

Press Release

Contact: Aaron Lovell

Phone: (202) 691- 4320

aaron.lovell@wilsoncenter.org

March 13, 2012

The Societal Impacts of Synthetic Biology
Survey Seeks Public Input into Prioritizing Action

WASHINGTON – The Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars is soliciting public opinion on the most critical ethical, legal, and social implications (ELSI) for synthetic biology in a new online survey, which will provide guidance as federal agencies, foundations, industry, NGOs, and other stakeholders with limited resources seek to address key ELSI concerns.

The online survey asks respondents to rate a number of actions that could address ELSI issues, such as ensuring long-term effects of synthetic biology are benign, tracking public and private investment in the field, or labeling products that include synthetic biology in their manufacture. By prioritizing these potential actions, resources can be better focused on areas of public concern. The results of this anonymous survey will be analyzed and compiled into a report, which will be released in mid- to late-May 2012. To take the survey, click [here](#).

This survey builds on a workshop held Nov. 8-9, 2010, at the Wilson Center in Washington, D.C. The workshop culminated in a July 2011 report, *Issues Arising from Synthetic Biology: What Lies Ahead?*, which identified potential challenges and pressing research needs. A PDF of the report can be found [here](#).

The workshop was sponsored by the Wilson Center, the Department of Energy, and the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation. Following the workshop, an online survey was conducted to gather further input about which ELSI issues should be considered in the context of synthetic biology. The list of priorities in the new survey integrates the workshop-generated ideas with the post-workshop online input.

To take the survey, click here:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/viewform?formkey=dERxQ1F5b1RKX3hDTC0xVnRRaWk3Q2c6MA>

###

Synthetic Biology Project

The Synthetic Biology Project is an initiative of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars supported by a grant from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation. The Project aims to foster informed public and policy discourse concerning the advancement of synthetic biology. For more information, visit: www.synbioproject.org

Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars

The Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars is the national, living memorial honoring President Woodrow Wilson. The Wilson Center provides a strictly nonpartisan space for the worlds of policymaking and scholarship to interact. By conducting relevant and timely research and promoting dialogue from all perspectives, it works to address the critical current and emerging challenges confronting the United States and the world. Created by an Act of Congress in 1968, the Wilson Center is a non-partisan institution headquartered in Washington, D.C. and supported by both public and private funds. For more information, visit: <http://www.wilsoncenter.org/>