

ScanBalt Position Paper

for the consultations on the mid-term review of the Life Sciences and Biotechnology strategy 2002-2010

Introduction

ScanBalt – the network of networks – has the vision of creating a competitive world-class meta-bioregion. ScanBalt BioRegion consists of the Nordic and Baltic countries as well as Poland, Northern Germany and Northwestern Russia (11 countries in total). The ScanBalt BioRegion has 85 million people, more than 60 universities and more than 870 biotech/life science companies. Members of ScanBalt are 11 regional triple helix networks between universities, biotech/life science industry, hospitals, public authorities and other important actors.

ScanBalt Intellectual Property Knowledge Network (IPKN) has been established with the aim to build a sustainable infrastructure to facilitate regional access to knowledge, skills and best practices in the field of IP in biotechnology sector. ScanBalt IPKN aims to increase the global competitiveness of the biotech industry in the Nordic and Baltic Sea countries by facilitating the development of a sustainable intellectual infrastructure capable of creating value from bioscience research. Through the creation of an active network of IP practitioners, researchers/academics, authorities, business managers and entrepreneurs in the ScanBalt BioRegion, the IPKN will act both to strengthen regional IP expertise - in bioscience IPR construction, IP management, and its implications on bioscience research and development- and broaden general IP awareness and competencies in how to use IP to create value in the innovation process - from idea creation and protection to commercialisation and business development.

In today's knowledge-based society intellectual property (IP) has a special role. IP forms a legal basis for creating and marketing new ideas, technologies and scientific works. It is an important factor in the development of science, economy and culture. IP's role in global, regional and national developments is increasingly growing. 183 Member States of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) form a global intellectual property society. This society relies on the notion given in Article 2 (viii) of the Convention Establishing the WIPO (1967), according to which "*intellectual property*" or "*intellectual property rights*" shall include the rights relating to:

- *literary, artistic and scientific works,*
- *performances of performing artists, phonograms, and broadcasts,*
- *inventions in all fields of human endeavor,*
- *scientific discoveries,*
- *industrial designs,*
- *trademarks, service marks, and commercial names and designations,*
- *protection against unfair competition, and all other rights resulting from intellectual activity in the industrial, scientific, literary or artistic fields.*

Biotechnology is a specific field of human activity. As part of life sciences and industry, biotechnology secures the quality and future of mankind, if used in an ethical manner. This is why IP has a special role to play in the biotechnology sector, from the protection of an idea to commercialization and business development.

The core of IP is copyright protection of literary, artistic and scientific works. Copyright is the most universal means for the protection of human creativity. In the biotechnology sector patented inventions play a central role. Such IP instruments as trademarks, commercial names, domain names, knowhow and licensing agreements secure the commercial interests of entrepreneurs in the sector.

The knowledge and use of the possibilities embodied in IP are not exploited in full in national, regional and global economic and legal systems. The knowledge about the possibilities of IP is still on the very basic level within the society and even among professionals. Politicians and other decision makers, academics and researchers, biotechnology industry, financiers and third sector can benefit times more if they use all the possibilities that IP offers.

We propose for the consultations on the mid-term review of the Life Sciences and Biotechnology strategy 2002-2010 to integrate the following into that strategy:

- 1) promote IP as a core element of science, economy and culture;
- 2) include general IP courses in the curricula as a compulsory subject at all universities and other institutions of higher education;
- 3) provide further education on IP, organize specialized courses, seminars and roundtables for researchers and representatives of industry;
- 4) finance research in the field of IP and biotechnology, promote international research cooperation;
- 5) use professional expertise provided by ScanBalt IPKN (www.scanbalt.org and www.scanbaltipkn.org) for the benefit of biotechnology sector, as well as other sectors of research and business;
- 6) establish local and regional expert groups and other nodes of competence, and invite them and IP professionals to participate in law drafting, drafting of policy papers, development programs etc.

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