Session 12: GBRCN implementation and coordination with national and regional efforts

Cluster model for network output: implementation of OECD best practice guidelines

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Abstract:
Since the very beginning of the OECD initiative for Biological Resource Centres the establishment of a Global BRC network (GBRCN) was recommended to "connect national BRCs and provide the framework within which co-ordination, harmonisation and quality assurance could be provided." [1] To reach this goals an ongoing global demonstration project is laying the fundaments to demonstrate that the synergy between the member BRCs and biological domains can deliver more effective access to high quality material and information to underpin life science research and development, especially for the emerging knowledge-based bio-economy. In it's assignment as the global provider for an international framework with linking mechanisms between member BRCs, biological material collections organised in scientific and industrial institutes, researchers, regulatory authorities and commercial interest groups, the GBRCN will force a cluster model. The benefit of clustering is that national BRCs and related institutions or organisations in proximity to one another fosters specialisation as well as collaboration and innovativeness. Thus the GBRCN cluster model will be affected by efficiency and synergy by enhancing the international visibility of single institutes and niche know-how, inventing respectively deepening co-operation between specialists, disciplines and institutions, and strengthening cross-border scientific co-operation. Within the demonstration project the concept will be developed to cluster specialised centres and in this way to bring together competencies, which probably were not pooled together. As a part of a cluster each individual can continue it's concentration on the own core competence without gaining further development in derivative fields. The GBRCN clusters will range from centres offering specialists for regulatory affairs (e. g. biosecurity, biosafety, ethics, CBD), centres experienced in legal aspects (e. g. intellectual property rights, access and benefit sharing), scientific centres having deep know-how in certain biological material with respect to isolation, cultivation and preservation, to technological oriented centres (e. g. for bioinformatics or innovative laboratory and analytical technologies). Resulting in mutual enrichment and technological innovation these clusters can offer with their specialised background the required utilisation of the biological material which means their translation into application. With this offer, the GBRCN clusters add an immeasurable value to all sectors in the bio-economy and will be a fundamental partner to tackle future challenges. Coevally with the OECD Best Practice Guidelines for BRCs a first version of a gold standard in quality management was introduced, which enables the participating organisation to parallel develop themselves in quality and managerial aspects by sharing the same indicators and achieve high levels of excellence in compliance. Self-, third party and peer-assessments will promote the confidence of the users in the single organisation whilst an excellence model for a future BRC certification offers an individual aligned, stepwise approach to avoid excessive demands.

Perspectively, the GBRCN clusters will be excellence centres not only for high quality material from all biological domains. Beyond that they add scientific and commercial value by providing access to the very latest scientific knowledge, highly specialized researchers and experts, as well as to managerial competences and regulatory know-how.

[1] Biological Resource Centres – Underpinning The Future Of Life Sciences And Biotechnology, OECD – Directorate for Science, Technology and Industry, 2001

Key-words:
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