat through the analysis and to provide for the three NAFTA countries recommendations that reflect diverse perspectives, are analytically rigorous, conceptually bold, and actionable for national scientific and policy agencies.