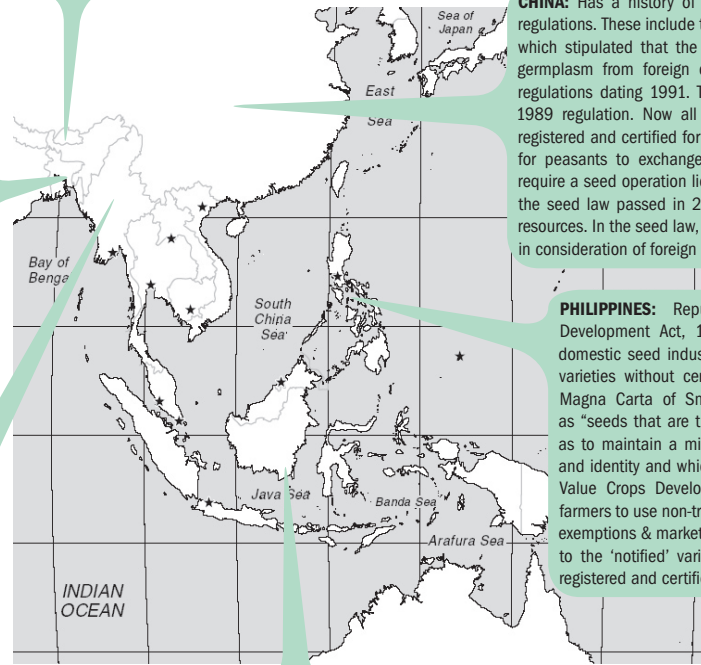


## Seed regulation and certification in some Southeast Asian countries

**BHUTAN:** Under the Seeds Act of Bhutan, 2000, the Royal Government of Bhutan regulates the seeds of notified kinds and varieties and certification is optional. The system is voluntary and there are no DUS criteria.

**BANGLADESH:** First seed law was passed in 1977. Like India's existing law, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Thailand, only varieties notified by government are subject to regulation. Five notified crops (rice, wheat, sugarcane, potato and jute) are mainly handled by public institutions. Greater participation of the private sector is planned. Under the SAP & ESAP agricultural input markets were substantially liberalised. By the 1997 amendment act and the 1998 Seed Rules the private sector can import and market any non-notified seeds, while seeds of notified crops may be brought in for trials, tested for suitability and then multiplied and sold. More amendments to the seed law are being discussed in the Ministry of Agriculture.

**THAILAND:** The Plant Act, 1992 envisages the regulation of notified kinds and varieties through a licensing system for "controlled seeds", apart from the varieties and species that are controlled the rest are free from government control. Transgenic seeds are dealt with under the Plant Quarantine Law of 1964 amended in 1999, under which the Ministry of Agriculture has prohibited the import of GM seeds for use, import of transgenic material after due approval is only allowed for research & experimental purposes.



**CHINA:** Has a history of several national & provincial level seed regulations. These include the regulation of seed management, 1989 which stipulated that the State protect germplasm resources and germplasm from foreign countries be registered, and quarantine regulations dating 1991. The Seed Law of 2000 has annulled the 1989 regulation. Now all commercial seed production has to be registered and certified for sale. Though there is a blanket exception for peasants to exchange and sell their seeds and they do not require a seed operation license to do so. It is important to note that the seed law passed in 2000 asserts State sovereignty over seed resources. In the seed law, changes were issued on August 28, 2004 in consideration of foreign seed companies in China & ASTA.

**PHILIPPINES:** Republic Act No. 7308 Seed Industry Development Act, 1992 was enacted to help develop the domestic seed industry. Farmers can exchange and sell their varieties without certification. As per Republic Act No.7607 Magna Carta of Small Farmers, "good seeds" are defined as "seeds that are the progeny of certified seeds so handled as to maintain a minimum acceptable level of genetic purity and identity and which is selected at the farm level". The High-Value Crops Development Act of 1995 gives incentives to farmers to use non-traditional crops such as low-cost credit, tax exemptions & market linkages. Recommended varieties (similar to the 'notified' varieties of South Asian countries) must be registered and certified.

**INDONESIA:** The Government Regulation on Plant Seed Management was passed in 1995. It importantly says that farmers' varieties do not fall under the regulation (they are considered 'natural varieties' and as such not controlled by the government). The commercial use of GM seeds is regulated by Government Regulation No.44 of 1995 on Seeds for Crops dealing with import/export, breeding & release of new varieties, while Decree No.737 of 1998 deals with the testing, evaluation & release of new plant varieties. Biosafety aspects and requirements for the use of transgenics for food & fodder are dealt with under Decrees number 856 of 1997 & 998 of 1998.

## Seed regulation and certification in some South Asian countries

