

Brazil regulates research on genetic resources

By Luisa Massarani

Concerned about the loss of its genetics resources through the activities of foreign researchers, the Brazilian government has set up a committee to manage and to control the use of the country's genetic patrimony.

In future, all scientific institutions and private companies will be required to apply for the council's permission to search for genetic samples and to be allowed access to the traditional knowledge held by indigenous communities.

Foreign research institutions and companies will only receive such permission if they work in collaboration with Brazilian institutions and companies. The committee's permission will also be required to send genetic material abroad, even if only for research purposes.

The committee, which is being set up under a law passed last year regulating genetic exploration, is made up of 19 members, and is being co-ordinated by the Environment Ministry.

The law recognises the right of indigenous groups and other traditional communities to participate in decisions about the use of their knowledge and to share the commercial use profits generated by it.

© SciDev.Net 2002

