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**INTERNATIONAL GENE SYNTHESIS CONSORTIUM (IGSC)
JOINS AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE
MEETING ON BIOSECURITY GUIDELINES**

*Consortium's Harmonized Screening Protocol Meets or Exceeds U.S. Draft Guidelines for
Biosecurity Practices for the Gene Synthesis Industry*

The IGSC is pleased to participate in the AAAS meeting, "Minimizing the Risks of Synthetic DNA: Scientists' Views on the U.S. Government's Guidance on Synthetic Genomics" and supports a continued, open dialogue among scientists and policymakers regarding best practices for biosecurity. For nearly a decade, the member companies of the IGSC have participated in a broad conversation on how best to develop a safe, secure commercial gene synthesis market in order to serve the growing needs of both industry and academia.

The IGSC has closely studied the U.S. government's draft Screening Framework Guidance for Synthetic Double-Stranded DNA Providers and will submit its final comment in the coming weeks. The consortium welcomes the draft guidance and encourages its final adoption in substance. The U.S. draft guidance is consistent with the consortium's own harmonized screening protocol

(http://genesynthesisconsortium.org/Harmonized_Screening_Protocol.html), and the consortium is taking steps to test and implement details of the draft guidance that differ from the protocol.

The guidance is the product of several years' close consultation between the responsible agencies and the academic, policy, public interest and gene synthesis communities. That consultation, along with the government's careful study, has helped to produce practical, useful guidance that all responsible suppliers should apply. We believe that other governments will find it an important model for their own efforts and a strong foundation for international cooperation.

The IGSC member companies, which together represent over 80 percent of worldwide gene synthesis capacity, have been strong supporters of efforts both in the U.S. and in other countries to strengthen biosecurity measures in the industry. Each company has implemented customer and sequence screening practices that closely parallel the procedures proposed in the U.S. government draft guidance.

The IGSC's recent success in harmonizing our members' screening protocols will make those practices even more effective, helping to ensure that genes synthesized and sold today are received only by legitimate scientists engaged in beneficial research. We support the broadest possible adoption of biosecurity approaches that will promote scientific advancement and prevent the technology's potential misuse. The U.S. government's draft guidance is an important step toward achieving that common objective.