

PRESS RELEASE

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IASB Welcomes New Recommendations of the U.S. Government for Biosecurity in Synthetic Gene Production

Recently the U.S. Government published recommendations for the production of synthetic genes. Those recommendations have been requested by associations like the International Association Synthetic Biology (IASB, www.ia-sb.eu). The fast development in the field of synthetic genes as a powerful tool in modern biotechnology necessitates a control to assure that opportunities can be taken and risks are minimized.

The recommendations are intended to provide guidance to producers of synthetic genomic products regarding the screening of orders, and encourage best practices in addressing any potential biosecurity concerns. The U.S. Government recommends that all orders for synthetic double-stranded DNA 200 base pairs (bp) in length or longer be subject to a screening framework that includes both sequence screening and customer screening.

Only a few weeks ago the IASB enacted a code of conduct for a safe use of gene synthesis. This contains in addition to basic aspects (screening, records, transparency) best practices like a specialized database (VIREP) which enables the inspection of orders for synthetic genes regarding pathogen or virulent sequences and appropriate software (Blackwatch from Craig Computing).

The IASB's code of conduct addresses next to companies in the field of synthetic genes academic institutes and public institutions.

The code of conduct and the recommendations of the IASB raised high interest. Within the scope of the further development the IASB is implementing an international "Technical Expert Group Biosecurity" which can advice members of the IASB as well as other interested parties.

Peer Staehler, CSO at febit and member of the IASB board, said: "We appreciate the initiative of the U.S. Government and hope that other countries will follow suit and implement recommendations for the handling and business with synthetic genes. We invite all companies and institutions in the field of synthetic biology to join the IASB and use the VIREP database. A certificate of the IASB can be a way for companies to show their sense of responsibility in this highly sensitive market."

About IASB

The IASB focuses on structural and networking issues to create a supporting environment in which the impact of Synthetic Biology as an emerging field will result in constructive and helpful tools for research and therewith unleash the power of this technology for effective biodefense and biosecurity. The International Association 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](#) and [Sloning BioTechnology GmbH](#). For more information please visit www.ia-sb.eu.

About synthetic biology

Synthetic biology means the artificial construction of biological components and systems and is a promising branch of biological research. 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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