EXCELLENCE THROUGH STEWARDSHIP℠ (ETS) is the first biotechnology industry-coordinated initiative to provide stewardship and quality management programs for the full product life cycle of biotechnology-derived plant products. ETS’ mission is to promote the responsible management of plant biotechnology, primarily by developing and encouraging implementation of product stewardship practices and by educating the public about those practices.

This stewardship program builds on the Biotechnology Industry Organization’s (BIO) efforts to promote consistently high quality guidelines across the plant biotechnology industry for product stewardship and quality management. While many organizations already have stewardship programs and quality management systems in place, ETS provides industry guidelines for the adoption of stewardship objectives, principles and management practices as well as third-party audits.

The ETS program comprises three major components.

1. **Stewardship Objectives, Principles and Management Practices** address measures that all ETS members are required to accept and abide by to contribute to a responsible product management.

2. **Guides to Understanding and Implementing Stewardship and Quality Management Systems** that promote stewardship and quality management across the entire plant biotechnology industry.

3. **A Global Stewardship Audit Program** that involves third party audits of ETS members to verify that appropriate stewardship programs and quality management systems are in place.

STEWARDSHIP is defined as the responsible management of a product from its inception through to its ultimate use and discontinuation. In plant biotechnology, stewardship includes careful attention to the responsible introduction and use of products.
ETS members receive and maintain membership status by agreeing to and abiding by ETS Stewardship Objectives, Principles and Management Practices.

**ETS objectives require that all its members:**

1. Fully comply with applicable regulatory requirements.
2. Seek to achieve and maintain plant product integrity.
3. Work to avoid trade disruptions to facilitate the flow of goods in commerce.

**Principles and Management Practices require that members shall:**

1. Define and document that stewardship programs and quality-management systems are in place for the full product life cycle, designed to achieve the above-described objectives.
2. Implement an appropriate third-party audit program that follows approved ETS audit protocols and verifies that stewardship programs and quality-management systems are in place.
3. Include appropriate stewardship and quality-management requirements, practices or specifications in applicable contracts and agreements involving plant biotechnology with third parties.
4. Reach out to others involved in the development and production of biotechnology-derived plant products with whom they have established commercial or professional relationships.
5. Engage others in the food and feed value chain with whom they have established commercial or professional relationships to promote stewardship programs and quality-management systems.

**Stewardship Guides**

ETS has published the following guides on the development and implementation of stewardship programs and quality-management systems.

- **Guide for Maintaining Plant Product Integrity**
- **Guide for Incident-Response Management**
- **Guide for Product Launch Stewardship**
- **Guide for Product Discontinuation**
- **Guide for Product Stewardship**

**Also Available**

- The BIO Handbook for Understanding and Implementing the Containment Analysis and Critical Control Point Plan for the Production of Plant-Made Pharmaceuticals and Plant-Made Industrial Products
- **BIO Field Trial Compliance Guide**

**Audit Program**

As part of the implementation of ETS Stewardship Objectives, Principles and Management Practices, ETS members shall have global stewardship systems audits conducted to verify that appropriate stewardship programs and quality-management systems are in place. Qualified third-party auditors receive ETS training before they conduct an ETS audit. The audits are performed using ETS audit protocols as applicable to the ETS member’s specific activities and operations, at specified intervals, and at member expense.

**Education and Outreach**

With the growth of the plant biotechnology industry, the need to expand education and outreach about stewardship must occur. Through education and outreach activities to food and feed producers, other plant biotechnology industry stakeholders, and governments, ETS’ vision is to be the trusted source for plant biotechnology stewardship practices. Through program outreach efforts with academic and government researchers and emerging companies in the agricultural biotechnology field, ETS mission is to promote the responsible use of plant biotechnology.

**A Global Stewardship Program**

ETS is being introduced in phases. The first phase of the program occurs in the United States, and then expand globally. ETS founding members will first self-certify that stewardship programs and quality management systems are in place; and then complete third-party audits of quality-management systems for U.S. plant product activities (gene discovery through breeder seed). In the next phase, audits are completed for global operations of all phases of the product life cycle.