Press release
Joint Scientific Conference
Science based support for the regulation of manufactured nanomaterials

For the past three days, a group of 180 international experts has debated the regulatory relevance and applicability of science-based results generated over the past 10 years, regarding the Environmental, Health and Safety (EHS) aspects of nanomaterials. The conference was hosted by the OECD and funded by the EU H2020 project ProSafe coordinated by the Dutch Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment. It also was the final conference of the European Union flagship project NANoREG.

The results of this scientific conference will form the basis for recommendations by the ProSafe project to policy makers, regulators and industry on how to test and assess the effects and risks of nanomaterials. It also will be input for international programmes for the harmonisation of test methods, such as that of the OECD.

The conference was organised around interlinked themes covering the exposures through the life cycle, fate, persistence and bioaccumulation, ecological effects and human health effects. A review and evaluation of over 1000 peer reviewed publications and reports formed the basis of the conference.

It was concluded that there is a need to continue to work towards the further harmonisation of tests methods in order to create a solid base for testing nanomaterials and to fulfil the conditions for mutual acceptance of data.

Experts reiterated that effective benchmarking methods, tiered testing schemes, grouping frameworks, and modelling approaches of which several promising examples have been discussed, can contribute to a more cost efficient safety assessment of manufactured nanomaterials. This is important since testing and assessing the effects and risks of nanomaterials can be extremely complex, time consuming, and as a result costly. For this reason it is not feasible to investigate every nanoform of a substance by applying a full test battery.

Scientist expressed the need for more specific guidance regarding the EHS data that should be generated to fulfil regulatory requirements. It was stressed that a sharing of experimental data is key to make real progress in developing models to predict the effects of nanomaterials; a basic condition for safe by design, grouping and read across. Structural provisions regarding data management are needed, like harmonised data logging, data curation and sustainable data storage are needed.

The conference results will feed into a White Paper with short and long term recommendations for policy makers to be released before the summer of 2017.
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