

EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

SENATE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE – QUESTIONS ON NOTICE 2004-2005 BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING

Outcome: CSIRO
Output Group: - CSIRO

DEST Question No. E244_05

Senator Carr provided in writing.

Question:

[Re Ecological Implications of Genetically Modified Organisms project]

1. This project was allocated \$5.3 million.
Could you provide this Committee with a breakdown of:
 - a) how that money was intended to be spent
 - b) when the project was launched and
 - c) how it actually had been spent when the project period ended last year?
2. (if money is allocated to specific outputs) When a report or output is abandoned, is the money allocated to that report re-allocated?
3. Could you provide this Committee with a summary of who initiated this project and what the process is for bringing a project like this to the point of funding and commencement?

Answer:

CSIRO has provided the following response.

Ecological Implications of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) project

1. This project was not allocated \$5.3 million. CSIRO's Executive allocated \$2M of redirected funding over three years, and CSIRO Divisions set additional targets of another \$1M to be realigned with the project. The maintenance of these targets was contingent on achievement of a coinvestment target of \$2M from external sources, to ensure relevance of the project. (Had it been realised, this would have led to a total expenditure of \$5M.)

a)

Key research area	Total CSIRO appropriation expenditure 00-03		External coinvestment*	
	Target	Actual	Target	Actual
Robust risk assessment	\$ 903,654	\$ 650,654	\$ 605,202	\$ 120,000
Pathfinder studies – existing and near market GMOs	\$ 1,184,770	\$ 1,184,770	\$ 989,171	\$ 290,000
Pathfinder studies - potential GMOs	\$ 999,775	\$ 248,775	\$ 351,983	\$ 106,000
Total	\$ 3,088,199	\$ 2,084,199	\$ 1,946,356	\$ 516,000

*Coinvestment was only to come from government in order to ensure that there was no perception of private interest.

- b) The project was launched in July 2000.
- c) See table above.

2. Yes, it is reallocated, but it is effort in staff time that is reallocated, not cash.

3. In mid 1999, Dr Mark Lonsdale and Dr Joanne Daly convened a workshop of CSIRO ecologists to scope out a possible multidisciplinary, multidivisional program to study the risks of GMOs to sustainability.

This was supported by Dr Paul Wellings, formerly Deputy Chief Executive of CSIRO, and Dr Lonsdale was asked to draw up a more detailed research plan and budget for consideration as part of the triennial planning process.

The research plan was funded by reallocating effort from within Divisions in the then Biodiversity Sector, ready for a start on 1 July 2000.