

Collaborative Mechanisms for Intellectual Property Management in the Life Sciences

Recently, both industry and governments have considered factors and mechanisms for encouraging collaboration amongst diverse interests in order to stimulate innovation, foster R&D and promote access and diffusion of technology and information. Previously, some collaborative mechanisms have been employed within other areas, such as information technology. However, there is increasing consideration and discussion about their potential use within the life sciences. Although the discussion of using such mechanisms in the life sciences is fairly recent, certain organisations have recommended that governments, the public sector and the private sector consider the development and use of collaborative mechanisms, within the life sciences and the field of biotechnology. The organisations that have made such recommendations include the Australian Law Reform Commission, the Canadian Expert Working Party on Human Genetic Materials, Intellectual Property and the Health Sector (Canadian Biotechnology Advisory Committee), the United States National Academies of Science (US), and the OECD. Consideration of these types of mechanisms is also occurring within the private sector, wherein companies, such as Pfizer, GlaxoSmithKline and Affymetrix, are also studying the use of such mechanisms for fostering innovation. A high-level roundtable was organised with experts from diverse backgrounds and experiences including private sector, public sector, finance, biotechnology/pharmaceutical/science, management, legal (IP, anti-trust/ competition), research/academia, etc. Generally, the roundtable focused on the diverse types of collaborative mechanisms and the manner in which they may be employed to facilitate access to and use of biotechnological innovations for purposes of research, commercialisation and the provision of products/services. An analytical report has been released which draws on the roundtable discussion and provides an overview of the issues pertaining to collaborative mechanisms and their application in the life sciences.

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