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## Wilson Center Awarded European Union Grant for Synthetic Biology Work *28-Group Initiative to Focus on Responsible Research and Governance*

WASHINGTON—The Synthetic Biology Project at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars has been awarded a grant to participate in SYNENERGENE (<http://www.synenergene.eu>), a newly launched consortium of 28 groups supported with €4 million (\$5.3 million) from the European Commission's Seventh Framework Programme to engage in the responsible governance of synthetic biology.

The Synthetic Biology Project is the only U.S. partner in the SYNENERGENE consortium. Over the next four years, the project seeks to foster responsible governance of synthetic biology by initiating mutual learning processes among a wide variety of stakeholders from science, industry, civil society, policy, education and art.

"The core value of SYNENERGENE is its emphasis on mutual learning between participants," says Eleonore Pauwels, a researcher with the Synthetic Biology Project. "Mutual learning requires the creation of a 'trading zone,' where knowledge can be shared, but no single voice dominates the dialogue and attention is given to expertise."

The Synthetic Biology Project will begin its work with a report identifying synergies between European and international synthetic biology actors around responsible research and innovation. The initiative will also support collaboration and open forums to promote a growing international community of practice focused on the policy aspects and governance of synthetic biology.

The overall initiative is being coordinated by the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT) in Germany. "Synthetic biology is an emerging field of science and technology, the contours of which are not yet clear," says Christopher Coenen of KIT's Institute for Technology Assessment and Systems Analysis. "We aim to involve citizens and a wide variety of stakeholders at an early stage in the process and to stimulate discussions between them."

Organizers hope the iterative mutual learning process within SYNENERGENE will contribute to a better understanding of synthetic biology research and innovation and enhance public engagement. Activities will be structured by four platforms highlighting synthetic biology's future, as well as its public, cultural and technological perspectives.

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### About the Synthetic Biology Project

The Synthetic Biology Project is an initiative of the Science and Technology Innovation Program of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars and 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: <http://www.synbioproject.org>

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