

Communication strategy

**Cooperative Research Centre for Sugar
Industry Innovation through Biotechnology**

(CRC SIIB)

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1. The communication strategy at a glance for target groups

The following table summarises the main elements of the Cooperative Research Centre for Sugar Industry Innovation through Biotechnology (the CRC SIIB) communication strategy.

Target group	Communication objectives	Target relationships	Key messages — summarised	Main tactics
Canegrowers: 2–3 voluntary contacts from each sugar-growing region	Informing: provide credible advice Conversing: create awareness and understanding of the scope, direction and outcomes of the CRC SIIB's research through two-way communication Involving: maintain and gain additional support for, and involvement in, the CRC SIIB	To increase: * level of use of CRC SIIB information from low to moderate *satisfaction with CRC SIIB information from low–moderate to high *level of awareness of CRC SIIB from low to moderate *satisfaction with understanding from moderate to high *level of involvement from very low–low to moderate *satisfaction with involvement from low–moderate to high	1. The CRC SIIB is a partnership with a high level of capability and skills, doing good science 2. The CRC SIIB's activities are now focused on delivering outcomes from its research 3. Biotech provides opportunities for improving the sugar industry's viability and opening new markets 4. Biotech includes developing genetically modified organisms but also many more technologies that do not modify the genes of organisms 5. The nature of biotech research means that its outcomes can take a minimum of five years to be commercially available 6. Biotech approaches are needed to improve sugar production and diversification 7. The CRC SIIB follows a rigorous process for making sure that any GM products do not create risks for the community 8. The CRC SIIB welcomes participation and investment in its research activities and outcomes	Identify 2–3 canegrowers in each region and personally brief them Send short email updates inviting any comments Articles in <i>BSES Bulletin</i> , <i>Canegrower</i> , <i>Australian Canefarmer</i> and <i>Australian Sugarcane</i> (twice a year) Relevant fact sheets Promote relevant new items on website Identify service providers conduits ASSCT interaction Education workshops Participate in industry events and activities Face-to-face interaction with CEO and board Invite them to the annual research symposium
Sugar millers: a couple of representatives from Australia's 26 mills	Informing, conversing and involving	To increase: *level of use of CRC SIIB information from low to moderate *satisfaction with CRC SIIB information from moderate to high * level of awareness of CRC SIIB from low–moderate to high *satisfaction with understanding from moderate to high	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8 (same as above)	Identify 2–3 sugar millers in each region and personally brief them Send short email updates inviting any comments Articles in <i>Australian Sugarcane</i> , <i>BSES Bulletin</i> , <i>Canegrower</i> , <i>Australian Canefarmer</i> and

Target group	Communication objectives	Target relationships	Key messages — summarised	Main tactics
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *level of involvement from very low–low to moderate *satisfaction with involvement from moderate to high 		<p><i>Australian Sugarcane</i> (twice a year)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify service providers conduits Relevant fact sheets Promote relevant new items on website ASSCT interaction Participate in industry events and activities Face-to-face interaction with CEO and board Invite them to the annual research symposium
Potential commercial investors	Informing, conversing and involving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To increase: *level of use of CRC SIIB information from moderate to high *level of awareness of CRC SIIB from moderate–high to high *satisfaction with understanding from moderate to high *level of involvement from low–high to moderate–high and satisfaction with that involvement from moderate–high to high 	<p>1,2,3,5</p> <p>9. The CRC SIIB conducts biotech that could produce plastics, alternative sugars and lignin-based products that are more environmentally friendly than existing products</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify potential commercial investors to create database Send short emails and provide fact sheets on commercial opportunities Promote relevant news items on website Participate in industry/ biotech events Face-to-face interaction with commercialisation unit Support commercialisation activities
CRC SIIB core partners (board): BSES, CSIRO, SRDC, Southern Cross University, The University of Queensland	<p>Informing, conversing and involving</p> <p>Partnering: Implement a cohesive approach to CRC SIIB communication</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To increase: *satisfaction with CRC SIIB information from moderate to high *satisfaction with involvement from moderate to high *level of involvement in CRC SIIB’s communication To maintain moderate or high level of: *use of CRC SIIB information 	1,2,5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board meetings and minutes Send media releases and annual report CRC SIIB e-newsletter Send notification of relevant new items on website Face-to-face interaction

Target group	Communication objectives	Target relationships	Key messages — summarised	Main tactics
		*awareness of CRC SIIB and satisfaction with understanding *involvement To achieve a high level of satisfaction with implementing the communication strategy, and a moderate level of involvement in its implementation		Board and briefing meetings Board monitoring of communication strategy Board act as spokespeople (provide presentation kit)
CRC SIIB staff, including students	Informing, conversing, involving, partnering	To increase: *level of use of CRC SIIB information and satisfaction with that information from moderate to high. *level of awareness of CRC SIIB from moderate high to high and satisfaction with understanding from moderate to high *satisfaction with involvement from moderate to high *level of involvement in CRC SIIB's communication To maintain high level of involvement To achieve a high level of satisfaction with implementing the communication strategy, and a moderate level of involvement in its implementation	1,2,3,5	CRC SIIB e-newsletter Send notification of relevant new items on website All staff emails Identify site communication contacts Monthly CRC SIIB executive meetings Annual research symposium Social events Project communication planning assistance and support Communication skills training
Other CRC SIIB partners/funders (non-board): Queensland and Australian governments, commercial partners, QUT, JCU	Informing, conversing, involving, partnering	To achieve a high level of satisfaction with: *CRC SIIB information *understanding of CRC SIIB *involvement *the implementation of the communication strategy To achieve a moderate level of: *awareness *use of CRC SIIB information *involvement in CRC SIIB or its communication	1,2,5	CRC SIIB e-newsletter Send notification of relevant new items on website Contribute to SGTG's fact sheets Send media releases and annual report Face-to-face interaction Supported to be spokespeople (provide presentation kit) Participate in SGTG network

Target group	Communication objectives	Target relationships	Key messages — summarised	Main tactics
General public	1,2	To achieve a moderate level of use of CRC SIIB information and satisfaction with that use To achieve a low level of awareness of CRC SIIB and a moderate satisfaction with understanding of CRC SIIB	1,2,4,5,7,9	Media liaison Website Participate in relevant SCTC and QBAC communication activities
Primary and high school students	1,2,3	To achieve a moderate level of use of CRC SIIB information and satisfaction with that use To achieve a moderate level of awareness and satisfaction with understanding of the CRC SIIB	1,2,3,4,5,7,9	Video case studies of scientists Education program — case studies, media promotion Direct interaction between researchers and students
Other researchers	1,2	To achieve a moderate level of use of CRC SIIB information and an awareness of the CRC SIIB and a high degree of satisfaction with that use and understanding of the CRC SIIB	1,2,5,8	Individual researcher contact and interaction Notification of new research information on the website

ASSCT = Australian Society of Sugarcane Technologists; BSES = BSES Limited; CEO = chief executive officer; CRC SIIB = Cooperative Research Centre for Sugar Industry Innovation through Biotechnology; CSIRO = Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation; JCU = James Cook University; QBAC = Queensland Biotechnology Advisory Council; QUT = Queensland University of Technology; SRDC = Australian Government Sugar Research and Development Corporation

2. Introduction

2.1 Cooperative Research Centre for Sugar Industry Innovation through Biotechnology

The CRC SIIB research goals, following its third-year review, are to:

1. Develop opportunities through molecular markers to improve the efficiency of the sugarcane breeding program.
2. Develop transgenic sugarcane incorporating a trait that overcomes a production constraint.
3. Develop the technology to support the commercialisation of a transgenic plant incorporating an industrial desirable trait.
4. Develop technologies that add value to sugarcane lignin as part of the bio-refinery process.
5. Create valuable and appropriate intellectual property (IP) through research in new concepts, technologies or opportunities that attract investment.

The CRC SIIB also runs an education program that supports postgraduate students within the CRC SIIB; understands how to teach biotechnology to schools and the community; and explains genetic modification research to canegrowers, teachers, school children and communities.

The CRC SIIB has two years to complete its current program funding, and is seeking industry-relevant outcomes from its research investment. The focus of the CRC SIIB's communication in the next two years is to communicate outcomes from its research and education programs.

The overarching goal of the CRC SIIB's communication is to help the CRC SIIB achieve its research and education goals by improving awareness of, and involvement in, the CRC SIIB, which will lead to investment in, and acceptance of, the CRC SIIB's outputs.

For example, communication will:

- help prepare and increase the sugarcane industry's support for new varieties of sugarcane, new uses of sugarcane, and the use of genetically modified plants
- highlight the potential or actual benefits of research, and help attract investors for further developing the results of research into products
- explain the benefits of biotechnology, including the use of genetically modified plants, and gain consumer support for these innovations
- support the technology transfer of the CRC SIIB's outputs to the sugar industry.

2.2 Current perceptions, concerns and needs of target groups

We (Econnect Communication) developed this communication strategy after researching the perceptions, concerns and needs of target groups through:

- a desktop review of relevant documents, including the CRC SIIB's third-year review, and existing communication tactics, including an extensive review of the CRC SIIB's new website

- workshops with CRC SIIB staff involved in communication, marketing and commercialisation
- interviews with the CRC SIIB's Board members and requests for feedback on a summary of those interviews at a Board meeting
- surveys of CRC SIIB staff and external industry people.

This research has informed all elements of this communication strategy, and is documented in a research report. The research identified issues and risks that this communication strategy aims to manage.

The initial draft of this strategy was modified after receiving feedback from CRC SIIB staff, Board members, influential stakeholders and discussions with canegrowers and millers at the Australian Society for Sugar Cane Technologists (ASSCT).

2.3 This communication strategy

This communication strategy is an internal document for the CRC SIIB and its partners. It is not prescriptive; rather, it provides a framework for guiding and supporting the CRC SIIB's communication over the next two years.

3. Identifying opportunities and managing risk

This communication strategy's objectives, priority target groups, key messages and tactics reflect the current opportunities for communication and the need to mitigate the internal and external risks identified below.

3.1 Communication opportunities

3.1.1 Strengths of CRC SIIB

First, we identified perceived strengths of the CRC SIIB, which the CRC SIIB can build on in their communication activities. These strengths include the CRC SIIB's:

- education and training programs for students, industry and the community
- reputation for good research, demonstrated through publications
- research capabilities — people and project management
- relationship with commercial partners, strengthened by recent successful projects by the CRC SIIB
- relatively effective internal communication through the annual research symposium, the e-newsletter, use of website and informal interaction between researchers
- quality of communication activities, which are perceived to be as good as other, similar organisations by most industry representatives.

3.1.2 External opportunities

We identified opportunities outside the CRC SIIB that would help their communication efforts, including:

- increased industry awareness of biotechnology activities and opportunities
- increased global demand for bio-commodities driven by 'green' interests in climate change
- advances in biotechnology that create new commercial and investment opportunities.

3.1.3 Internal and external communication

In our research, we also identified communication opportunities for internal and external communication:

Internal

- producing more regular editions of the internal e-newsletter (bi-monthly instead of quarterly)
- encouraging CRC SIIB staff contributions to the e-newsletter and website; they use these as a source of information, but do not yet perceive them as an opportunity to provide information
- supporting the staff's desire to gain an ongoing profile for their research beyond the CRC SIIB
- supporting the staff's desire to know how and what to communicate about the CRC SIIB
- supporting informal interactions between staff through social events.

External

- providing more articles to industry magazines
- communicating more frequently and regularly
- increasing the number of stories on *Landline*, *Totally Wild* and similar programs
- providing local and regionally relevant information to canegrowers through face-to-face interaction
- supporting the Australian Government Sugar Research and Development Corporation's (SRDC) quarterly short and relevant email updates
- presenting at regional meetings of canegrowers
- linking with productivity and BSES extension services in each cane-growing area.

3.1.4 Sugarcane gene technology group

The CRC SIIB is a member of the Sugarcane Gene Technology Group (SGTG). This group, with Cox Inall Communications, has developed a strategy and a plan to guide communication across the sugar industry supply chain while genetically modified (GM) cane technology is being developed for commercialisation.

The communication plan (2007–2009) will guide the CRC SIIB's communication activities and help the consortium achieve the plan's objectives to:

1. Ensure the Australian Government, and Queensland, Western Australian, New South Wales and relevant local governments support the commercialisation of GM cane.
2. Ensure relevant stakeholders are fully informed, engaged and satisfied that industry can properly manage the technology.
3. Pre-empt and assist industry to manage public debate by increasing the industry's awareness of GM technology and its capacity to respond to issues confidently in the public domain.
4. Ensure communication about GM cane is based on agreed facts, evidence and sound science; not opinion, emotion and perceptions.

The CRC SIIB can support the SGTG's communication objectives by:

- checking the messages about GM cane in any communication products against the nine messages developed in the SGTG communication plan to make sure they are consistent
- participating in briefing meetings with government agencies and industry
- participating in government liaison, as appropriate
- providing materials or speakers for meetings and workshops, including the leadership development program convened by SGTG
- participating in SGTG's network of public affairs and consumer advocacy network
- providing trained media spokespeople, when relevant
- contributing to SGTG fact sheets with specific CRC SIIB examples and case studies.

3.1.5 Queensland Biotechnology Advisory Council

The Queensland Biotechnology Advisory Council (QBAC) provides independent strategic advice to the Queensland Government on biotechnology issues and helps to implement the [Queensland Biotechnology Strategic Plan 2005:2015: Biotechnology](#)

– *Setting New Horizons*. The CRC SIIB already works strategically through QABC to promote shared messages, and there is an opportunity to strength this relationship. This is especially true in regard to the CRC SIIB’s second generation biorefinery research, which is investigating using the plant material from sugarcane after it has been harvested as a biofuel.

3.2 Internal risks

Some of the communication risks for the CRC SIIB relate to internal issues within the CRC SIIB, and include:

- competing research programs in partner organisations ,and associated confidentiality and IP issues
- the potential failure of CRC SIIB researchers to recognise the IP potential of their research
- CRC SIIB partners seeing the CRC SIIB as a funding body for their own, individual research
- conflicting interests and agendas of CRC SIIB partners that do not align with collaboration
- confusing ideas about the CRC SIIB’s roles and messages
- perceiving the CRC SIIB as bureaucratic and slow
- limited communication between CRC SIIB researchers and the chief executive officer, and between CRC SIIB researchers and the commercialisation unity
- some staff believing that there is an overload of information from the CRC SIIB
- limited external communication by CRC SIIB researchers, especially with industry
- reliance on time-consuming communication tactics, such as face-to-face interaction
- lack of understanding of what other sections of the CRC SIIB does
- perceived lack of clarity of messages
- lack of awareness about who is on the CRC SIIB Board and what their role is
- time put into communication perceived to be unrecognised and unrewarded.

3.3 External risks

We identified external threats and risks for communication, including:

- lack of contact lists of leading industry representatives
- public perceptions and attitudes to GM organisms, including confusion about terms such as ‘biotechnology’ and ‘genetically modified’
- fragmented and diverse nature of the sugar industry
- the sugar industry being composed of small to medium organisations with a short-term focus on immediate profits and cost savings versus the longer-term focus of the CRC SIIB’s research outcomes
- the sugar industry’s lack of capacity to respond to new plant biotechnology opportunities
- the sugar industry’s focus on sugar and the price of sugar, rather than alternative commodities
- only low awareness of the CRC SIIB activities by the sugar industry; for example, about one-third of leading canegrowers incorrectly believe one of the CRC SIIB’s projects is to develop new and modified machinery for harvesting,

and about one-third of leading canegrowers and millers incorrectly believe the CRC SIIB is working to improve techniques for crop rotation

- very low to low involvement in the CRC SIIB by the sugar industry
- contact with the CRC SIIB does not change or influence the sugar industry's behaviour
- limited use by external target groups of the CRC SIIB's website and annual report
- a significant proportion (26%–55%) of external target groups are not sure whether: (a) the CRC SIIB provides accurate and consistent information; (b) they are satisfied with the interaction they have with the CRC SIIB; (c) they are satisfied with the amount of information they receive; (d) the CRC SIIB responds effectively to their needs; or (e) the CRC SIIB provides consistent messages
- perception by the sugar industry that biotechnology has promised much but has delivered little or nothing of benefit to them
- perception by sugar industry that biotechnology is expensive technology and commercial opportunities are limited to a few players
- perception by most of the sugar industry that the CRC SIIB has not made an effort to be relevant to them
- leading growers often do not have contact with the onground growers and are considered by other canegrowers to be out of touch with the industry
- many growers, especially older ones, do not use the internet
- CRC SIIB researchers are known by their organisations (for example, BSES, CSIRO, etc) rather than as working for the CRC SIIB.

4. Target groups of this communication strategy

Different groups within the CRC SIIB considered all the groups listed below to be important at various times. For example, some researchers considered the general public and school students to be the most important people to communicate with; others are doing work that is directly relevant to the sugar industry or potential commercial investors. The target groups are as follows:

1. Sugar industry:
 - (a) canegrowers — identify 2–3 canegrowers from each of Australia's cane-growing regions who are willing to communicate directly with the CRC SIIB and with the others in their region
 - (b) millers — identify 1–2 people from each of Australia's 24 sugar mills
 - (c) peak bodies such as Australian Canegrowers, the Australian Sugar Industry Alliance, Australian Cane Farmers Association.
2. Potential commercial investors in the CRC SIIB's research.
3. CRC SIIB core partners (Board) —BSES including their extension officers, CSIRO, SRDC, Southern Cross University, The University of Queensland.
4. CRC SIIB staff — all those directly involved in the research, including students.
5. Other CRC SIIB partners/funders (non-Board) — Queensland Government, Australian Government (CRC SIIB Secretariat), CSR, Maryborough Sugar Factory, Queen Nutraceuticals, Metabolix, SRI, Tully Sugar, Dow, Queensland University of Technology, James Cook University.
6. General public (through the media, the CRC SIIB's education program and the CRC SIIB's involvement with the Sugarcane Gene Technology Group and QBAC).
7. Primary and high school students and their teachers, though the CRC SIIB's education program.
8. Other researchers, including the international research community.

4.1 Relationships

The success of communication with target groups can be assessed by looking at the relationship that the CRC SIIB wishes to develop with their target groups. These relationships will also guide the communication objectives (see next section). The four different types of relationships are:

1. Informing — one-way relationship where information is provided to specific target groups.
2. Conversing — two-way relationship that involves dialogue between the CRC SIIB and target groups, obtaining their input as well as providing information.
3. Involving — close relationship where target groups may be directly involved in specific CRC SIIB projects or activities.
4. Partnering — strong interactive and interdependent relationship where activities are planned and carried out together.

The following table [describes the CRC SIIB’s desired overall relationships with each target group.

Target groups	Type and desired strength of relationship			
	Informing	Conversing	Involving	Partnering
Sugar industry — leading canegrowers and millers	Moderate–high	Moderate	Moderate	Low
Potential commercial investors	High	High	Moderate–high	Low
CRC SIIB core partners (Board)	Moderate–high	High	High	Moderate–high
CRC SIIB staff	High	High	High	Moderate–high
Other CRC SIIB partners/funders (non-Board)	Moderate	Moderate–high	Moderate	Moderate–high
General public	Moderate	Low–moderate	Low	Low
Students	Moderate	Moderate	Low–moderate	Low
Other researchers	Moderate	Moderate	Low	Low

5. Objectives of this communication strategy

The four overall objectives of this communication strategy are provided in the table below. These objectives support the sort of relationship the CRC SIIB might have with its target groups. The table also describes:

- performance indicators for measuring the success of the CRC SIIB in achieving these objectives, which can be measured by surveys
- target groups for these objectives
- a broad indication of the CRC SIIB's current performance for each target group, based on our web survey research, interviews and a desktop review; some of these ratings are based on quantitative survey data, and some on an assessment of the qualitative data; for some groups we do not have the relevant information
- target performance levels to be achieved in the next 12 months.

Communication objective	Performance indicators (to be tested mid-2009)	Priority target groups	Current (April 2008) performance against indicators		Target performance for May 2009	
			Level	Satisfaction	Level	Satisfactor
Informing Provide credible advice and information	Level of use of information products	Canegrowers	Low	Low-moderate	Moderate	Moderate
		Sugar millers	Low	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
	Satisfaction with quality and accessibility of information	Potential commercial investors	Moderate	High	High	High
		CRC SIIB core partners (Board)	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	High
		CRC SIIB staff, including students	Moderate	Moderate	High	High
		Other CRC SIIB partners/funders (non-Board)	Unknown	Unknown	Moderate	High
		General public	Unknown	Unknown	Moderate	Moderate
		School students	Unknown	Unknown	Moderate	Moderate
		Other researchers	Unknown	Unknown	Moderate	High
Conversing Create awareness and understanding of the scope, direction and outcomes of the CRC SIIB's research through two-way communication	Level of awareness	Canegrowers	Low	Moderate	Moderate	High
		Sugar millers	Low-moderate	Moderate	Moderate	High
	Satisfaction with understanding	Potential commercial investors	Moderate-high	Moderate	High	High
		CRC SIIB core partners (Board)	High	High	High	High
		CRC SIIB staff and students	Moderate-high	Moderate	High	High
		Other CRC SIIB partners/funders (non-Board)	Unknown	Unknown	Moderate	High
		General public	Unknown	Unknown	Low	Moderate
		School students	Unknown	Unknown	Moderate	Moderate
		Other researchers	Unknown	Unknown	Moderate	High
Involving	Level of	Canegrowers	Very low-low	Low-moderate	Moderate	Moderate

Communication objective	Performance indicators (to be tested mid-2009)	Priority target groups	Current (April 2008) performance against indicators		Target performance for May 2009	
			Level	Satisfaction	Level	Satisfactor
Maintain and gain additional support for, and involvement in, the CRC SIIB	involvement	Sugar millers	Very low–low	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
		Potential commercial investors	Low–high	Moderate–high	Moderate–high	High
	Satisfaction with involvement	CRC SIIB core partners (Board)	High	Moderate	High	High
		CRC SIIB staff	High	Moderate	High	High
		Other CRC SIIB partners/funders (non-Board)	Unknown	Unknown	Moderate	High
		School students	Unknown	Unknown	Low–moderate	Moderate
Partnering Implement a cohesive approach to CRC SIIB communication	Level of involvement in communication	CRC SIIB core partners (Board)	Low	–	Moderate	High
		CRC SIIB staff	Moderate	–	Moderate	High
	Satisfaction with implementation of this communication strategy	Other CRC SIIB partners/funders (non-Board)	Unknown	–	Moderate	High

CRC SIIB = Cooperative Research Centre for Sugar Industry Innovation through Biotechnology

6. The CRC SIIB's key messages

The following messages have been derived from the research undertaken for this communication strategy. The specific target groups for these messages are listed after each message. The messages need to be developed more specifically according to specific tactics and target groups, but should still reflect the overall meaning described below.

1. The CRC SIIB is:

- a partnership of research agencies and commercial partners with a high level of capability and skills working on some of the most significant problems faced by the sugar industry
- working collaboratively, involving both scientists and industry in the research
- doing good research and developing new technology that will help the long-term viability of the sugar industry by increasing market opportunities with new products in the medium to long term
- producing a positive return on investment and producing commercial outcomes from its research and IP
- transparent and open in its policies and operation, and welcomes input and ideas into its research.

Target groups: all

2. The CRC SIIB's activities are now focused on delivering outcomes from its research. The CRC SIIB's outcomes will inform further research by its partners, be developed commercially over the next 5 to 10 years, or be of direct benefit to the sugar industry.

Target groups: all

3. Biotechnology provides opportunities for improving the sugar industry's viability and sustainability as well as opening up new markets for pharmaceuticals and chemicals.

Target groups: sugar industry, potential commercial investors, CRC SIIB staff, school students

4. Biotechnology includes developing genetically modified organisms but also includes many more technologies that do not modify the genes of organisms.

Target groups: sugar industry, general public, school children

5. The nature of biotechnology research and development means that research outcomes can take a minimum of five years and often much longer to be commercially available. However, the long-term potential financial, social and environmental benefits of biotechnology are huge.

Target groups: all

6. Biotechnology approaches are needed for improving sugar production and diversification.

Target groups: sugar industry

7. The CRC SIIB follows a rigorous accreditation process for making sure that any GM sugar products do not create risks for the community. Australia has one of the world's most stringent and well-managed systems for regulating genetically modified organisms, including field trials.

Target groups: sugar industry, general public, students

8. The CRC SIIB welcomes participation and investment in its research activities and outcomes.

Target groups: sugar industry, potential commercial investors, other researchers

9. The CRC SIIB conducts research and development into sugarcane biotechnology that could produce plastics and alternative sugars or lignin-based products. These products could help reduce greenhouse gas emissions, use of pesticides and other chemicals, and provide healthy food options for consumers.

Target groups: potential commercial investors, general public, students

7. Communication strategies and tactics

7.1 Focus of activity

The main focus of internal communication will be to assist the CRC SIIB's staff to communicate with each other as well as prepare them for the closure of the CRC SIIB in two years' time.

External communication will support the CRC SIIB's commercialisation staff to promote the major commercial outcomes from the CRC SIIB's research, extension of relevant results to the sugar industry, and ongoing educational activities. For example, during the later part of 2008, the following five commercial outcomes are likely to drive much of the communication activity: compound with a low glycemic index (GI); compound that slows the development of prostate cancer; vacuole sequencing; hyaluronic acid; and the Nodax patent.

7.2 Partnerships

Implementing this strategy will rely on partnerships with:

- BSES extension staff and the regional productivity services to communicate regionally to sugar industry groups
- SGTG and QABC to communicate shared messages, especially with the general public and school groups
- communicators from partner organisations, especially BSES, CSIRO and The University of Queensland.

7.3 Strategies and tactics

The following table describes the strategies and specific tactics that will be used to communicate to the target audiences according to communication objectives and desired relationships with these audiences. This has been informed, where possible, by our research for this strategy and also by knowledge of best practice. The table includes four communication strategies:

1. Transferring information — publications, presentations, website, media, education.
2. Profile building — website, media, events, displays.
3. Consulting — requesting feedback, asking advice, workshops, interviews, focus groups, surveys.
4. Interacting — face-to-face meetings, workshops, meetings, field days, social events, email, phone.

7.3.1 Objective 1: Informing

Objective: Provide credible advice and information

Communication strategies: Transferring information

Target group	Tactic
Sugar industry	<p>Identify 2–3 canegrowers in each region who are willing to receive and provide information and make up a database list; identify 2–3 contact people from each sugar mill who are will to receive and provide information and make up a database list</p> <p>Personally brief canegrowers on the list with BSES extension involvement</p> <p>Personally brief millers on the list</p> <p>Send database list short email updates bi-monthly about CRC SIIB research, inviting any constructive feedback</p> <p>Produce brief update sheets about CRC SIIB research activities and outcomes that are relevant to canegrowers or millers, pre-test drafts with relevant people on database list — and when final, put on website, and distribute to BSES extension officers and database list</p> <p>Send database list notification of relevant new items on website: media releases, fact sheets, articles from publications</p> <p>Identify contacts at service production boards who could act as conduits to communicate with regional growers about CRC SIIB research</p> <p>Aim to provide at least two articles a year about the CRC SIIB to the <i>BSES Bulletin</i>, <i>Canegrower</i>, <i>Australian Canefarmer</i> and <i>Australian Sugarcane</i></p>
Potential commercial investors	<p>With commercialisation staff and relevant project leaders, identify potential commercial investors who are willing to be added to a database list; keep this list up to date and add to as new names arise</p> <p>Send short email updates as new commercial opportunities arise</p> <p>Provide list with fact sheets on the commercial opportunities/outcomes — provide personally, put on website and promote</p> <p>Send list notification of relevant new items on website: media releases, fact sheets, articles from publications</p>
CRC SIIB core partners (Board)	<p>Board meeting notes and minutes</p> <p>Send media releases, annual report</p> <p>CRC SIIB e-newsletter — bi-monthly</p> <p>Send notification of relevant new items on website: media releases, fact sheets, articles from publications</p>
CRC SIIB staff	<p>CRC SIIB e-newsletter — short updates bi-monthly, specifically targeted at CRC SIIB staff and sent through personalised emails; invite staff contributions</p> <p>Maintain and update CRC SIIB website, include a members-only website section; invite staff contributions</p> <p>Identify a volunteer site contact from each CRC SIIB site to provide a regular point of contact for internal communication; this could be a student</p> <p>Send notification of relevant new things on website: media releases, fact sheets, articles from publications</p>
Other CRC SIIB partners/funders (non-Board)	<p>Send media releases, annual report</p> <p>CRC SIIB e-newsletter — bi-monthly</p> <p>Contribute to SGTG's fact sheets with CRC SIIB stories and examples</p> <p>Send notification of relevant new things on website: media releases, fact sheets, articles from publications</p>
General public	<p>Media liaison, including use of relevant TV programs</p> <p>Website maintained and kept up to date</p>
Students	<p>Case study videos of interesting scientists</p> <p>Support education program: materials, case studies, stories, media</p>
Other researchers	<p>Individual researcher contact — through publications, conferences presentations</p>

BSES = BSES Limited; CRC SIIB = Cooperative Research Centre for Sugar Industry Innovation through Biotechnology; SGTG = Sugarcane Gene Technology Group

7.3.2 Objectives 2 and 3: Conversing and involving

Objectives:

Conversing: Create awareness and understanding of the scope, direction and outcomes of the CRC SIIB's research through two-way communication

Involving: Maintain and gain additional support for, and involvement in, the CRC SIIB

Communication strategies: Profile building, consulting, interacting

Target group	Tactic
Sugar industry	Participate in ASSCT — CRC SIIB staff, interactive display Run relevant education workshops with education program and BSES extension staff Identify relevant industry field days/meetings/AGMs and participate in collaboration with BSES Regular face-to-face meetings by CEO and Board and relevant researchers on a planned basis Invite those on the list to the annual research symposium
Potential commercial investors	Identify and participate in relevant industry and biotechnology events Facilitate face-to-face communication in cooperation with commercialisation unit Collaborate with and support commercialisation and business manager's activities
CRC SIIB core partners (Board)	Board meetings Regular face-to-face, phone and email interaction Regular briefing meetings
CRC SIIB staff	Monthly CRC SIIB executive meetings Project and lab meetings Project leader meetings Provide opportunities to meet with CEO at project meetings Hold short 90 minute internal discussion sessions to discuss communication issues (as needed) Annual research symposium Work with site contacts to support regular informal social opportunities for informal interaction (eg morning tea) on site and across sites
Other CRC SIIB partners/funders (non-Board)	Regular face-to-face, phone and email interaction Regular briefing meetings
General public	Participate in relevant SGTG and QBAC communication engagement activities on an opportunistic basis
School students	Through CRC SIIB's education program and direct interaction between researchers and students
Other researchers	Individual researcher interaction — workshops, conferences, etc

ASSCT = Australian Society of Sugarcane Technologists; BSES = BSES Limited;
CEO = chief executive officer; CRC SIIB = Cooperative Research Centre for Sugar Industry Innovation through Biotechnology; QBAC = Queensland Biotechnology Advisory Council;
SGTG = Sugarcane Gene Technology Group

7.3.3 Objective 4: Partnering

Objective: Implement a cohesive approach to CRC SIIB communication

Communication strategies: Consulting, interacting

Target group	Tactic
CRC SIIB core partners (Board)	Board approval and support for this communication strategy Board monitoring of strategy implementation Board to act as spokespeople for the CRC SIIB, applying messages in this strategy — provide a generic PowerPoint presentation about CRC SIIB
CRC SIIB staff	Monthly CRC SIIB executive meetings to identify communication opportunities and make sure activities fit this communication strategy Annual research symposium: session to discuss communication Professional support for program communication plans Check messages about GM sugarcane or products against the messages developed by SGTG and QBAC Provide recognition of communication activities through awards presented at the annual research symposium
Other CRC SIIB partners/funders (non-Board)	Approval and support for this communication strategy Supported to be spokespeople for the CRC SIIB, when relevant, applying messages in this strategy Participate in SGTG network

CRC SIIB = Cooperative Research Centre for Sugar Industry Innovation through Biotechnology; GM = genetically modified; QBAC = Queensland Biotechnology Advisory Council; SGTG = Sugarcane Gene Technology Group

7.4 Making the tactics effective

Implementing the tactics described above will require:

- using case studies and stories in information products, including materials for the website
- identifying opportunities for CRC SIIB staff to interact with target groups by developing and promoting a calendar of events
- making information and communication opportunities relevant to the target groups; for example, the web update sent to canegrowers would highlight different information from that sent to millers
- keeping up-to-date databases of priority target groups for personalised contact
- monitoring to check that the tactics are relevant to, and continue to meet, the needs of the target groups while meeting the CRC SIIB's communication objectives
- implementing the recommendations from our review of existing tactics.

7.5 Review of existing tactics

To prepare this strategy, we reviewed the CRC SIIB's existing tactics, such as the website and publications in preparing this strategy (see attached research report).

7.5.1 Website review

In our extensive review of the CRC SIIB's website, we found that it upholds the CRC SIIB's reputation as a serious professional organisation. However, there are many improvements that can be made to ensure it is more useful for the sugar industry. These recommendations are provided in the attached research report. They include:

- keeping information up to date
- keeping contact details of relevant people involved in the CRC SIIB up to date

- including news stories that are less than four weeks old and archiving older media releases
- promoting and making publications on the website accessible, including success stories.

7.5.2 Publications review

We reviewed the CRC SIIB's publications according to target audiences, key messages, structure and layout. The report of this review is provided in the attached research report. Our three key recommendations are to:

1. Draft articles and information with specific audiences in mind, making them relevant and easy to understand. Draft publications, such as fact sheets, should be pre-tested with a sample of the target audience before finalising for the website and/or publication.
2. Make sure information, especially for non-technical audiences, is written in simple English with active direct language that avoids jargon and acronyms.
3. Edit documents professionally before they are published to avoid typos and clumsy sentence structure.

8. CRC SIIB communication roles

Everyone involved in the CRC SIIB has a direct or indirect role and responsibility to communicate both internally and externally.

8.1 Chief Executive Officer

The CEO has a primary communication role for the CRC SIIB, both internally and externally. In particular, the CEO:

- interacts with staff informally at project meetings and social occasions
- interacts with staff formally at monthly executive meetings, the annual research symposium and relevant meetings
- makes sure communication is resourced appropriately
- speaks on behalf of the CRC SIIB with industry, bureaucrats and politicians
- liaises with potential commercial investors
- communicates regularly with the CRC SIIB's partners
- builds bridges between CRC SIIB partners

8.2 Board

Board members have the following roles in communication, which are carried out on an opportunistic basis:

- speaking on behalf of the CRC SIIB with industry, bureaucrats and politicians
- setting the direction of the CRC SIIB's communication
- being conduits, when relevant, between the CRC SIIB and their own organisation.

8.3 Communication manager

The CRC SIIB currently has a part-time communication manager who:

- plans and manages communication on a strategic basis
- identifies and manages subcontractors
- manages the website
- produces fact sheets, media releases and newsletters
- organises displays and events.

Contract support should be employed to provide help with the following:

- construct and manage the databases
- draft updates, fact sheets, e-newsletters, media releases and materials for the web for approval by the manager
- research and construct calendar of industry events and meetings and keep staff informed of opportunities
- identify target publications for articles, their editors, publication timelines and opportunities to publish CRC SIIB stories
- assist with project-level communication that fits with the program communication plans
- interact with CRC SIIB staff face-to-face on a daily basis, identifying communication opportunities and issues.

This will allow the communication manager more time to pursue a more strategic approach with communication, liaise regularly with partner communication staff and BSES extension, and write high-quality stories about CRC SIIB outcomes.

8.4 Education manager

The CRC SIIB's education manager is directly and indirectly involved in communication through her organisation of, and interaction in, education programs. The communication manager supports their activities and likewise the education manager identifies communication opportunities for the communication manager.

8.5 Commercialisation and business manager

The commercialisation and business manager has important communication roles to:

- market the CRC SIIB as a potential partner or collaborator to relevant companies
- market the IP generated by the CRC SIIB
- encourage CRC SIIB researchers to recognise and value commercialisation opportunities and activities.

The manager carries out these activities with the support of a marketing company as well as through support from the communication manager.

8.6 CRC SIIB researchers

CRC SIIB research teams have a responsibility to communicate within their team, with other CRC SIIB research teams, and with relevant external target groups. They will be supported by the communication manager to do this communication through project communication planning that links with this overall strategy.

9. Action plan May–December 2008

The priority actions for May–December 2008 are listed below. Once this strategy is approved, these actions will be described in further detail and linked to the:

- CRC SIIB's budget for communication for this time period (\$120 000)
- timelines and deadlines for making this happen
- responsibilities for achieving the deadlines, including contract and coordination of consultants to assist the communication manager implement this strategy
- tactics for ongoing monitoring and evaluation

The external communication will be focused on CRC SIIB outcomes and the internal on maximising opportunities for informal interaction.

9.1 Priority actions

9.1.1 External

1. In conjunction with CRC SIIB administration support, review, update and maintain databases of key contacts for target groups (including emails, addresses and phone numbers). These will be used to send out updates and contact target people about specific communication opportunities or issues.
2. Use grower contacts (identified at SGTG workshop) as champions of sugarcane biotechnology. Include group in the above database list and aim to send bimonthly update and links to new website information.
3. Liaise with the CRC SIIB executive team at monthly meetings to identify strategic communication opportunities.
4. Research publication outlets, deadlines and topics for partner and target group magazines and newsletters (e.g. BSES Bulletin, Canegrower, Australian Sugarcane Magazine)
5. Respond to review of website recommendations made in the attached research report
6. Continue to work on a media strategy with Prodigy+ focussing on commercial opportunities and products to announce, but also including stories for the general public and promotion of industry relevant-CRC SIIB events and educational opportunities.
7. Work with CRC SIIB administration support to update the current internal calendar of relevant sugar industry and commercial events and opportunities. Produce a liaison strategy for CRC participation in such events in collaboration with the CEO and where appropriate, BSES extension. These events should include industry workshop and field days, conferences and SGTG events. Participation should be planned as part of the program communication activities and in liaison with the CEO and Board.
8. Provide CRC SIIB partner spokespeople with an overview of the CRC Communication Strategy, copy of the latest CRC brochure and any future project information sheets. These documents will contain information about the CRC's goals, activities, partners, research outcomes and opportunities.

9.1.2 Internal

9. Identify a contact from each CRC SIIB site to provide a regular point of contact for discussing communication issues informally and gaining information for the e-newsletter.

10. Invite CRC SIIB staff to informal 90 minute sessions to discuss communication issues when the need arises.
11. Produce bi-monthly CRC e-newsletters which are shorter and offer CRC staff the opportunity to contribute short articles or information they'd like to communicate to others.
12. Discuss CRC SIIB program, education and commercialisation communication activities at monthly executive meetings to make sure they fit this communication strategy and to identify new communication opportunities.
13. Include a communication session at the next Project Leaders Retreat to discuss internal and external communication issues, opportunities and activities.