

PART II, SECTION IV

ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND

MANAGEMENT OF

BIOTECHNOLOGY

Introduction

Chapter 16 of Agenda 21 recognizes the role that biotechnology can play in addressing such issues as food production and improvements in human and environmental health. At the same time, the chapter emphasizes the importance of managing biotechnology safely. Canada's approach to this subject focuses on the same interests and concerns.

Since 1983, there has been a National Biotechnology Strategy and a National Biotechnology Advisory Committee. The Committee is composed of representatives from government, industry, academia, and the public. It provides advice to the federal government on issues related to the development and management of biotechnology.

Both the Committee and the Strategy attempt to balance the potential value of this technology against the need for safe management and public acceptance. As with most areas of Canadian activity, research often involves co-operation between governments, environmental NGOs, research centres, universities, and the private sector.

Examples of some work in this field consistent with Chapter 16 follow.

Expanding the Environmentally Compatible Applications of Biotechnology

Recent National Biotechnology Strategy allocations will provide \$30 million for the 1995-1997 period to support a range of activities, including the following:

- more efficient extraction and use of non-renewable resources
- development of hardier, disease-resistant canola, salmon, and conifer species
- enhanced ability to detect pollutants rapidly and more accurately
- minimized use of harmful chemical pesticides