



An Overview of the Office of Biotechnology and Science

The Office of Biotechnology and Science was established in October 2000. It provides an integrated focal point for biotechnology within Health Canada, the federal government, externally, for science issues in the Health Products and Food Branch (HPFB), and is the lead office for the Science Library Network. The Director General of the Office of Biotechnology and Science (OBS) is responsible for the oversight of these main areas.

DEPARTMENTAL BIOTECHNOLOGY OFFICE

The Departmental Biotechnology Office works in collaboration with the other branches of Health Canada to coordinate the biotechnology activities of the department. The office also has a mandate to increase awareness of biotechnology both within the department, and with external stakeholders and the public.

The Departmental Biotechnology Office has four main areas of responsibility:

- Act as the focal point for biotechnology in Health Canada;
- Provide sound strategic advice on the applications and impacts of biotechnology on health, and lead Health Canada's horizontal policy work on biotechnology within the federal government;

- Develop, coordinate and implement activities to build awareness, familiarity, transparency and confidence in Health Canada's role with regard to biotechnology and the regulatory system for biotechnology; and
- Establish and maintain partnerships with other biotechnology stakeholders, including both federal and international biotechnology regulators and associations.

The Departmental Biotechnology Office takes part in numerous activities in order to fulfill its responsibilities. Some of these activities include:

- Health Canada's Biotechnology Framework
- Federal Biotechnology Stewardship Framework
- Biotechnology science issues
- Building confidence in biotechnology and the regulatory system in place for products of biotechnology
- Departmental Biotechnology Committee
- Canadian Biotechnology Advisory Committee
- Biotechnology in health innovation
- Canadian Biotechnology Strategy Working Group on Regulations
- Canadian Biotechnology Strategy Funds and funds accountability
- Federal Genomics Initiative
- Long-term health effects of biotechnology
- Gene technology, genetic information and privacy
- Forecasting and assessing the regulatory impacts of emerging technologies



SCIENCE POLICY AND COORDINATION DIVISION

The Science Policy and Coordination Division provides Branch strategic science and technology advice, and coordination. The Division works closely with HPFB Directorates and Bureaus to develop concerted approaches to science and technology issues.

The Division:

- Provides Branch strategic science and technology advice on policies, programs, and operations;
- Coordinates HPFB science and technology input to the branch, departments, interdepartmental, and other organisations' initiatives;
- Fosters a better understanding of HPFB's science and technology activities at the branch, departmental, federal and public level;
- Promotes a science culture within HPFB; and
- Contributes to the building of a nationally-based, flexible organisation that has the science and technology capacity to fulfill its mandate and priorities.

The Science Policy and Coordination Division provides the Secretariat for the Branch Science Community Committee and maintains its database, organizes the Branch Science Seminar series, and provides on a rotational basis with the Office of the Chief Scientist, Healthy Environments and Consumer Safety Branch (HECSB) and Pest Management Regulatory Agency, the Secretariat for the Science Assistant Deputy Minister's and Director General's committees.

The Science Policy and Coordination Division leads or is involved in the following:

- Development of a Branch Science Plan
- Science expenditures
- Science infrastructure
- Science Human Resources issues
- Quality Management
- Health Canada Science Framework
- Health Canada Science Forum
- Science Advisory Board
- Health and Environment Research Agenda
- Northern Science and Technology/International Polar Year
- Science in support of Mission Critical Goals
- Emerging science issues, potential synergies
- Barriers to integration
- Collaborative arrangements

SCIENCE LIBRARY NETWORK

The Science Library Network provides information and document services to support the research and regulatory activities in HPFB, HECSB, and the Public Health Agency of Canada.

The following services are available to clients:

- Reference and literature searching
- Training and orientations
- Acquisitions
- Current awareness
- Document delivery (photocopies and interlibrary loans)

The Science Library Network is a participating member of the following organizations and groups:

- Science Library Advisory Committee
- Council of Federal Libraries
- Strategic Alliance of Federal Science and Technology Libraries
- Association of Faculties of Medicine of Canada, Committee on Medical School Libraries
- Canada Institute for Scientific and Technical Information, Committee on Health Sciences Information

**FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT
THE BIOTECHNOLOGY THEME AT
HEALTH CANADA'S WEB SITE:**

<http://www.healthcanada.ca/biotech>

Or contact us at:

Health Canada
Office of Biotechnology and Science
AL 0702A, Tunney's Pasture
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0L2
Fax: (613) 957-0362
Email: obs-bbs@hc-sc.gc.ca ●