

PO 344498: ----- export of GM mosquito eggs to Panama

Thank you for your letter of 7 April about the export by the company Oxitec Ltd of GM mosquito eggs to Panama.

Statutory controls need to be applied in a proportionate manner and have due regard to the specific circumstances that may arise in a given situation. In this case, the position is that Oxitec has been acting in partnership with the Gorgas Institute in Panama, with the latter liaising with the Panamanian authorities to secure the clearances that will enable trials of the mosquitoes to be taken forward. In addition, the Panamanian authorities chose to do their own risk assessment for the proposed environmental release of the mosquitoes, and thus did not require Oxitec or the Gorgas Institute to provide one.

**Comment [CB1]:** Gorgas provided information for the assessment of risk in the application in accordance with what was requested by the Panamanian authorities.

The basic objective of the Cartagena Protocol and EU regulation 1946/2003 is to enable countries to make informed decisions on whether to allow the import and release of GM organisms. The authorities in Panama have clearly felt able to reach an informed judgment in this instance, as indicated by their granting of a permit for both import and deliberate release. In these circumstances we do not think that any further action is required. Oxitec has provided Defra with all the relevant information it has pertaining to the export and release of the mosquitoes, and this has been forwarded to you by the GM Team.