

Environmental risks of new genomic techniques

Closing conference on the 'Horizon Scanning' undertaken by the Project Genetic Engineering and the Environment (FGU)

16 November 2022 / The closing conference for the 'Horizon Scanning' undertaken by the Project Genetic Engineering and the Environment (Fachstelle Gentechnik und Umwelt, FGU) was held on 15 November 2022. The project was started in November 2019 and funded by the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN) through the Federal Environment Ministry (FKZ3519840300). The 'Horizon Scanning' project focused on research in the field of new genomic techniques (NGTs), including its technical variants, technology applications, technical potential and possible impacts on nature and the environment. The project was designed to identify new developments in biotechnology and any early stage risks associated with the technology and its applications.

The best known tool used in NGTs (also called new genetic engineering or genome editing) are the so-called CRISPR/Cas gene scissors, which can be used to knock out natural genes and to insert new genetic information into the genome. The gene-scissors allow pervasive genetic and metabolic changes in many species, even without inserting additional genes. The risks of such organisms for health, the environment and nature protection are a controversial issue in the EU.

A key finding of the project are the differences in comparison to conventional breeding, as NGTs make the genome available for changes to a much greater extent. Relevant findings and other outcomes have been published in several articles in peer-reviewed journals. Short summaries from the 'Horizon Scanning' project, factsheets and videos are available in German and English on the FGU website. Presentations from the online conference will also be made available on the website. The FGU projects have been organised by Testbiotech since 2017.

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Further information: [The FGU website](#) [2]

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