

European scientists on African mission to break biotech logjam

Africa is expected to be the next target of GM food companies, as European scientists and policymakers travel to Ethiopia to boost the prospect of growing more of the controversial crops on the continent.

Anne Glover, the chief scientific adviser to the European commission, and other prominent pro-GM researchers and policymakers from European countries including Germany, Hungary, Italy and Sweden will this week meet Ethiopian, Kenyan, Ghanaian and Nigerian farm ministers as well as officials from the African Union.

The British environment secretary, Owen Paterson, who said last year that the UK would be acting immorally if it did not make GM crop technologies available to poor countries, pulled out of the conference in Addis Ababa, organized by the European Academies Science Advisory Council (Easac).

According to an Easac spokeswoman, the meeting is intended to help EU and African scientists collaborate to allow the crops to be grown more easily on the continent. "EU policy on GM crops is massively important for Africa," she said. "A lot of countries are scared to do any research. They fear they will be punished by EU restrictions. They depend on the EU for their exports."

Critics, however, said the meeting was a thinly disguised attempt to promote GM farming at a governmental level, whether or not it was good for local farmers.

Read the full original article: [GM crops: European scientists descend on Africa to promote](#) biotech