

Rathenau Instituut

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Exploring the views of Dutch citizens on the use of NGTs and older genetic modification techniques in crops using focus group discussions.





### WHAT ARE NEW GENOMIC TECHNIQUES?

NGTs are techniques that can help breed new plant varieties faster, and with higher precision than classical breeding techniques, such as seed selection or cross-breeding. NGTs can produce a wide diversity of plant products. These plants may have only small changes that might also occur in nature or through classic breeding or they may have more complex modifications.

## NGTs versus GM

- Participants saw NGT-crops as no different from GM-crops.
- This stands in stark contrast to the current dominant frame in the debate.
- Participants wonder whether equating NGTs with traditional breeding is done for political or marketing reasons.



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Although citizens see opportunities for NGTs, there is little enthusiasm for introducing them in crop breeding for several reasons:

1. Citizens have doubts about the long-term safety of these techniques for humans and the environment.
2. They view NGT crops as unlikely to contribute meaningfully to solving current challenges.
3. They do not trust companies to develop crops that will contribute to solutions for societal challenges.



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Participants were unanimous in their views that:

- NGT-crops need to be regulated.
- An environmental risk assessment should be required before market authorization.
- NGT-crops need to be labelled.

- How do we anticipate citizens to react to the current proposal of the EC?
- What is our advice to the members of the EP?





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- Make an environment risks assessment a requirement for all NGTs.
- Preserve the freedom of choice of citizens by maintaining the requirement to label GM food, including NGT food.
- Make a broader assessment of ethical, cultural, and socio-economic aspects of NGT crops a requirement for market approval.