

Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC)

March 10, 2021

About GEAC

- GEAC is a statutory body.
- Constituted under the 'Rules for the Manufacture, Use /Import /Export and Storage of Hazardous Microorganisms/Genetically Engineering Organisms or Cells, 1989' notified under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.
- It functions under the Ministry of Environment, Forests & Climate Change.
- Regulates the use, manufacture, storage, import and export of hazardous microorganisms or genetically-engineered organisms and cells in India.
- The GEAC is the apex biotech regulatory body in India.

Functions

- Responsible for the appraisal of activities that involve the large scale use of hazardous microbes and recombinants in research and industrial production from the point of view of the environment.
- The GEAC also assesses proposals regarding the release of genetically engineered products and organisms into the environment, and this includes experimental field trials as well.
- The body also looks into proposals regarding the use of living modified organism that comes in the risk category III and above in the import/manufacture of recombinant pharma products, or where the end-product of the recombinant pharma product is a modified living organism.
- The Committee has the power to take punitive action

against people/body under the Environment (Protection) Act.

- The approval of the GEAC is mandatory before genetically modified organisms and products derived from them can be used commercially.

Composition

- The Committee is chaired by the Special Secretary/Additional Secretary of the Ministry of Environment.
- A representative of the Department of Biotechnology is a co-chair.
- There are many other members including experts from other ministries as well as institutions such as the ICAR, ICMR, CCMB, etc.