

Economics Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Industry, Innovation and Science Portfolio
2016-17 Supplementary Budget Estimates
20 October 2016

AGENCY: CSIRO

TOPIC: Commercial partnerships

REFERENCE: Written Question – Senator Carr

QUESTION No.: SI-114

1. Can the CSIRO confirm that it has entered into what has been described as an strategic alliance with Swisse (as reported by Fairfax media on 26 October 2016)?
2. What is the nature of this arrangement?
3. What activities will CSIRO be performing in this arrangement?
4. What is the financial value of this arrangement for the CSIRO?
5. What expertise does the CSIRO have to offer in research around complementary medicine that is of value to this arrangement?
6. What activities does CSIRO engage in around clinical trials?
7. How will research projects be chosen?
 - a. Will the CSIRO retain complete independence in the conduct of any research, experiment design and decisions around publication?
 - b. What arrangements will be made to ensure all research is appropriately peer reviewed?
8. Does the CSIRO have guidelines for the use of its brand and logo by commercial partners? If so, how will CSIRO ensure that use of its brand and logo are within the parameters of these guidelines?
9. How will the CSIRO ensure its research findings from this project are transparent?
10. Has the CSIRO entered into other arrangements of this nature? If so, can you list those instances?

ANSWER

1. CSIRO entered into a Master Agreement to form a strategic research alliance with Swisse on 1 August 2016.
2. The Master Agreement establishes a framework for investigating research opportunities, facilitating collaboration and undertaking individual projects of mutual interest.
3. CSIRO and Swisse will develop projects aligned to CSIRO's skills, expertise and technologies relevant to the health and wellness industry. This includes investigating the efficacy of Swisse products and exploring opportunities for science supported innovation in nutraceutical supplements and their manufacture.
4. The Master Agreement is a framework for individual research projects and as such does not have any financial payment terms. Individual project agreements that may be entered into under the umbrella of the Master Agreement will have a financial value in line with the scope of each project.

5. CSIRO has considerable expertise across manufacturing technology, logistics, food processing, food safety, nutrition and health.

CSIRO has a purpose built state of the art clinical nutrition research facility and is able to undertake rigorous human clinical trials.

6. CSIRO undertakes fee for service work for the food, health and nutraceutical industries by examining the health attributes of foods, supplements and dietary patterns. Such work requires following ethical standards and approval processes.

CSIRO has a long history of research in nutrition, including conducting clinical trials. Clinical trial activities typically include the development of study protocol, approval of study protocol (CSIRO, collaborator and Human Research Ethics Committee), recruitment of study participants, conduct of study, data analysis and report writing, and communication of results including via papers or presentations at scientific conferences and peer-reviewed publications.

7. Under the Master Agreement, a management committee will be responsible for developing a program of individual projects.

- a. While the details of each project must be agreed by both parties, CSIRO cannot be compelled to undertake projects that do not satisfy internal protocols around the conduct and quality of research it carries out.

CSIRO will ensure appropriate rights to publish are included in the individual project agreements.

- b. CSIRO has mandatory internal approval peer-review processes prior to submitting any reports or scientific publications. These processes will apply to any work undertaken under the Master Agreement.

8. Yes. The use of the CSIRO logo by third parties follows CSIRO policy statement 2.11 which requires approval from CSIRO Senior Executive in accordance with CSIRO Brand Guidelines.

Under the CSIRO-Swisse agreement a party must not use and/or permit the use of any of the other party's brands, trademarks or logos in any form of publication, advertising and/or publicity release without prior written consent of the other party.

9. CSIRO will ensure that all appropriate rights to publish are included in the individual project agreements.

10. CSIRO uses a Master Agreement approach to guide ongoing project specific discussions with a number partners, noting that these are tailored according to each relationship. Arrangements such as these include collaborations with:

- Boeing;
- Chinese Academy of Sciences;
- SAHMRI; and
- Fonterra.