

## Viewpoint: Sweeping impact of gene editing demands better way to educate the public

If the history of public engagement surrounding other recent scientific innovations is a guide, efforts to explain the science behind gene editing will intensify, such as through news stories, at science festivals, in public lectures and in museums. And there will be a rash of small, disconnected workshops involving members of the public that are designed to inform specific policy decisions.

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Instead of waiting for an outcry about a specific potential application, governments and key stakeholders must design a new kind of engagement.

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The kind of engagement model I propose would require government support and impetus from 10–15 organizations initially, to include the multitude of actors invested in and concerned about gene editing — perhaps with a single coordinating body.

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Ultimately, the consortium would have two functions: connecting people to the science and policy debates, and connecting scientists and policymakers to other people.

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This could involve the consortium engaging on social media, producing videos, communicating with the media or providing information to relevant groups.

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[T]he model I propose will require significant investment of time and money (in the region of US\$700,000 to \$1.5 million per year). Yet, as many experiences with genetically modified crops have illustrated, simply trying to convince people that the science is safe, and that they should accept the applications that emerge, can be much more costly.

**Read full, original post:** [Rethink public engagement for gene editing](#)