

**Canadian Biotechnology Advisory Committee
Twenty-Fourth Meeting – October 11-12, 2005
Summary of Main Decisions and Actions**

October 11th - Evening

1. Executive Director's Update

- CBAC's future role is an important consideration in the renewal of the Canadian Biotechnology Strategy. Particular mention was made of the Government of Canada's Smart Regulation Initiative and the prominence of biotechnology in this government-wide effort. The importance of public consultations on the renewal was highlighted.

➤ ***Decision/Action:** CBAC will continue to be informed about the renewal (or revision) of the strategy.*

2. Proposal for CBAC event (March 2006)

- Members had a wide-ranging discussion and several ideas were proposed concerning the possible focus and audience for a CBAC event that would advance the dialogue around Canada's biotechnology strategy going forward. Members considered:

- A series of roundtables leading to a larger conference on the elements of a Canadian national strategy on biotechnology.
- A series of citizen engagement exercises held across Canada on issues relating to biotechnology, specifically, crosscutting issues or biotechnology and sustainable development.

➤ ***Decision/Action:** It was agreed that time will be a significant factor in the decision of which plan to pursue. A revised proposal will be considered by the CBAC Executive, and a decision of which (if any) plan to undertake will be made shortly.*

3. Minutes from May 25-26, 2005 CBAC Meeting

➤ ***Decision/Action:** Approved*

4. Review of Financial Statement

- Members received a mid-year update on finances.

October 12th – All Day

1. “Human Genetic Materials: Making Canada’s Intellectual Property Regime Work for the Health of Canadians” (GIPH) - Discussion of CBAC Advisory Memorandum

- The co-chair of the GIPH Expert Working Party joined CBAC for this discussion.
- The GIPH report was presented to CBAC members for general discussion. It was noted that feedback on the report has been requested from federal, provincial and territorial governments, participants in the project roundtables, and interested stakeholders. It has been posted on CBAC’s public website and comments are invited broadly. CBAC will consider all input in preparing its commentary and final recommendations to government.

➤ *Decision/Action: CBAC members were invited to forward additional comments on matters related to the Advisory Memorandum to the Secretariat.*

2. Plant Molecular Farming

- CBAC has an interest in the issues related to plant molecular farming. It was suggested that a CBAC-hosted workshop on plant molecular farming might be beneficial in identifying the current situation and ways to move forward on policy considerations for the use of this technology in Canada.

➤ *Decision/Action: The suggestion of conducting a workshop will be further considered by CBAC.*

3. CBAC’s Recommendations on the Regulation of Genetically Modified (GM) Foods

- CBAC welcomed the Acting/Associate Director, Bureau of Food Policy Integration, and the Director, Departmental Biotechnology Office, the Office of Biotechnology and Science, Health Canada.
- The Health Canada presentation focussed on how the advice provided by CBAC in its 2002 report on this subject has influenced government activities and thinking with respect to the regulation of GM foods and other novel foods in Canada.

➤ *Decision/Action: The Secretariat will follow-up on mechanisms for ongoing engagement and dialogue and report back to CBAC.*

4. “Biotechnology in Canada’s Sustainable Development” (BSDE) - Presentation of Annotated Outline

- CBAC has established an Expert Working Party (EWP) to conduct analysis and formulate recommendations pertaining to biotechnology and sustainable development.
- The presentation focussed on the objectives of the project and five key themes for the report. The objective of the report is to provide a comprehensive analysis/overview of biotechnology in sustainable development using an analytic framework that results in policy recommendations. The five key themes presented were:
 - Healthy, Sustainable Communities and Ecosystems
 - Biotechnology and SD Assessment Framework
 - Biotechnology and SD Innovation Systems
 - Governance (Overarching Theme)
 - Public Literacy and Dialogue
- CBAC members suggested that the breadth of this topic merits a “multi-layer” approach to the report to appeal to the varying information needs of the audience. They expressed enthusiasm for the project and work completed to date.
 - **Decision/Action:** *The EWP will consider the suggestions from CBAC and continue to develop the report, anticipating a discussion with CBAC of a draft report in early 2006.*

5. Next Meeting

- **Decision/Action:** *CBAC will meet by teleconference in late November or early December to review the GIPH advisory memorandum. The next in person meeting will be held in January 2006.*