

(25 July 2026)

## **Roundtable Calls for Science-Based Reforms to Fast-Track Adoption of Genetically Modified and Gene-Edited Crops in India**

To address growing climate risks, declining agricultural productivity, and the evolving technological landscape, the Trust for Advancement of Agricultural Sciences (TAAS), in collaboration with the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), and the Federation of Seed Industry of India (FSII) organized a high-level Roundtable on “Reforms in Regulations and Approval of Genetically Modified (GM) and Genome-Edited (GE) Crop Plants” on 25 July 2026, at the NASC Complex, New Delhi.



The event was Co-Chaired by Dr Raj Paroda, Chairman, TAAS and Dr M Ramasami, Founder Chairman, Rasi Seeds Pvt. Ltd. It commenced with a welcome address by Dr Paresch Verma, followed by introductory remarks setting the context for the day's deliberations by Dr Bhag Mal, Secretary, TAAS. Setting a strong scientific and economic foundation, the session featured keynote addresses by Dr CD Mayee on Need for Reforms in Regulatory Processes, Dr Rhodora Romero-Aldemita on Global Developments in Regulatory Frameworks and Possible Harmonization, and Dr Graham Brookes on Economic Impact of GM/GE Crop Plants. The opening session wrapped up with an interactive discussion among participants and synthesizing remarks by the co-chairs, laying a solid foundation for the technical panel discussions that followed subsequently.



The event brought together over 80–90 key stakeholders, including regulatory decision-makers, eminent agricultural scientists, biotechnologists, policymakers, industry leaders, agricultural economists, and international experts.



### Key Highlights

Dr ML Jat, Director General of ICAR and Secretary of DARE, emphasized ICAR's commitment to evidence-based agricultural innovation. He stressed the necessity of a balanced, predictable regulatory structure that facilitates the safe, fast-tracked adoption of biotechnologies to secure food and nutritional security, climate resilience, and farm viability.

Dr RS Paroda, Chairman, TAAS, highlighted that updating regulatory mechanisms is critical to maintaining farm productivity amid escalating climate pressures and global competitiveness. He emphasized on the need to revisit the existing multiple guidelines, reduced time of testing, enhanced funding for outreach and public awareness, greater focus on digitization and the need for organizing such dialogues periodically.

Dr Graham Brookes (PG Economics Ltd) shared global best practices and demonstrated how countries like the United States, Argentina, Brazil, Japan, and Australia have implemented enabling, product-based frameworks that reduce developer compliance costs while maintaining safety.

Dr CD Mayee, President, SABC, along with panellists from public institutes and private seed developers, discussed the economic loss caused by delayed technology approvals and emphasized that transparent rules are vital to encouraging public and private start-ups.

### **Key Action Points**

Participants at the roundtable reached a consensus on several imperative action points:

1. **Risk-Proportionate & Time-Bound Clearance:** Shift toward streamlined, predictable, and time-bound approval pathways that evaluate products based on scientific evidence rather than process-based delay mechanisms.
2. **Optimized Biosafety Data Requirements:** Rationalize required testing data by utilizing existing global safety data to eliminate redundant trials without compromising safety standards.
3. **Harmonized Regulatory Pathways:** Clear regulatory boundaries for gene-edited traits (SDN-1 and SDN-2) to expedite commercialization for both public institutions and private start-ups.
4. **Inter-Agency Coordination:** Strengthen alignment between the MoEFCC, DBT, ICAR, FSSAI, and state governments to establish seamless, multi-agency decision-making.

The recommendations and insights gathered during the sessions will be consolidated into a comprehensive policy paper to be submitted to relevant ministries, regulatory bodies, and policymakers to support evidence-based reforms in agricultural biotechnology oversight in India.

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