

On 1-2 December 2022, the OECD Working Party of the National Coordinator of the Test Guidelines Programme (WNT) held a workshop on the future uptake of emerging science and technologies in OECD Test Guidelines. The WNT reiterated the importance of having valid methods to test chemicals and assess their safety.

Regulatory science is the backbone of consumer and societal protection from dangerous chemicals, drugs, and other products. In order to use the most up-to-date science, it is essential that grant-making institutions in member countries prioritize the evaluation and validation of new science. Such assessment of the robustness of the methods is important to keep us safe and protect the environment while upholding values we all share, including animal welfare, good scientific practice and innovation. In recent years, several research projects aimed at the development and initial evaluation of new methods have been funded by member countries and stakeholders. However, the essential next steps to conduct the ultimate validation of relevant new methods, such that they are shown to be transferable and reproducible within and outside the developer's laboratory, is seldom (adequately) funded. This call is to highlight the need for dedicated financial support for validation.

The WNT, supported by the OECD Chemicals and Biotechnology Committee, calls for urgent mobilisation of national and regional resources for the demonstration of reproducibility and reliability of methods developed in single laboratories. In particular to assist accelerating the pace of chemical safety testing and assessment, to reduce the use of laboratory animals and to better protect human health and the environment. Training, funding for the experimental validation work and manpower are essential to support the transferability of new methods amongst laboratories and evaluate their reliability. In this way, valid scientific methods supported by the application of good laboratory practice (GLP) will continue to ensure that countries benefit from the system of Mutual Acceptance of Data (MAD).

There are already mechanisms and processes in place to facilitate standardization and guarantee the good conduct of validation studies. They need sustainable and realistic financial support to continue to provide relevant and reliable methods that meet the needs of evolving chemicals regulations. This is a dynamic area where other key players, including small businesses, have emerged with innovative methods that have successfully been accepted as OECD Test Guidelines. The WNT recognizes the need to bring key players together and consolidate robust approaches that help us achieve relevant and reliable innovative methods for chemicals testing.

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