

V GE³LS RESEARCH PROGRESS– Ethical, Environmental, Economic, Legal and Social aspects stemming from the Research

Objective

iBOL's GE³LS research program follows a common cycle of issue identification, analysis, identification of options, recommendations, and, where possible, implementation and monitoring. Each activity has also been chosen for its immediate relevance to iBOL; the intrinsic interest of the research question; the potential for resolution of key issues within the lifespan of the iBOL project; and the likelihood that solutions will have positive socioeconomic benefits for Canada.

Progress

The revised iBOL GE³LS plan was submitted March 15, 2010, and it was approved July 5, 2010, which puts the approval into the period of the interim report. The GE³LS team (Castle, Gold, Secko, Phillips and Bubela) carefully considered the reviewers' comments, has made slight adjustments to its research plan and has implemented other suggestions, particularly around communications and outreach, within the larger ambit of iBOL. One substantive change has been considered, in response to a reviewer's comment that barcoding raises contentious issues about biological classification, the role of bioinformatics, and the impact on and relation to, traditional taxonomy. This topic was included in the original GE³LS proposal, but was withdrawn for the revised program proposal. Since activity five relating to the governance of integrated GE³LS was not uniformly valued by the reviewers, the scope of that activity has been reduced and in part replaced by a sixth activity on issues of biological classification. The iBOL executive has been notified of this request for a change in the program, which will require approval due to a change to the budget.

In addition to responding to reviewers' comments and rationalizing the iBOL GE³LS program of research, the GE³LS team has participated in the Scientific Steering Committee (SSC) meeting in September at which time iBOL was officially launched. The GE³LS program of research has been fully integrated as Theme 6 in iBOL, with its activities assigned to six working groups. The GE³LS team has initiated discussion with node representatives about recruiting international GE³LS scholars in regions and countries other than Canada as participants in its Working Groups. This will ensure that the GE³LS effort broadens to become an international research undertaking.

Although GE³LS activity 5 on governance was not uniformly valued by the initial reviewers, there is already evidence that, as a large-scale international research project with an integrated GE³LS component, iBOL requires GE³LS input that dovetails with its approach to governance. The GE³LS team has been working closely with the iBOL Executive Director, not only to improve on and develop the overall organisational structure of iBOL, but also to develop reporting, communication and organisational structures that will facilitate the integration of GE³LS into the iBOL science and technology agenda.

In addition, Dr. Bubela has actively started on GE³LS *Activity 1: Issues Related to the Equitable Use of Genetic Resources*. Dr. Bubela has developed interview guides on international research collaborations such as iBOL that involve North-South partnerships. The guides are based on a theoretical Framework for analysing research commons for genetic resources, in turn based on the analytical framework for analysing natural resource commons developed by Nobel Laureate, Dr. Elinor Ostrom. The interview guides elucidate key issues in the specific context of North-South research partnerships, namely equitable distribution of costs and benefits in the sharing of bio-resources, IP rights, understanding impacts of the national implementation of the *Convention on Biological Diversity*. The interview guides are contextualised for different classes of stakeholders, namely researchers, policy-makers, funders, bio-repository managers (including museums and botanical gardens), industry, and non-governmental organisations. One postdoctoral fellow, Dr. Ashok Kumbamu, has been hired and is currently conducting interviews in India. An ELAP (Emerging Leaders of the Americas Program) Scholar will be arriving at the University of Alberta

in February and is conducting interviews in Brazil prior to his arrival. Ethics approvals were sought and granted from the University of Alberta for all activities.

A compilation of international legal frameworks on Access and Benefit Sharing is well underway, including updates related to the new ABS *Protocol* adopted last month at the *CBD COP 10* in Nagoya Japan. Finally, Drs Gold and Bubela have an edited book contract on ABS, Traditional Knowledge, and Indigenous Rights with Edward Elgar.

Planned Strategic Adjustments

The major strategic adjustment planned for the GE³LS program is its full integration as Theme 6 in iBOL, with its activities assigned to five working groups. In addition, a sixth working group, *Barcoding and Biological Classification*, is proposed.

During the period under review, Dr. Castle transferred from the University of Ottawa to the University of Edinburgh. This move does not create any unusual logistical, financial, timing or communications issues for the project.

Roles and Responsibilities of GE³LS Research Team

Name, Title and Affiliation	Role	Time (hrs/week)	Description of Responsibilities
Dr. Tania Bubela Associate Professor of Public Health, University of Alberta	Project Leader	10 hrs/week	Dr. Bubela is responsible for leading Activity 1, and for collaborating on Activities 4 and 5.
Dr. David Castle Professor and Chair of Innovation in the Life Sciences, ESRC Innogen Centre, University of Edinburgh	Project Leader	15 hrs/week	Dr. Castle is responsible for leading the GE ³ LS team, collaborates on Activities 2-4, and is responsible for Activity 5.
Dr. Richard Gold Associate Professor, Faculty of Law, Department of Human Genetics/Faculty of Medicine, McGill University	Project Leader	10 hrs/week	Dr. Gold is responsible for leading Activity 3 and for collaborating on Activity 5.
Dr. Peter Phillips Johnson Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy, University of Saskatchewan	Project Leader	10 hrs/week	Dr. Phillips is responsible for leading Activity 2 and for collaborating on Activity 5.
Dr. David Secko Assistant Professor, Department of Journalism, Concordia University	Project Leader	10 hrs/week	Dr. Secko is responsible for leading Activity 4 and for collaborating on Activity 5.