

## Update on Nanotechnologies and the Safety of Manufactured Nanomaterials

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Recently, there has been much public discussion about nanotechnologies which are set to offer a wide range of economic benefits. At the same time, they pose new policy challenges to governments. Using its multidisciplinary approach, the OECD is working on policies and instruments that foster the development of nanotechnologies in an efficient and an effective way as possible.

To this end, two OECD Committees, the *Chemicals Committee* and the *Committee for Scientific and Technological Policy* have started complementary activities. These co-ordinated and mutually supporting efforts should help provide the conditions for optimal development of this exciting range of new technologies.

As nanotechnologies are relevant already to two OECD Committees, it has been agreed that the Internal Coordination Group for Biotechnology (ICGB), will also be the co-ordination mechanism for nanotechnologies. This should allow the identification of synergies across OECD directorates and relevant Committees, while avoiding duplication.



### COMMITTEE FOR SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL POLICY (CSTP)

#### Work on Nanotechnologies under the Committee for Scientific and Technological Policy

Much of the recent public discussion about nanotechnologies has concerned applications for the future. However, estimated annual public R&D expenditure already exceeds USD 4 billion and a number of products are already on the market. At the same time, they pose new policy challenges to governments.

OECD's Committee on Scientific and Technological Policy is focusing on creating supportive frameworks for innovation on nanotechnologies. The CSTP discussed its future work on nanotechnologies in October 2006 and decided, in principle, to propose the creation of a new working party on nanotechnologies. It will hold a workshop in February 2007, in the Netherlands, to develop the terms of reference of this proposed group and establish a work programme. The activities of the CSTP would seek to achieve, amongst other things, a better understanding of how best to promote research, development and innovation of nanotechnologies, the possible uses and commercialisation of products from this research, how different applications of nanotechnologies might appropriately develop, as well as the development of statistics and indicators to track the development of nanotechnologies. This work should help foster good policy making and governance of technological developments in OECD member countries.

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## CHEMICALS COMMITTEE: WORKING PARTY ON MANUFACTURED NANOMATERIALS (WPMN)

The OECD Working Party on Manufactured Nanomaterials (WPMN) is a subsidiary body of the Chemicals Committee. This programme aims to promote international co-operation on the human health and environmental safety of manufactured nanomaterials, and involves approaches to the safety testing and risk assessment of manufactured nanomaterials.

The 1<sup>st</sup> Meeting of the WPMN was held the 26<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup> October in London, United Kingdom. The main outcome of this meeting was a Programme of Work that has been endorsed by the 40<sup>th</sup> Chemicals Committee (15-17 November 2006). The Programme of Work addresses three main areas listed as follows: 1) Identification, Characterisation, Definitions, Terminology and Standards; 2) Testing Methods and Risk Assessment; and 3) Information sharing, Co-operation and Dissemination.

The WPMN has started to implement the programme of work through different projects, which will lead to: i) the development of a database on human health and environmental safety (EHS) research related to manufactured nanomaterials; ii) the development of a global strategy for EHS research on manufactured nanomaterials; iii) the testing of a representative set of manufactured nanomaterials; iv) the evaluation of the suitability of existing OECD test guidelines (chemical safety) for nanomaterials; v) information exchange on national regulatory programmes and voluntary regulatory schemes; and vi) co-operation on risk assessment and undertaking exposure measurements.

Progress on each of these projects will be discussed at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of WPMN (end of April 2007).

### **Recent Publication:**

📖 *Current Developments/ Activities on the Safety of Manufactured Nanomaterials, November 2006*

### **Other publication:**

📖 *The Report of the OECD Workshop on the Safety of Manufactured Nanomaterials: Building Co-operation, Co-ordination and Communication, 7-9 December 2005*

**Website:** [www.oecd.org/env/nanosafety](http://www.oecd.org/env/nanosafety)  
[www.oecd.org/env/nanosecurite](http://www.oecd.org/env/nanosecurite)

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## FUTURE EVENTS RELEVANT TO NANOTECHNOLOGIES AND SAFETY OF MANUFACTURED NANOMATERIALS

- ◆ 89th Session of the Committee for Scientific and Technological Policy, Paris, France, 26-27 March 2007 (Contact: Dirk Pilat)
- ◆ 2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the Working Party on Manufactured Nanomaterials, Berlin, Germany, 25-27 April 2007 (Contact: Peter Kearns)

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