

From:
Sent: 2015-08-12 3:58:02 PM
To: Jim.Louter@ec.gc.ca
CC: Sarah.Davis@inspection.gc.ca; Jaimie.Schnell@inspection.gc.ca; Philip.Macdonald@inspection.gc.ca
BCC:
Subject: Re: SynBio - AHTEG - informal group

Jim,

Excellent – welcome!

Pity that you were not asked for the AHTEG, because your interventions were spot on.

I hope that the other Canadian who was asked is a Government official, because that would add another very much needed like-minded Party representative on the AHTEG. |

If your colleague does indeed decide to decline, I very much hope that she will in the same letter recommend you are someone else of the Canadian Govt in her place, to avoid that the CBD Sec starts looking elsewhere.

Cheers

On 12 August 2015 at 18:39, Louter, Jim [NCR] <Jim.Louter@ec.gc.ca> wrote:

> Thanks I'd be happy to participate in your discussion as I am able
> to (!).
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>
> Regarding your other question on the AHTEG, no, I was not asked to join
> it. Perhaps I did not participate a sufficient number of times or there
> were other factors that I didn't meet. Right now, I know of only one other
> Canadian who has been to join and she may decline.
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> Jim

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> *From:*

> *Sent:* August 8, 2015 3:46 AM

> *To:* Louter,Jim [NCR]; Macdonald, Philip: CFIA

> *Subject:* SynBio - AHTEG - informal group

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> Hi Jim

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> I very much enjoyed your interventions in the on line discussions on
> synthetic biology, and wanted to alert and invite you to an informal
> discussion group on CBD-SynBio, which PRRI facilitates (in the same way as
> we facilitate such groups on CPB related topics as ERA, SECs, and Review).

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> FYI: This is a group of over 40 colleagues with an interest in discussing
> Synthetic Biology in international fora such as OECD, CBD etc. The main aim
> is to exchange information and views. The exchanges in this group are
> informal, and not aimed at establishing common positions. Some colleagues
> on this list actively participate in the discussions, while others are
> mainly 'listeners'. PRRI participates facilitates similar groups on various
> CPB and CBD topics, such as environmental risk assessment, socio economic
> considerations in decision making, liability and redress, review and
> assessment. All these discussions are conducted under the Chatham House
> rules.

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> The participants are PRRI members, other researchers, members of the other
> part of the regulated community (i.e. the private sector), and regulators.
> Phil is on the list for ERA and SECs.

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> Feel very welcome to join that list. Below I paste my latest update email
> to the group.

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> Related question: have you been invited to join the AHTEG? Know of any
> others?

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> Cheers

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> Some AHTEGs meet only once, while others can continue for years.

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> PARTICIPATION OF OBSERVERS

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> While the invitation from the Secretariat to participate in the AHTEG did

> not mention the term 'observer', in practice a distinction is made between

> Party members and observer members.

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> One of the main differences is that only Party Members can vote.

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> Other than that, it very much depends on the Chair how observers can

> participate in an AHTEG. In some AHTEGs observers have participated in the

> same way as Party members (which is how it should be, because AHTEGs are

> groups of experts), in other AHTEGs, observers could participate fully, but

> can only speak after the party members had made their contribution. This

> is a bit of an unnatural way of exchanging views among experts, but as

> Maria said, it sometimes helps to be able to speak after others have

> spoken.

>

> It is very good that Bob has asked the CBD secretariat for an explanation

> of the role of observers, and I would recommend that other new observers to

> ask for a copy of the current rules of AHTEGs.

>

> Let me underline that in my experience observers in AHTEGs have always

> participated actively and often had a very significant impact. This has

> been the case for those who want society to benefit maximally from the

> potential of modern biotechnologies, but – unfortunately – also for

> antibiotech groups. Many of us have experienced how ideo-science and

> pseudo-evidence have influenced some party members.

>

> As said, the participation of PRRI members has had quite an impact

> in MOPs, COPs and AHTEGs. Having said that, I must correct that not all

> people on this email list are PRRI members. In the past these informal

> groups did indeed only consist of PRRI members, but over the years these

> lists include other researchers, members of the other part of the regulated

> community (i.e. the private sector), and regulators.

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> The way in which PRRI has impacted the work of AHTEGs was:

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> - by bringing to the table the most up to date science in relation to the

> technology itself, the anticipated benefits and potential risks, where

> possible with illustrative examples,

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> - by correcting erroneous notions about science and about the experience

> accumulated to date. Exposing crap as crap is a powerful tool.

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> As and said, participating in an AHTEG can at times be

> frustrating, but it is important to participate. Let me also say that

> AHTEGs do not have to be a frustrating experience. Some AHTEGs in which I

> participated were actually very pleasant and an excellent way to get up to

> date with the latest developments.

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> In addition, know that we always establish a 'back up team' on the home

> front, who can give immediate feedback through email, or search for

> articles while you sleep.

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> Those articles can be scientific articles as well as articles from the CBD
> that are relevant to the discussions. One CBD article that is very
> important in the context of the SynBio discussions is article 16: “*Access
> to and Transfer of Technology”, which in the first paragraph says:” Each
> Contracting Party, recognizing that technology includes biotechnology, and
> that both access to and transfer of technology among Contracting Parties
> are essential elements for the attainment of the objectives of this
> Convention, undertakes subject to the provisions of this Article to provide
> and/or facilitate access for and transfer to other Contracting Parties of
> technologies that are relevant to the conservation and sustainable use of
> biological diversity or make use of genetic resources and do not cause
> significant damage to the environment.*”

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> Wishing you a good weekend

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