

BBSRC collaboration with Forum for the Future and Friends of the Earth (Northern Ireland, Wales and England) on enabling broad conversation on synthetic biology

Synthetic biology raises controversies amongst a broad range of stakeholder groups. In order to get a clearer understanding of stakeholder views about the technology BBSRC is collaborating with Forum for the Future and Friends of the Earth (Northern Ireland, Wales and England) on a project to understand the varied and often conflicting views that exist.

BBSRC was approached by Friends of the Earth in spring 2014 to discuss synthetic biology and develop a shared understanding of our organisations' approaches and understanding of the topic.

After discussions with Forum for the Future and Friends of the Earth, BBSRC has agreed to support a collaborative project to map the various perspectives and issues around synthetic biology and potentially produce some guidelines or lessons for different stakeholder groups.

The project has started with the three organisations meeting to discuss and map issues and opportunities associated with synthetic biology which are now being explored, updated and amended after a series of one-to-one interviews with stakeholders from within the synthetic biology community.

The project will culminate in a workshop to be held in March 2015 where invited stakeholders from industry, academia, Government, regulation and more will meet to discuss an evolving issues map and input to the development of a process that can be used by individuals and organisations considering undertaking synthetic biology projects.

This project will complement the synthetic biology public dialogue undertaken by BBSRC in 2010. The dialogue aimed to increase understanding of public views on synthetic biology. The dialogue report can be located at: www.bbsrc.ac.uk/syntheticbiologydialogue.

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