

Reviewing growth and innovation challenges in industrial biotechnology

The Industrial Biotechnology Innovation and Growth Team (IB-IGT) was formed in late 2007, to facilitate a collective view from the UK chemical and bioscience industries on the innovation and growth challenges in industrial biotechnology. It is an industry-led project facilitated by the Department for Business Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR) and its activities are driven through an industry-led Steering Group chaired by Ian Shott of Excelsyn.

IB-IGT report to be published in May 2009

The IB-IGT and its three Working Groups have met on a number of occasions in 2008/9, making significant progress against work plans.

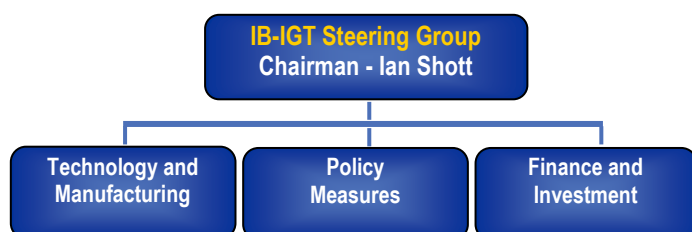
The IB-IGT's final report, which will contain specific recommendations and an action plan for industry and Government - based on output from the work group programmes - is currently being finalised and will be published on 14th May 2009.

Stakeholder Engagement Key to Success

Emerging themes from the IB-IGT work were shared with stakeholders in January/February - via a series of regional events attended by over 70 delegates from a wide range of organisations.

These events provided a timely opportunity for the IB community to hear about developments and engage directly with members of the IB-IGT steering group and work group chairs on the key issues and emerging themes.

IB-IGT Structure



Ian Shott set out the background and scope of the IB-IGT work ahead of presentations from each of the three Work Group chairs. Presentations highlighted the process that had been adopted in reviewing the opportunities and challenges facing the IB sector in the UK and key messages emerging from this work.

In summarising, Ian Shott set out the key themes under which the emerging recommendations will be grouped. These are set out in more detail overleaf.

Attendees at the three regional events expressed their broad support for the areas of work that had been undertaken and provided valuable feedback to the IB-IGT steering group on the emerging themes.

Summary of key points raised at events:

- Simplification of SME support
- Identification of the critical market sectors where IB will make a difference
- Industry leadership required in implementing IB-IGT recommendations
- Supply chain connectivity is critical
- Demonstration plants should be sited within existing facilities
- Increased awareness of IB market opportunities
- Development of a common language for IB that can be understood across academia and business
- IB should compete on merit in terms of cost and performance
- More positive communication of the opportunities and benefits of IB
- Need to identify gaps in IB skills and fill them
- Ensure academia and industry align with the needs of the IB community



"I'd like to thank everyone involved in the Working Groups and all those who attended the stakeholder events for the valuable input and contribution made to the development of the key themes and emerging recommendations for the IB-IGT Report".

Ian Shott, Chair IB-IGT Steering Group

UK industrial biotechnology community help shape emerging IB-IGT recommendations

With a broad spectrum of IB stakeholders and experts engaged in the three Working Group programmes - and very constructive feedback from the wider IB community on the emerging themes - the IB-IGT Steering Group is now busy refining its recommendations prior to publication of a final report on 14th May 2009.

Many of the themes emerging from the separate work group activity showed significant synergy and the final recommendations have therefore been rationalised and grouped under five key themes with a number of specific recommendations under each theme. The five themes are shown below.

The final report will set out the background, context, trends, drivers and the evidence base for the work of the IB-IGT. It will also set out in more detail the key steps and activities required to enable delivery of these recommendations with a timetable for action.

1. Connecting it all together

Provide leadership so as to effectively promote and connect industrial biotechnology activities across all supply chains



An Industrial Biotechnology Leadership Forum with ownership of the recommendations and responsibility for overseeing implementation

2. De-risking access to products and technologies

Reducing the level of risk through the IB innovation process is an important way of increasing the adoption of IB processes



Development of an open access demonstrator facility and fund to enable access to the facility

3. Accelerating the innovation and knowledge transfer process for IB in the UK

Long-term commitment to the development of IB through better integrated support for R&D, business development and knowledge transfer



Building on UK expertise (including a Centre of Excellence), Business support schemes, Knowledge transfer experts, Overseas promotion of UK expertise

4. Retaining and developing interdisciplinary talent in science and management

Exploitation of IB is hampered by a lack of specific high-level skills at the graduate and post-graduate level.



Research Councils and Sector Skills Councils to work together to develop a joint strategy.

Industry engagement with Research Councils.

5. Creating a supportive public and business environment for Industrial Biotechnology

Public and business perceptions have significance in determining whether IB advances are at a sufficient pace and scale to deliver the benefits it is capable of in good time (or even at all).



Standards
Address the impact of existing initiatives
Public procurement
Land use
Public perception

For more information on the themes and emerging recommendations resulting from the detailed work of the IB-IGT over the past 18 months please send an email to: IB-IGT@berr.gsi.gov.uk

Next steps

The emerging recommendations will be further developed and tested within the IB-IGT.

On 14 May 2009 the IB-IGT will publish a final report which will set out a strategy for the sustained success of the UK Industrial Biotechnology sector alongside a workable action plan that is owned by stakeholders .

The Government will publish its response to the IB-IGT report at a launch event in late June 2009.