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forum for the future
action for a sustainable world

An Outreach and Communication Strategy

for the

Industrial Biotechnology Leadership Forum

Trustworthiness builds trust

Trust builds confidence

Confidence builds markets

December 2012

Industrial Biotechnology - Outreach & Engagement Strategy

Trustworthiness builds trust. Trust builds confidence. Confidence builds markets.

The Brief:

UK-based Biotechnology companies want to build stakeholder confidence in their ability to make a significant, safe and sustainable contribution to some of the world's pressing problems. Forum for the Future has been asked to put forward a Strategy that helps to achieve this goal, and has combined forces with MATTER to deliver that Strategy.

Outreach Strategy - Summary

Baroness Onora O'Neill in a recent radio broadcast said "*..the slightly plaintive question 'How can we restore trust?' is on everyone's lips. The answer is pretty obvious. First: be trustworthy. Second: provide others with good evidence that you are trustworthy*."[1] This sentiment is the basis of our outreach strategy.

It is also one of the key messages in the Report authored by Jonathon Porritt for the Industrial Biotechnology Leadership Forum, 'Industrial Biotechnology Done Well: Sustainable Returns'.

Aim & Objectives

Aim

Align Biotech business practice with the principles of responsible innovation in a manner that demonstrates trustworthiness. It is that reputation for trustworthiness which, we believe, will help build trust; trust builds confidence, and confidence lays the foundations for commercial success.

Objectives

- Develop a a shared understanding of how 'IB Done Well' principles may be delivered in practice
- Create a trusted online hub for information and ongoing engagement with stakeholders
- Develop a framework for social reporting through a collaborative, multi-stakeholder approach

To begin with, we propose two significant, interlinked initiatives:

1. Development of an online hub for the involvement of stakeholders

There is very little easy-to-understand, impartial information in the public domain about biotechnologies as a whole and the key issues which may arise from their use.

There is even less of an opportunity for stakeholders to collaborate and become involved with the research directions, applications and uses of biotechnologies in a constructive way. We see such a site as providing a useful hub for this activity. (A successful pilot site developed by MATTER for nanotechnologies www.nanoandme.org may provide a useful starting point).

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[1] Baroness Onora O'Neill Which comes first - trust or trustworthiness? BBC Radio 4 07/12/12 'Point of View'

2. *An industry-led process to develop a "framework for social reporting" for Responsible Biotechnology*

There is currently no unifying reporting framework for responsible innovation or biotechnology specific issues. We believe that developing and embedding good governance processes will be the key to demonstrating that the health, safety, social and environmental issues (which the IB Done Well Report highlights), are being considered, addressed and properly communicated.

A set of Business Principles would be developed, supported by a social reporting framework. We propose the collaborative development of such a framework, led by the industry and co-developed with key stakeholders , to affirm the mandates outlined in the report, and help embed them in the business processes of companies across the biotechnology value chain. A similar initiative has also been recommended by the Nuffield Council on Bioethics in their recent report *'Emerging Biotechnologies, Technology, Choice and the Public Good".*[2]

Audiences for the Outreach strategy

A more detailed stakeholder mapping process should be undertaken as part of the implementation of the Outreach strategy. However, we see three key target audiences who should be involved in the development and implementation of the strategy and be audiences for its messages:

1. Biotech businesses of all sizes
2. Independent intermediaries trusted by the public - eg NGOs, academics, retailers, respected journalists
3. The public at large - reached direct and through interested groups, media and social media

Who will deliver this programme of work?

- Both these initiatives provide a platform and initial approaches to governance and stakeholder engagement which can be built upon both by the Leadership Forum and the Industrial Biotech Stakeholder Council.
- Forum for the Future and MATTER would be happy to help and support the further development and implementation of such a strategy. However, outsiders can only do so much to help. The real work has to come from the companies and other organisations delivering the research and ultimately the products enabled by biotechnologies. We are aware that some companies have been doing significant work on these topics for many years and can help and support others.

Outreach and Engagement Strategy

Delivering 'Responsible Innovation'

The mandates outlined in the IB Done Well Report, sometimes termed 'Responsible Innovation'[3] will require many companies to think differently, act differently and communicate differently. The need, as the report says, is to 'put in place the highest possible standards of transparency and accountability' as a critical priority.

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[2] Emerging Biotechnologies-technology, choice & the public good". Nuffield Council on Bioethics 2012

[3] Responsible Research & Innovation report prepared by MATTER for EC DG Research & Innovation 2012

Some of the data needed to demonstrate that the issues highlighted in the report have been considered and achieved may require new types of research, collaborations with unusual partners, and an openness which to many will be unfamiliar. Some may not be achievable by individual companies acting alone, but may require a number of companies, supply chains or stakeholders, including government, academics and civil society groups to combine their knowledge, share data and to open up their processes to increased scrutiny.

However, it is also worth bearing in mind that it is not just in the field of biotech that such new approaches are increasingly expected. Companies and research institutions working with all innovative technologies, particularly nanotechnologies, ICT, synthetic biology, Robotics, AI and converging-tech applications, all face these changing expectations. This is not just in the UK, but also in other countries in Europe, the US and many Asian countries.

Involving Stakeholders

'...policies continued to be based largely on erroneous beliefs about 'the public'

"The public is anti-technology", "The problem is, they don't understand the science behind biotechnology". "The public is irrational", "They want zero risk which is not realistic".

There is much misinformation about the public's views on new technologies. The public is, in fact, most often supportive of technologies which provide a significant benefit, not just for themselves personally, but for people or the environment.

A study undertaken at the height of the GMO controversy in 2001 on public acceptance of Agricultural Biotechnologies', demonstrated that most of these views of the opinions of the public were myths; but despite that *"policies continued to be based largely on erroneous beliefs about 'the public".* We believe that in 2012 these erroneous beliefs still inform the views of politicians and business leaders to a significant and damaging extent.

Why Stakeholder involvement?

A fundamental component of 'responsible innovation' is the ongoing involvement of stakeholders, including the public in the product development process from 'cradle to grave'.

Sometimes the application of research may be contentious; views on what is actually a benefit and to whom, are not straightforward. The needs of different communities may throw up conflicting priorities.

The involvement of stakeholders will be crucial to getting to the right solutions for our problems and for choices on any potential trade-offs or differences. It is also important to flag up early warnings of potential future concerns and impacts.

1. Development of an online Hub for the involvement of stakeholders

We envisage a web-based Hub of information and engagement about the various uses of biotechnology.

In response to a number of public dialogues, through which the public indicated that they would value easy- to-understand, impartial information about nanotechnologies, MATTER obtained a grant from ScienceWise to product a site called www.nanoandme.org provide this. The 'me' could be a member of the public looking to understand nano better, a small business wanting to get to grips with regulations, an NGO keeping up the the latest developments. The site was a pilot, which was never publicised or launched, but still gets over 3000 hits a month from 155 countries.

We suggest modelling the process of development on the collaborative and open methodology adopted for Nano&me, which was well received by all stakeholder groups. Unfortunately, further funding was not available to go beyond the pilot stage - though some businesses were willing to part fund the site, we were unable to obtain matched funding from government and other stakeholders.

To provide independently curated, impartial information

The Hub would be developed and structured according to the priorities that stakeholders have advanced. It could feature:

- Information about what the different biotechnologies are, what they do, and how they work
- How they feature in our lives
- Current and potential social, ethical and environmental issues about their use and stakeholder concerns
- Regulations & HSE requirements - regulation, standards and protocols (particularly for SMEs interested in the area)
- Product information in the various categories
- 'How to' guides and toolkits to support businesses in their stakeholder involvement and reporting programmes
- Possibly an easy to navigate link to open source research from Governments, the EC, Universities, companies and civil society groups.

To act as a Hub for interactive dialogue

The site would also be designed to be a Hub for moderated involvement with stakeholders and the public. An engaging and interactive style and tone will make it easy to understand and accessible to all. Layers of data may be possible giving increasing depth of information and access to more academic science and social science.

It would be the focus for consultations and interactions on a range of subjects. EG:

- Co-creation of the Business Principles for Responsible Biotechnology with stakeholders (see 2 below)
- Involvement with specific areas of new research or product areas with a view to having public views inform the direction of research or product areas
- Exploration of key social or ethical issues associated with existing or new areas - eg land use in Biofuels
- Structured bespoke research - preferably initiated in response to stakeholder concerns.

Outputs

- An independently curated source of impartial information on all things related to biotechnologies
- A focus for interaction with the public and other stakeholders
- A programme of communication to draw attention to the site and to key initiatives on the site.
- A focus for organisations to interact with stakeholders at important milestones in product or sector development.

Outcomes

- Again, this initiative will begin to both demonstrate how companies can be trustworthy and provide evidence of trustworthiness.
- An honest and open reflection of contentious issues to assist with the successful application of biotechnology in other areas

- The ongoing involvement of the general public, the intermediaries they trust (like NGOs and patient groups) customers (eg farmers, GPs), government and academia as partners in the 'co-creation' of research directions and products, is an increasingly useful and important aspect of developing appropriate products. Involvement at an early stage helps develop products which are fit for purpose, and ensure that concerns and potential problems are addressed as early as possible in the process of development.

2. *An Industry-led process to develop a framework for social reporting for Responsible Biotechnology*

We propose for an industry-led collaborative initiative to clarify and codify expectations , and to understand, illustrate and promote good practice to all in the biotechnology value chain (i.e. from research and development to manufacturing, distribution, retailing, use, disposal and recycling).

Learning from previous initiatives will help inform this process - including the Roundtable for Sustainable Biofuels, The Responsible Nano Code, NGO Principles for the Oversight of Synthetic Biology, the Technology Strategy Board Responsible Innovation Framework for the Commercialisation of Research Findings and current thinking in the European Commission on Responsible Research and Innovation and the Global Reporting Initiative frameworks for other areas.

The principle output would be a set of Business Principles, which would then be elaborated through a new social reporting framework. Obviously it is the quality of Business Principles which is the test of their effectiveness. Developing these principles into a framework for social reporting will help align this thinking with the ways businesses currently operate, without 'reinventing wheels'.

(MATTER is also undertaking work for the Biotechnologies and Food group within the Biosciences KTN to develop a booklet offering Guidance on Responsible Innovation for Businesses, particularly SMEs, involved in Biotechnologies and Food. This practical approach will also complement such an initiative).

Additional Outputs:

- A robust, inclusive process is developed through which to involve stakeholders in the establishment of good practice in the development and use of biotechnologies
- It provides a concrete purpose for the engagement of stakeholders, including the public, and the opportunity for them to positively influence the responsible development of biotechnologies.
- A framework for the responsible development and use of products using biotechnologies is created, and reporting procedures are codified.

Outcomes:

- Potentially, it will create a shared understanding among stakeholders on what constitutes good practice in the biotechnology value chain.
- It could also provide the impetus for a commitment to improved responsibility, accountability and transparency among leading biotechnology companies.

Appendix 1

Forum for the Future is a non-profit organisation working globally with business and government to create a sustainable future: www.forumforthefuture.org

About Matter

MATTER is a non-profit organisation dedicated to 'Responsible Innovation' - particularly science-based innovation including nanotechnologies, synthetic biology and other bioetchnologies. We aim to build a bridge between science and society by focusing on three main areas:

(a) embedding strong governance,

(b) promoting the involvement of the public and other stakeholders and

(c) inspiring the development and use of new technologies for societal benefit

We use action research and engagement processes in our role as a catalyst to motivate others to play their part. Our current focus is on engaging business, investors, ngos, policy makers and the public to develop and communicate good practice in these areas and ensure that responsible innovation is considered as an intrinsic part of the research, development and use of science and technologies.

Our Approach

- Forum for the Future and MATTER both act as catalysts to inspire and motivate all stakeholders to play their part responsibly.
- We connect organisations and their stakeholders to consider the best approaches for mutually beneficial outcomes.
- We believe we will best serve the common good by working with organisations - as a 'springboard to good practice' - to help them engage with their stakeholders to deliver responsible, sustainable solutions for the long term.