

## ***IRELAND***

### ***Highlight of developments since the 2nd meeting of the WPMN***

- In June 2007 the Technical and Scientific Advisory Committee of the Health and Safety Authority agreed to set up an ad-hoc working group on Nanotechnology
- The Health and Safety Authority liaised with Forfás, Enterprise-Ireland, Academia, Irish Industry and Irish Business and Employers Confederation and other Irish departments in the set up of this ad-working group on Nanotechnology
- The Health and Safety Authority proposes to develop a Strategy on the Safe Use of Nanomaterials in the workplace
- The Irish Government has proposed € 31 Million funding to research programmes in the area of nanoscience
- Current call for research proposals in the area of environmental & human health from the Irish EPA
- Projects foreseen under the 7<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme
- Conference: Nanotechnology: implications for human health, the environment and food safety

### ***Work completed, underway or planned***

#### **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**

At present there is no specific national regulation addressing nanomaterials in Ireland.

In April 2006 the Health and Safety Authority (HSA) which is the Competent Authority for chemical legislation in Ireland liaised with the National Policy & Advisory Board for Enterprise, Trade, Science, Technology & Innovation (Forfás) and with the governmental agency Enterprise-Ireland responsible for the development of Irish Industry, to discuss future development in relation to the use of nanomaterials.

During 2006 Forfás organized Panel meetings (NanoBio, NanoMaterials and NanoElectronics) (as part of a Technology Assessment process to develop a national approach to the development of Nanotechnology in Ireland) to discuss approaches with stakeholders regarding the nanotechnology development.

Forfás is preparing a report 'NanoIreland', which looks at developing a national nanotechnology approach for Ireland and will include the aspiration that Ireland should be at the forefront of the debate on Regulation and Safety. This is scheduled to be published soon.

It is also hoped that a national policy will be developed with all the key stakeholders following further discussions at national level.

In June 2007 the Technical and Scientific Advisory Committee (TSAC) of the Health and Safety Authority (HSA) agreed to set up an ad-hoc working group on Nanotechnology to discuss and develop a HSA strategy on the safe use of nanomaterials in the workplace. Expressions of interests were received from relevant stakeholders, such as academia, industry and several other Irish departments, to participate in the ad-hoc working group. These were presented to the TSAC for their approval.

The 1<sup>st</sup> ad-hoc working group meeting was held on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2007, where the Terms of Reference was discussed and agreed. The 2<sup>nd</sup> ad-hoc working group meeting is scheduled for the 7<sup>th</sup> December 2007.

## **2. Developments related to voluntary or stewardship schemes**

At present there are no specific initiatives in relation to voluntary or stewardship schemes in Ireland. However, some companies that participated in the HSA nanotechnology internet consultation signaled that they are willing to share further information on current projects. A dialogue with these companies will have to be initiated.

## **3. Information on any risk assessment decisions**

Ireland has not yet received a notification of a nanomaterial. Consequently no risk assessment has been carried out.

## **4. Information on any developments related to good practice documents**

Due to lack of information Ireland is not yet in a position to develop guidance or good practice documents.

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

Ireland does not have an overall specific research programme to address human health and/or environmental safety aspects of nanomaterials. However, Ireland received approval and funding from the EU for a project under the sixth Framework Programme (FP6) search, technical development and demonstration activities. The project NanoInteract focuses on risk assessment of engineered nanoparticles and is led by the University College Dublin (UCD). Several other Irish universities and Irish companies are involved in this project along with UCD. NanoInteract started on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2007 and will run until 31<sup>st</sup> December 2009.

Enterprise-Ireland has noted a number of risk assessment and health and safety activities under the seventh Framework Programme (FP7) for research, technical development and demonstration

activities. The call for FP7 closed on the 4<sup>th</sup> May 2007. It is hoped that some of these projects will be successful in receiving final approval.

In August 2007 the Irish Minister for Education and Science, Mary Hanafin, indicated that the €31 Million funding will be provided to research programmes in the area of nanoscience and will be provided to six universities and two institutes of technology (Ref. Irish Times, 4<sup>th</sup> August 2007). No details are available to date on how much funding will be used in research programmes to address human health and/or environmental safety aspects of nanomaterials.

The Irish EPA has launched a call for research proposals in the area of environmental & human health with a closing date by 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2008. The technical description of the Science, Technology, Research & Innovation for the Environment (STRIVE) programme 2007-2013 includes research opportunities, such as:

- Potential health impacts of engineered nanomaterials - including predicting the behaviour of nanoparticles, during usage, handling and disposal
- Development of alternatives to animal-based techniques for toxicology testing
- Ecotoxicology research in support of the REACH Directive

The Joint Conference: ‘Nanotechnology: Implications for Human Health, the Environment and Food Safety’ was organised by the Dublin Institute of Technology in collaboration with the Food Safety Authority of Ireland and the Irish Society of Toxicology. More than 150 participants from academia, industry, and national regulatory and funding bodies attended the conference. Among the participants were also a number of international delegates from academia in Italy, Germany and Belgium.

## **6. Information on any public/ stakeholder consultation**

In April 2006 the Health and Safety Authority (HSA) developed a questionnaire regarding engineered nanomaterials to address the following objectives:

- Need to gain some information on the nature of nanomaterials, such as:
  - Type of nanomaterials (chemical identity)
  - Type of industry using nanotechnology in Ireland
  - Quantities of nanomaterials used in Ireland
  - Particle sizes of nanomaterials
  - Methods by which nanomaterials are identified
  - Any information available on the potential hazard(s) associated with these nanomaterials
  - Exposure scenarios for nanomaterials in Irish industry
- Need to modify regulations to address the risks of nanotechnology
- Need to share information internationally on nanotechnology
- Need to standardise definitions in respect of nanotechnology
- Guidelines may have to be adapted in respect of nanomaterials
- An alert system containing information on the kind of products involved may have to be created, based on information requirements of regulators

This questionnaire was made publicly available on the HSA website as internet consultation for a period of six weeks (1<sup>st</sup> August to 15<sup>th</sup> September 2006).

Responses were received from companies including the following sectors: electronics, pharmaceutical and medical devices.