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OpenMTA to lead way for global biotech innovation

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The OpenMTA is a Material Transfer Agreement (MTA) designed to support openness, sharing and innovation in global biotechnology.



A new easy-to-use legal tool, OpenMTA, has been launched recently that enables open exchange of biological materials. The OpenMTA is a Material Transfer Agreement (MTA) designed to support openness, sharing and innovation in global biotechnology.

The agreement has been developed through a collaboration, led by the San Francisco-based BioBricks Foundation and the UK-based OpenPlant Synthetic Biology Research Centre, a joint initiative between the University of Cambridge, John Innes Centre and Earlham Institute.

It provides a new way to exchange materials commonly used in biological research and engineering, complementing existing, more restrictive arrangements. The OpenMTA also promotes access for researchers and individuals working in less privileged institutions and world regions.

Use of the OpenMTA allows redistribution and commercial use of materials, while respecting the rights of creators and promoting safe practices.

The new standardised framework also eases the administrative burden for technology transfer offices, negating the need to negotiate unique terms for individual transfers of widely-used materials.