



TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE NATIONAL BIOTECHNOLOGY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

1. Background

On 11 June 2001, the Minister of Arts, Culture Science and Technology approved a National Biotechnology Strategy for South Africa, which provides for the establishment of a National Biotechnology Advisory Committee to support the implementation and further development of the National Biotechnology Strategy. The National Biotechnology Advisory Committee is established as a NACi subcommittee in terms of Section 8(4)(a) of the NACi Act of 1997.

2. Composition

The National Biotechnology Advisory Committee will consist of 11 members.

3. Functions

The main functions of the National Biotechnology Advisory Committee are to:

- 3.1. Render advice on biotechnology in South Africa, recognising government's investment in developing the bioeconomy
- 3.2. Provide strategic interpretation and advice on the overall development of the South African biotechnology sector
- 3.3. Provide strategic advice on national biotechnology research and development priorities, innovation opportunities and gaps to ensure a functioning and growing pipeline of biotechnology innovation- related intellectual property that can be used to enhance the quality of life of South Africans and achieve economic growth
- 3.4. Consider and recommend improvements to existing strategies to grow financial resources, human capital and infrastructure to the benefit of the sector
- 3.5. Provide strategic advice to increase the impact and efficiency of the National Biotechnology Strategy and any subsequent published strategies and implementation plans.
- 3.6 Monitor and advise on issues pertaining to bioethics:
 - Commission new and review existing independent research on ethical issues arising, or potentially arising, from current and future developments in biotechnology that are not currently addressed in the ethical management

systems in place in South Africa, and focusing particularly on ethics related to research, development and innovation practice in South Africa

- Provide strategic advice on the management and development of bioethics in South Africa in the light of research findings.

4. Selection of committee members

The members of the National Biotechnology Advisory Committee will be nominated in terms of Section 8(4)(a) of the NACI Act. At least two members of NACI Council will serve on the committee. In terms of Section 8(4)(b) of the NACI Act, the chairperson of the Biotechnology Advisory Committee will be designated by NACI from among the members of NACI.

The members of the committee will be people of high stature who are held in esteem in the national system of innovation and whose positions allow them to provide advice, in the national interest, in respect of the matters outlined above. They will serve as members of the committee in their personal capacity, and are not intended to represent any stakeholder interest or grouping, so that the advice they produce will not be deemed to be driven by special interests.

The members of the committee will, before taking up their positions on the committee, have to meet the standards required for participation in the activities in NACI (see *Guidelines to NACI and its operations*; available on request).

5. Nomination criteria

The NACI Executive will select the committee with due consideration of the following criteria with respect to representation:

- Expertise in the biotechnology industry, public research or academia in the South African and global contexts
- Ability to provide advice without specifically and directly representing narrow stakeholder interests
- Familiarity with aspects of bioethics, particularly in areas that are directly relevant to the National Biotechnology Strategy and that are not covered by existing ethical management systems in South Africa
- Familiarity with research and innovation strategy and implementation.

Other factors that will be taken into consideration in selecting the committee include:

- Committee members should preferably not be directly involved in the implementation of the current strategy. Board members and officials of BRIC and NBN are therefore not eligible.
- Members of government departments directly charged with responsibility for biotechnology-related instruments and legislation (such as the GMO Act) should preferably not be members.
- Due regard must be paid to the demographic representivity norms and practices of government.

6. Meetings and outputs

- Following its appointment, the committee will meet at least twice a year.
- The NACI Secretariat will undertake or outsource the annual programme of work agreed by the committee. The outputs of the programme of work and the minutes of committee meetings will be submitted to the NACI Executive for distribution, as appropriate, to the Council.
- The Committee will report annually (or more frequently, as required) to the NACI Council on the following matters:
 - The status and future of biotechnology in South Africa
 - The status of bioethics in respect of research development and the implementation of the National Biotechnology Strategy or subsequent plans and strategies.

7. Funding

The Department of Science and Technology will provide a ringfenced amount of R600 000 for the 2005/06 financial year, R1 million for 2006/07 and R1.2 million for 2007/08 for the activities of the National Biotechnology Advisory Committee.