

The OECD/HUGO Symposium on Genomics and Bioeconomy

Workshop Objectives and Discussion Issues

The overall goal of the meeting was to devise the first draft of a policy agenda and recommendations on how genomics can boost the development of the bioeconomy. A joint report between OECD and HUGO on these topics will be prepared in the coming months.

Key Outcomes

The main messages which came out of the meeting were the need for guidelines on international cooperation in genomics R&D; the need to further advance the areas of genomics through innovative IPR management models; and the need for innovative approaches to measure the economic impact of genomics.

To come up with a comprehensive international agenda on genomics research and policy, delegates pointed out that the terms “genomics” and “bioeconomy” should be first well- defined and well-framed. The measurement of the contribution of genomics to the bioeconomy is highly important and data gathering is a crucial element to be considered in this context. An integrative index could be developed to measure this impact holistically. It was highlighted that a number of current indicators already exist and can be used for this purpose.

The importance of studying the different models for knowledge management and identifying the most effective ones in the case of genomics was largely mentioned throughout the meeting. Open innovation was highlighted as a possible way to follow for further development of products issued from genomics. Genomics generates a huge amount of data at the precompetitive phases of R&D, that data should be better managed to fully capture value. Social trust systems (*e.g.* audits) could be developed and implemented to build trustworthy and transparent environments amongst collaborators.

The transition of genomics from bench to products requires more investment and funding. The need to create supportive policies to attract investors was pointed out. Human resources are also an important issue. Interdisciplinary education for biology students was mentioned as a key item. This would coincide with the increasing convergence of technologies (*e.g.* biology, computational sciences) in order to successfully achieve the goals of genomics.

The meeting had a large representation and involvement of developing and emerging economies. India, South Africa, Malaysia, China and Mexico were just a few of the emerging countries present. The importance of genomics research for these countries was highlighted, and it was often stated that in order for these economies to advance in the life sciences, it is essential to build up the capacity in life sciences infrastructure to meet their own needs.

Next Steps

As to what comes next, the OECD Secretariat will take the lead in the coming months in developing a policy paper based on the discussions at the seminar. We are also working with conference organizers to co-author an editorial piece for a publication to discuss what was said and accomplished in Montpellier. There has also been discussion of a follow-on meeting and a sense that the OECD/HUGO relationship could offer some very interesting frameworks for mutually beneficial cooperation.