



JOB TITLE

Postdoc Position in the FWF-NSFC¹ joint project I215 „Investigating the biosafety and risk assessment needs of synthetic biology in Austria and China“

CLOSURE OF ANNOUNCEMENT

March 31, 2009

NAME OF ORGANISATION

Organisation for International Dialogue and Conflict Management (IDC), Vienna, Austria. web: www.idialog.eu

This is a joint project with the Institute of Botany, Chinese Academy of Sciences (IBCAS).

BACKGROUND/ DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

Synthetic biology can be understood as the application of true engineering principles to biology. Whereas in “genetic engineering” the term engineering is used as a metaphor, in synthetic biology it is a methodology. In a sense synthetic biology is the next development step after genetic engineering.

Our objective is to provide better scientific insight into the challenges synthetic biology addresses in the field of biosafety and risk assessment. This objective – we think- is best tackled from an international perspective, including a European (Austria) and Chinese perspective. We will pursue our objectives in three steps:

- 1) analysing the current developments in synthetic biology and its different subfields; with a special focus on Europe and China;
- 2) investigating the safety (and security) implications of synthetic biology;
- 3) review current biosafety regulations and prepare recommendations to improve existing biosafety assessment frameworks

The community has recognized the need to address safety concerns in synthetic biology, but up to now discussions are only fragmentary and insufficient. Our project we will contribute to the establishment of a European - Chinese network of researchers investigating the safety and security aspects of synthetic biology.

As a reference see the previous IDC project SYNBIOSAFE: www.synbiosafe.eu

APPOINTMENT

Duration: The appointment (100%) will be initially for 1 year. If the results are good the appointed period will be prolonged to a total duration of 36 months.

Start/ End: April 1, 2009 to March 31, 2012

Location: Vienna, Austria

SALARY

Salary is based on the Austrian FWF scheme for Postdocs (see: www.fwf.ac.at).

¹ FWF: Austrian Science Fund. NSFC: National Natural Science Foundation China



DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES/ WORK DESCRIPTION

The successful candidate will analyse latest developments in synthetic biology, investigate the biosafety implications of synthetic biology, review current biosafety regulations, assist in the conceptual design of new biosafety engineering tools, prepare recommendations, publications and reports, carry out dissemination work (conferences, meetings, website), and communicate regularly with our Chinese cooperation partner IBCAS. Annual trips to China for project meetings are foreseen.

QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCES

The candidate for the PostDoc position is expected to have a PhD degree or an equivalent qualification. As the work is highly interdisciplinary a background in one or preferably more of the following areas is required: synthetic biology, molecular biology, nano(bio)technology, bioengineering, biochemistry, electronic engineering, risk assessment, biosafety, technology assessment. Previous experience in synthetic biology is an advantage. The candidate needs to have skills that allow her/him to manoeuvre in largely unmapped scientific areas. It goes without saying that proficiency in computer skills, familiarity with standard office software applications, good organizational skills, plus excellent verbal and written communication skills in English is a must.

HOW TO APPLY

Send your application (writing the application number I215 at the top left side of the letter and envelope) before the specified deadline to:

Dr. Markus Schmidt
International Dialogue and Conflict Management
Kaiserstr. 50/6, 1070 Vienna,
Austria

Alternatively, you can e-mail your application letter to:
markus.schmidt@idialog.eu