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Table 11 The Biotechnology Century: Three major eras

<p>What the RCGM Recommended</p>	<p>14.2 That Government establish Toi Te Taiao: The Bioethics Council to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Act as an advisory body on ethical, social and cultural matters in the use of biotechnology in New Zealand. b. Assess and provide guidelines on biotechnological issues involving significant social, ethical and cultural dimensions. c. Provide an open and transparent consultation process to enable public participation in the Council's activities.
<p>What Government Delivered</p>	<p>This recommendation was accepted by the Government. It was agreed to establish the Bioethics Council and to follow the suggested guidelines for its activities. The Government also decided to disestablish the Independent Biotechnology Advisory Committee (IBAC) (MfE, 2001a; 2003e).</p> <p>December 2002: The Bioethics Council was established by the Cabinet Minute [POL (02) 117] (MfE, 2007). Importantly, it was established to advise Ministers only. Therefore ERMA has no formal relationship with the Council, although ERMA does obtain ethical advice through its own Ethics Advisory Panel (EAP).³⁴ The Council's Terms of Reference are to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide independent advice to Government on biotechnological issues involving significant cultural, ethical and spiritual dimensions. 2. Promote and participate in public dialogue on cultural, ethical and spiritual aspects of biotechnology, and enable public participation in the Council's activities. 3. Provide information on the cultural, ethical and spiritual aspects of biotechnology. (Bioethics Council, 2007) <p>2005: The Council was independently reviewed by the State Services Commission in 2005. The resulting report, titled <i>Bioethics Council Review Report</i>³⁵, found the purpose of the Council to be valid and that it had become a trustworthy vehicle for education and public discourse on emergent biotechnology issues. The report made a number of recommendations that endorsed the Council's current role and structure but suggested changes aimed at strengthening accountability and communication between the Council and key stakeholders, and the Council and key Ministers (SSC, 2006: 21). It also suggested the formation of an <i>ad hoc</i> Ministerial Coordination Group on Bioethics to inform the Council's work programme, to receive and discuss reports and coordinate any appropriate response.</p>

³⁴ Information about the EAP is available on ERMA's website <http://www.ermanz.govt.nz/about/eap.html>. An Ethics Framework document is also available at <http://www.ermanz.govt.nz/resources/publications/pdfs/ER-PR-05-1.pdf>.

³⁵ This report was not made public and was requested under the Official Information Act.

Table 11 The Biotechnology Century: Three Major Proposals cont.

What the RCGM Recommended	14.4 That the Ministry of Research, Science and Technology develop on a consultative basis a medium- and long-term biotechnology strategy for New Zealand.
What Government Delivered	<p>2001: The recommendation to develop a biotechnology strategy for New Zealand was accepted by the Government (MfE, 2001a).</p> <p>October 2002: A public discussion paper on a New Zealand biotechnology strategy was published (MoRST, 2002).</p> <p>May 2003: <i>The Biotechnology Strategy for New Zealand</i> was published (MoRST, 2003a). MoRST funded the Navigator Network (2005–2007) and the Regulatory WayFinder to aid the implementation of the biotechnology strategy.</p>
What We Concluded	<p>To what extent has the recommendation been implemented?</p> <p>Fully Implemented</p> <hr/> <p>Is further policy work required by central government? Yes: Ongoing</p> <p>Discussion</p> <p>The Government needs to clarify the requirements around review, and the process for modifying this strategy in the light of new science and research outcomes or changes in the international arena. It also needs to share with the public what (if any) mechanisms are in place to ensure relevant agencies are acting in line with this strategy.</p> <p>In addition, while MoRST is the agency with primary responsibility for the biotechnology strategy, it is not clear to what extent cultural, ethical and spiritual dimensions, and cross-agency policy areas, are currently being taken into account.</p>