

PRESS RELEASE

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Synbio 4.0: IASB presents biosecurity report

At the *4th International Meeting on Synthetic Biology* held from Oct. 10-12, 2008 in Hong Kong (China), the Industry Association Synthetic Biology (IASB) will present a catalogue of solutions (available for download at www.ia-sb.eu) directed at biosecurity in synthetic biology.

The rapid and cost-efficient availability of an unrestricted multitude of DNA molecules provides a wealth of new opportunities but also entails novel risks in biotechnology. The IASB principally aims at making these chances exploitable while keeping the risks controllable. One important result of these efforts is a catalogue of measures which was developed by leading American and European experts from industry, science, EU and organizations during a workshop on "Biosafety in Synthetic Biology" held during the *Analytica* in April 2008.

The core provisions listed in this catalogue aim at the development and implementation of processes and databases that will allow the monitoring of all incoming orders of synthetic genes for known risk factors in a systematic and automatic manner. Using this approach, the IASB seeks to minimize risks associated with the use – and misuse – of this promising new technology.

A comprehensive sequence database will be provided to all companies involved in gene synthesis. Based on these data, the suppliers will be able to identify orders that require closer scrutiny. A panel of acknowledged scientists as well as representatives of relevant authorities will be involved in the development of this database and its application in the subsequent monitoring.

Peer Staehler, IASB spokesman and CEO of febit synbio GmbH, explains the plans for the Hong Kong meeting: "Biosecurity in synthetic biology essentially requires a global coordinated strategy. We already have established a lively exchange with the U.S., and we now will leverage the platform provided by *SB 4.0* to sensitize more countries around the world for risks and potential solutions in biosecurity – and encourage them to join this worldwide effort."

On behalf of the IASB, Peer Staehler will elaborate on the background of the planned measures in a session on biosecurity chaired by the renowned geneticist George Church at *Synthetic Biology 4.0* in Hong Kong on October 11, 2008.

Please refer to the IASB website at www.ia-sb.eu for the full report.

About the IASB (www.ia-sb.eu)

The Industry Association of Synthetic Biology (IASB) is a consortium of leading companies in synthetic biology. Founding members include ATG: Biosynthetics GmbH, Biomax Informatics AG, Entelechon GmbH, febit synbio GmbH, MWG Biotech AG and Sloning BioTechnology GmbH. The main focus of the association is the advancement and future development of synthetic biology.

About synthetic biology

Synthetic biology means the artificial construction of biological components and systems. Fueled by the rapid progress of DNA synthesis techniques, synthetic biology offers unprecedented opportunities for the advancement of biological research. This powerful technology has a broad spectrum of applications, e.g. in vaccine development, optimization of drugs and renewable energy sources, among many others.

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