

GENE EDITING & SOCIETAL ENGAGEMENT TOOLKIT: RESOURCES FOR GETTING STARTED

ABOUT THIS TOOLKIT

This toolkit provides guiding questions, planning frameworks and resources, and references to support gene editing researchers, developers and partners in getting started on societal engagement for gene editing.

The toolkit was developed by the Innovative Genomics Institute, the Kavli Center for Ethics, Science, and the Public, and Keystone Policy Center.

WHY SOCIETAL ENGAGEMENT FOR GENE EDITING?

Gene editing has the potential to address urgent challenges in the environment, climate resilience, human health and food and nutrition security. Many diverse sectors and stakeholders share a mutual belief in the potential for gene-editing to deliver societal benefits while recognizing the important role of societal interests and social license in addressing concerns and achieving benefits.

Effective societal engagement on gene-edited products can:

- Guide work toward mutually beneficial outcomes
- Build trust
- Inform exploration of how problems are ‘framed’ and which solutions - gene editing and/or otherwise - might best meet societal needs
- Ensure that appropriate and culturally competent engagement, collaboration, and self-determination principles are upheld
- Support prioritization of which applications of gene editing to pursue and how to pursue them
- Support exploration of risks and benefits of specific gene edited products associated with a broad range of environmental, social, economic and cultural interests
- Increase inclusivity of decision making and governance on emerging technology
- Increase understanding of diverse views of stakeholders, communities, and the general public and how these views affect societal support for specific gene edited products
- Integrate societal values along with technical value to address complex issues that cannot be addressed by science alone
- Invite various forms of expertise and knowledge into co-creating goals and solutions
- Increase the capacity of partners - including historically underrepresented partners - to participate in research
- Increase transparency and accessibility of information about gene editing research
- Complement science-based regulation, industry transparency, and voluntary stewardship
- Create and sustain durable relationships, partnerships and collaborations across diverse perspectives that can result in reduction of risks and enhancement of societal benefits