

## **Gloria Adduci: South-East Asia and the governance of agrobiotechnology**

South-East Asia is a region located south of China and north of Australia and composed by 10 countries: Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Philippines, Brunei, Cambodia, Vietnam, Laos and Myanmar, all of them – with the only exception of Singapore – developing countries.

Since mid-1980s, many South-East Asian countries have been investing in development of biotechnology and policies apted to attract foreign investments; the economy of the region, however, remains based on agriculture and therefore biotechnology applied to agriculture become almost immediately one of the most interesting field of research and investments.

In the past 20 years, South-East Asia has been working actively to develop specific legal frameworks to rule production and commercialization of genetically modified (GM) crops: the need to adequate to the international regulation, however, is always present. Although all the countries have ratified the Convention on Biological Diversity, many countries have not been able to develop a clear policy on biosafety and international mechanisms like the Biosafety Clearing-House.

The situation in this geographic area appears difficult but promising: many are the investments in research, educational programmes for human resources and socio-economic policies. Is this area destined to become competitive in the next years on the international market of GM crops?