

Core Ethical Values HollandBIO

HollandBIO, the Dutch biotech industry organisation, represents over 120 companies involved in the research, development, testing, manufacturing, marketing, sales and distribution of biotechnology products and services in the fields of healthcare, agriculture, food and the environment.

The biotechnology industry recognises its responsibility to encourage, through dialogue, better mutual understanding of ethical concerns. These concerns include any cultural or religious aspects related to biotechnology, possible environmental impact, and the adequacy of regulations.

These Core Ethical Values are addressed to consumers, patients, the agricultural community, politicians, legislators, the media, organisations and others who wish to know about the key ethical values that underpin our work. All members of HollandBIO share these Core Ethical Values. Since biotechnology is innovative and rapidly developing, these Core Ethical Values may be modified over time to address new issues and new insights that arise in the future.

General principles

- We are committed to realising the potential of biotechnology to improve the quality of human life.
- We give priority to health, safety, and environmental protection when undertaking the research, development, manufacture and distribution of our products and services.
- We develop and use biotechnology with full respect for human dignity and human rights.
- We communicate and share information about biotechnology and its derived products and services in a balanced manner, stating both benefits and risks.
- We engage in a dialogue with those concerned about ethical and societal implications of biotechnology.
- We treat animals in a respectful manner and, when at all possible, we limit their use in research. Any disproportionate suffering to animals involved in our research and/or other parts of our work is avoided and the highest standards of well-being are maintained.
- We support the conservation of biological diversity.
- We oppose the use of biotechnology to make any weapons and will not develop or produce biological weapons.
- We support the exchange of biotechnology between developed and developing countries duly considering each country's cultural values.

Healthcare

- We respect the codes of ethics of the healthcare professionals who diagnose and treat disease, and who prescribe, dispense, and use our products or make use of our services whether in research, development or patient care.
- We support the protection of the confidentiality of medical information, which includes genetic information.

- We oppose the use or disclosure of medical information, without informed consent, or any use or disclosure which could lead to allow intolerance or stigmatisation.
- We ensure, within our responsibilities, that the informed consent of all individuals participating in our research programmes, taking genetic tests or undergoing medical treatment is obtained. When individuals are unable to give their consent, it is obtained from their legal representatives according to current legislative requirements.
- We do not use or support the use of cloning technologies to reproduce human beings.
- We do not support human germ line gene therapy.
- We support the accessibility of counselling for genetic testing.

Agriculture, Food and Environment

- We support improvements in the quality of food and agricultural products, in order to enhance the world's food supply and thereby human and animal nutrition.
- We promote efficient and sustainable agriculture and support new biotechnological developments, which offer additional opportunities for farmers to protect or improve their crops and to use natural resources more effectively.
- We support transparent product information to promote informed consumer choice. We support the development of bioremediation and cleaner industrial and municipal processes through biotechnology.

Transparency

We support transparency initiatives, such as public access to documents, provided measures are in place to minimise the possibility of misuse that could decrease trust in decision-making processes or in regulated products, or undermine industry's legitimate economic interests.

These measures include:

- A predictable and stable operating environment
- An adequate legal and regulatory framework respecting the principles governing the protection of personal data, confidential business information and intellectual property.
- Special care for the protection of patients' personal data, especially in the case of rare diseases, where data de-identification could be problematic, given the extremely small number of individuals participating in the clinical studies.
- Special care for the protection of R&D data in regulatory dossiers, since they include data of high commercial value being the result of years of costly research and trials – whether in the healthcare, agricultural or industrial biotechnology sectors.

All members of HollandBIO voluntarily adhere to these Core Ethical Values. Member companies shall not represent any position as being that of HollandBIO unless that position has been approved by the Board of HollandBIO.

Member companies also recognise HollandBIO's responsibility to consider deviations by its members from these Core Ethical Values and to recommend appropriate responses after a reasonable due process.

Approved by HollandBIO's Board of Management, October 2015