About us

We are a multidisciplinary team, with a wide range of professional backgrounds and diverse nationalities. Expertise in the Centre includes molecular biology, genetics, biochemistry, post-genomics, gene ecology, political science, social studies of science and technology, participatory technology assessment, and the social dimensions of risk.

The Director of INBI is Dr Jack A. Heinemann, an associate professor of molecular genetics with interests in biosafety, risk assessment and education. The Deputy Director is Dr Joanna Goven, a social scientist with expertise in the areas of risk assessment and public participation.

International links include the University of Tromsø, Norway; the Norwegian Institute of Gene Ecology (GENØK); University of León, Nicaragua; Institute for Applied Ecology (Öko-Institut), Germany; Island Knowledge Institute, Solomon Islands; and the French Institute for Agronomic Research (INRA), France.

iNBi Centre for Integrated Research in Biosafety

Contact us

For more information about INBI and our activities, please visit our website: **www.inbi.canterbury.ac.nz.** or email to inbi@canterbury.ac.nz

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INBI - Centre for Integrated Research in Biosafety

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CHRISTCHURCH NEW ZEALAND

Biosafety

INBI -

creating integrated and collaborative research in biosafety

The Centre for Integrated Research in Biosafety (INBI), formerly known as NZIGE, is a research centre of the University of Canterbury in Christchurch, New Zealand.

INBI aims to contribute to the increased understanding and more effective management of emerging biotechnologies. Our research is:

- *independent*
  We are practiced in the techniques associated with recent and emerging biotechnologies, but we have no financial interest in their development or prohibition.
- *transdisciplinary*
  INBI brings together scientists skilled in biotechnology research and safety assessment and social scientists with expertise in researching the social, cultural, ethical and political implications of biotechnology. This team is committed to working collaboratively across disciplinary boundaries and to modeling new forms of integrated research.
- *collaborative and international*
  When conducting capacity-building activities in the developing world, we offer our own expertise while also working with the knowledge and specific needs of the country or region.
- *committed to biosafety*
  The Centre participates in the national biosafety framework of New Zealand and supports, to the degree that we are able, the research needs of citizens, civic leaders, NGOs, scientists and others who are participating in their national biosafety frameworks.

What do we do?

INBI is engaged in assessing whether and how various products of biotechnology may pose risks to humans and the wider environment. Our focus is biosafety (or, biosecurity as the term is most commonly used in New Zealand). We make the results of these assessments available freely to the public.

We are also involved in biosafety capacity-building in developing countries under the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. This has taken the form of independent advice and courses in the assessment and evaluation of biotechnologies. INBI has been a key partner in the international biosafety course held by the Norwegian Institute of Gene Ecology (GenØk), 'Holistic Foundations for Assessment and Regulation of Genetic Engineering and Genetically Modified Organisms'.

Regional Biosafety Course- Solomon Islands 2005

In August 2005 INBI conducted the inaugural Regional Biosafety Course in Honiara, Solomon Islands. It provided an introduction to modern biotechnology, biosafety and the regulatory requirements of the Cartagena Protocol. It included practical laboratory sessions in which participants isolated DNA from local fruits and built inexpensive versions of a PCR machine and a gel electrophoresis rig.

The Biosafety Assessment Tool

An ongoing project of INBI is the Biosafety Forecast Service. This is part of the UNEP-GenØk Biosafety Capacity Building Package, funded by the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation. The Biosafety Forecast Service is funded to produce the Biosafety Assessment Tool (BAT).

The BAT will be a free-to-the-public online resource, designed as a practical tool for the risk assessment of GMO applications for food, feed, medicine or environmental release. Accessible to specialists and non-specialists alike, the BAT will assist users to identify relevant risk issues and to evaluate technical information provided in applications to import GMOs.

As part of the development of the BAT, several prototypes will be produced for testing and evaluation. The first evaluation sessions in 2005 (in Honiara, Solomon Islands and Tromsø, Norway) produced an enthusiastic response.