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FHI Principles for the Use of Biotechnology to Protect or Restore Forest Health

The Forest Health Initiative was established as a means to protect or restore forest health. FHI participants will work to develop and support use of biotechnology when natural processes are insufficient to ensure the conservation or protection of native biodiversity. In using biotechnology to protect or restore forest health, FHI participants are committed to: (1) understanding and being responsive to the environmental and social implications of use; (2) the highest possible conformance with existing regulation; (3) providing transparency throughout the process, from development through deployment; and (4) identifying science-base solutions. To demonstrate this commitment, FHI participants suggest that those using biotechnology for forest health purposes should subscribe to the following principles:

Evaluation. Those using biotechnology for forest health purposes will understand and ensure sensitivity to the environmental and social implications of use of biotechnology.

Evaluation includes the expected benefits and risks from use – both environmental and social. Risks include not only reasonably anticipated negative impacts on the environment and society, but also the risk associated with inaction. Evaluation will include an assessment of anticipated benefits, risks, impacts, and potential mitigation.

Controls. Those using biotechnology for forest health purposes will conform to existing regulation and protocols.

Those using biotechnology for forest health purposes will abide by the highest standards in conformance with existing regulation, and further commit to cooperating and communicating both process and results in a fashion beneficial to the advancement of future regulatory understanding. Conformance with this principle also includes appropriate monitoring for anticipated and unanticipated consequences after out planting.

Communication. Those using biotechnology for forest health purposes will be transparent in their operations.

Those using biotechnology for forest health purposes involved in every stage of the process, development through out planting, will communicate openly with interested stakeholders. Expectations include active engagement of stakeholders to solicit meaningful input and to participate in the process of protecting or restoring forest health. Moreover, users of biotechnology commit to work collaboratively to develop information that helps stakeholders and the general public better understand the key issues surrounding use of biotechnology.

Science. Those evaluating biotechnology for forest health purposes will seek science-based solutions.

Those involved in the evaluation and use of biotechnology for forest health purposes will do so using accepted scientific method, best available science and the highest ethical standards. Results and analysis will be presented in such a way that they are transparent and replicable. Claims or conclusions will be supported by science.