

Format Tour de Table
OECD Extended Steering Group Meeting on Manufactured Nanomaterials
26-27 October, 2006

Note on agenda item 4: Tour de Table on current developments in member countries on the safety of manufactured nanomaterials

Responses Requested by Tuesday 5th September 2006

Background

The main objective of the Extended Steering Group Meeting is to agree on a draft programme of work for 2006-2008. This will be forwarded to the Chemicals Committee for consideration at its next meeting, which will be held 15-17 November 2006.

The purpose of agenda item 4 (the tour de table) is to give each delegation the opportunity to describe recent or planned national initiatives and/or events related to the safety of nanomaterials. This will facilitate the development of the draft Programme of Work by allowing delegations to share their experiences and preoccupations with respect to safety. This will identify opportunities for future co-operation and co-ordination.

In considering this agenda item, the steering group (which has been organising the meeting) has recommended that each delegation be invited to prepare a short written paper (2 pages maximum) to support their intervention under this agenda item. This would allow delegations to make relatively short interventions. It would be preferable if these short papers were prepared by delegations in advance of the meeting.

The steering group has also recommended that the information in these papers be organised, where possible, under the headings identified below, while recognising that not all delegations will be able to supply information under each heading. It is also expected that there will be considerable variation amongst delegations as to the issues they wish to address, so there should be some flexibility in the way the information is provided.

The Secretariat will be responsible for compiling the information gathered and for making it available at the meeting.

The headings

Please identify work completed, underway or planned in your country or organisation, which relates to **activities in the chemicals regulatory area on health and environmental safety aspects of manufactured nanomaterials**:

1. Any national regulatory developments on human health and environmental safety including recommendations or discussions related to adapting existing regulatory systems or the drafting of laws/ regulations/ guidance materials;

A study on regulatory gaps and options is currently undertaken by the Federal Environment Agency (UBA). This study examines European and German chemical and environmental legislation. However, currently no legislation activities are under development due to lack of scientific methods to measure exposure and effects of nanomaterials appropriately

2. Developments related to voluntary or stewardship schemes;

At present very little information is available about the occupational exposure to nanoparticles, the risk management, and safety measures applied in industry. A questionnaire about the identity of nanoparticles produced, the production method and use pattern, the production volume, the number of exposed workers, and the already applied safety measures should be developed. This questionnaire should be answered by industry. Next to information on occupational exposures, nanoparticles of major concern can be identified. When more precise data on possible health effects become available the completed questionnaire can be used to improve guidance for a safe handling and use of nanoparticles. (In cooperation with the association of the German chemical industry (VCI) the Federal Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (BAuA) is finalising such a survey for the German industry. The results might form the basis for an European action and should be extended to OECD countries.)

In addition a voluntary reporting scheme by industry to authorities is considered an interesting approach to be informed regularly about produced and commercialized nanoparticles.

3. Information on any risk assessment decisions;

Not applicable due to lack of information

4. Information on any developments related to good practice documents;

A "Code of Good Practice" is considered an important tool to inform about what can be seen as good technical standard. Since some technical information is available at the industrial companies BAuA cooperates with the VCI (German chemical industry association) in this field.

5. Research programmes or strategies designed to address human health and/ or environmental safety aspects of nanomaterials;

At present there is uncertainty about the risks of nanomaterials. Especially nanoparticles are in the focus of discussion. Research is generally considered to be necessary to finally produce recommendations for production and use of nanomaterials which is safe for human health and environment, to set exposure limits and to make risk assessments, that take into account the current practice of assessing particles and chemical substances in general. Thus it is of high importance to structure the diversity of research ideas, to set priorities and to make sure that the research is not limited to fundamental research, but especially is appropriate to enable authorities to set exposure limits, to perform comprehensive risk assessments, to protect the environment, etc. Thus the BAuA (Federal Institute of Occupational Safety and Health) works together with BfR (Federal Institute for Risk Assessment) and UBA (Federal Environment Agency) on the

development of a German research strategy, that considers health issues of workers and consumers and the environment issues.

The Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) started in March 2006 the project "NanoCare". In this project the ministry together with Industry support research to assess risks in handling new nanomaterials in their life cycle. Another project called INOS, supported by BMBF, is investigating the effects of nanoparticles at the research and development stage on people's health and the environment. The aim is to create a scientifically-based data set where anyone can find information about the potential risks of nanoparticles. In the joint project TRACER the potential of Carbonanotubes concerning applications and toxicological risks will be investigated to tap the full potential of this material.

6. Information on any public/ stakeholder consultation.

The Federal Ministry for Environment (BMU) together with the Federal Environmental Agency (UBA) and the Federal Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (BAuA) initiated a dialogue to assess synthetic nanoparticles in the work place and in the environment with a workshop in October 2005. This dialogue is continued by the BMU in September 2006 with a conversation with high-ranking experts on chances and risks on nanotechnology. In this conversation succeeding activities will be considered.

Expert-Meeting "Nanotechnology - Applications, Trends and Risks" (BfR), 28.03.2006

Expert-Meetings "Nano sealing sprays" (BfR), 07.04.2006, 23.05.2006, 05.07.2006

Delphi survey about risks of nano-technological applications in the areas of food, cosmetics and commodities (BfR), 03/2006 – 12/2006

Consumer conference on perception of nanotechnology (BfR), 04/2006 – 01/2007

Additional Information

Delegations may wish to provide any additional related information, e.g., any consideration of the benefits of nanotechnologies and consideration of ethical implications.

Returning Responses

We will also be pleased to receive any supplementary information, or supporting documentation, especially if it is available in electronic form including links to web sites.

Please send you completed responses to Mrs Diana Morales e-mail to diana.morales@oecd.org .
The deadline for responses is: 5th September 2006

If you have any enquiries concerning this report please contact Mrs. Morales.