

*Canadian Biotechnology Advisory Committee
Twentieth Meeting –April 26-27, 2004
Summary*

PARTICIPANTS

CBAC Members

Dr. Arnold Naimark (Chair), Gloria Bishop, Pierre Coulombe, Barry Glickman, Linda Lusby, Anne Mitchell, Peter Phillips, David Punter,

CBAC Staff

Kim Elmslie (Executive Director), Brian Colton, Lidia Guerra, Eileen Inrig, Richard Konchak, Anne Malo, Marnie McCall, Stephanie Wilson

Regrets

Mary Alton Mackey, Timothy Caulfield, Pete Desai, Pavel Hamet, Lyne Létourneau, Denny Warner

BUSINESS

Routine Matters

1. Dr. Naimark welcomed members and drew their attention to two points: the emphasis on the Biotechnology and Health Innovation (BHI) project in the meeting agenda; and new work on the horizon for CBAC as a function of the Industry and Health Canada Deputy Ministers' *Referral on Human Genetic Materials, Intellectual Property Regime and the Health Sector*.
2. Kim Elmslie introduced Stephanie Wilson, who has joined the CBAC team as a senior policy analyst. She updated the membership on three initiatives: the upcoming presentation to the Biotechnology Assistant Deputy Ministers' Coordinating Committee (BACC) on the findings and/or recommendations of the Treasury Board Horizontal Expenditure and Management Review of Biotechnology; the Office of the Auditor General's (OAG) examination of the Canadian Biotechnology Strategy; and the Institute on Governance's (IOG) May 26, 2004 workshop on the future of the government's biotechnology strategy. CBAC members will be kept abreast of these initiatives and a number of members can expect invitations to the IOG workshop.
3. Peter Phillips provided an overview of the *Biobased Molecular Production Systems* workshop he attended on April 26, 2004.
4. The minutes of the January 28-29, 2004 meeting were approved.

5. A summary report on the CBAC budget at the close of the fiscal year that ended March 31, 2004 projected a surplus of \$54,000. It is uncertain whether or not this surplus will be available to CBAC in the new fiscal year.
6. The Committee approved the proposed priorities/allocation of resources for the fiscal year beginning April 1, 2004.

Sector and Project Reports and Discussion

7. Stephanie Wilson updated the Committee on the status of the approval process of the Government of Canada Response to CBAC's GM Food Report. Following a discussion led by Peter Phillips, members agreed to forward a letter of acknowledgement to Biotechnology Ministers that will reiterate major aspects of CBAC's recommendations, namely the need for standard protocols, the need for accessible information for consumers and the issue of the scientific capacity of the regulatory system. Members also agreed to keep a watching brief on the issue.
8. Marnie McCall informed the Committee that Dr. Arthur Hanson is expected to submit a revised draft of the proposal on Biotechnology and the Future Economy in a few weeks. She reminded the group that the proposal was approved in principle at the CBAC January meeting.
9. The Committee received a special presentation and engaged in extensive discussion on two aspects of the Biotechnology in Health Innovation Project, namely Health Technology Assessment and Uptake of Biotechnological Innovations into the Health Care Sector.
 - Mr. Jack Smith, Team Leader, and Mr. Marcus Brady, Team Member of the National Research Council Office of Technology Foresight (NRC-OTF), presented a summary review of the April 26, 2004 Expert Roundtable Discussion, organized by CBAC with the assistance of the NRC-OTF, on the role of Health Technology Assessment (HTA) and the Uptake of Biotechnological Innovations into the Health Care Sector. The roundtable was well attended by representatives from academia, federal and provincial governments and agencies, industry, non-government organizations, the health delivery sector, and citizens interested in biotechnology in health innovation.
 - The summary report indicated that CBAC's advice to Government needs to articulate the following: there is a need for greater communication, integration and coordination within the Canadian Health Technology Community to ensure the brokering and alignment of existing HTA knowledge. The new biotechnology innovations to be assessed will require new skills, and education programs for the assessors to ensure a sound and effective assessment system. The new technologies coming into the health sector will require an assessment system that will support decision makers in understanding the potential impact of these technologies before they are

introduced into the health care system. Additionally, the public needs to be appropriately informed and educated about the results of HTA in order for them to provide feedback to the assessment process, and make informed decisions on the use of the new technologies for their own health care.

- Following this presentation, CBAC members discussed a number of strategic options to advise government on the issues concerning technology assessment and uptake of biotechnology innovations into the health care system. The membership then turned its attention to the formulation of advice to government on the other two theme areas of the project, research and development, and regulation and commercialization.
10. The Committee discussed the future of the GM Food and Feed Dialogue Tool and decided on the following measures to promote it: the development of a communications plan for internal and external audiences; making it available to the public on CBAC's website; editing it to make it relevant to other issues and packaging it in kit format
 11. Dr. Naimark highlighted the key features of the *Referral on Human Genetic Materials, Intellectual Property Regime and the Health Sector* and walked members through the workplan. The workplan, including the proposal to carry out the work via an Expert Working Party, was approved.
 12. The Committee received a report entitled *Maximizing Value in Health Biotechnology Research* produced by Randy Goodfellow from Goodfellow Agricola. This report was commissioned by CBAC in response to a referral from Industry Canada. Members approved the report for delivery to Industry Canada.