

BIONET Expert Group

## Constitutional Document

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### 1. Name

Within Workpackage No. 4 of the EU FP6-project *BIONET: Ethical Governance of Biological and Biomedical Research: Chinese European Co-operation, Contract No. 036788*

an

*European and Chinese Expert Group on Ethical Governance of Research in the Life Sciences and Biomedicine*

has been established. Its name can equally be

*Chinese and European Expert Group on Ethical Governance of Research in the Life Sciences and Biomedicine*

or for short: *BIONET Expert Group*

### 2. Objectives and functions

The BIONET Expert Group has four objectives:

1. To contribute to establishing standards and guidelines for best practice in the Ethical Governance of Research in the Life Sciences and Biomedicine, with a specific focus on EU-China collaboration.
2. To act as advisors to actual and potential research partnerships.
3. To help in the development and oversight of regulatory procedures and standards.
4. To provide a resource for those wishing to regulate or evaluate research in the life sciences and biomedicine in collaborations between EU and China.

The Expert Group will (1) fulfill an advisory role for the BIONET and its options, in particular the Steering Committee and the partners.

It will (2) also advise the political and scientific authorities of actual and potential research partnerships between European Union and China including public bodies and private corporations working in this sector about best practice on problematic ethical issues of governance of research in the Life Sciences and Biomedicine. It aims to help in the development and oversight of regulatory procedures and standards.

It will (3) provide a platform for cross-cultural exchange in bioethics and represent an international network of expertise. As such it will have a disseminating role for results from the project, and work in concert with the Steering Committee.

### 3. Composition

The Expert Group is composed of the following regular members:

Dr. Ole Döring

Professor Herbert Gottweis

Dr. Margaret Sleeboom-Faulkner

Professor Wolfgang Hennig

Professor Geneva Richardson

Professor Cong Yali  
Professor Lu Guangxiu  
Professor Zhai Xiaomei  
Professor Qiu Renzong (Co-Chair)

Professor Christoph Rehmann-Sutter (Chair)

Administrative support: Dr. Ayo Wahlberg, BIOS, London School of Economics.

All regular Expert Group members are partners in the BIONET. All partners present in the BIONET workshops and conferences will have the opportunity to make input to the work of the Group, to read, contribute and comment on draft reports. In addition, consultations will be undertaken with the representatives of a range of disciplines and expertises from China and Europe who will be invited to attend meetings of the Expert Group as appropriate, and to give evidence in oral and written form.

#### **4. Organisation of Work**

The Expert Group will meet six times over the course of the 36 months, whenever possible in connection with the Workshops and Conferences of BIONET. In addition, members of the Expert Group will attend the Conferences and Workshops, and discuss the findings and implications electronically in the period between Expert Group meetings.

The Expert Group can build Working Groups to specific topics. The Working Groups report to the plenary of the Expert Group.

Administrative support is provided by the BIONET secretariat at BIOS, LSE.

#### **5. Decision Procedures and Representation**

All important decisions about the content of recommendations and publications are taken by the Plenary of the Expert Group. The Chair makes proposals for the agenda of the meetings, supports the Expert Group with expertise, and represents the Expert Group and its decisions externally. All members can act as representatives of the Expert Group, within the aims and the decisions of the Plenary.

If possible, decisions shall be taken in consensus.

In recommendations and publications all positions expressed and sustained within the Expert Group shall be explained with their proper arguments. In public statements they shall also be made transparent.

#### **6. Deliverables**

First Interim Report at the end of year 1.

Second Interim Report at the end of year 2.

Best practice guide by Expert Group on Informed Consent in European-Chinese collaborations.

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Status of this document: After discussion of a draft at the first session of the first meeting of the Expert Group in Beijing, April 2007, the Constitutional Document has been revised and passed in the plenary on Friday at the same meeting. Thereafter, it shall be made publicly available on the BIONET website and on request also elsewhere. It can periodically be revised and adapted, according to the needs of the Expert Group.