



Work Package 5, Health, Safety and Environment

Observatory Summary: KIR nano

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Dutch observatory: KIR nano

Risks of Nanotechnology Knowledge and Information centre - Linking science and policy

In a paper which sets out their vision on nanotechnology (Kabinet, 2006), the Dutch government stated that a national observatory on risks of nanotechnology for man and the environment should be established at the National Institute of Public Health and the Environment (RIVM). The observatory was founded in 2007 and is called the Risks of Nanotechnology Knowledge and Information centre (KIR nano). It is part of the Dutch action plan on nanotechnology (Tweede Kamer, 2008). This action plan includes proposals on research, innovation, development, legal aspects, risk management, and communication to the public at large.

KIR nano aims to observe and monitor the potential risks of nanotechnology, gathering relevant scientific literature, and advising and informing governmental bodies and professionals. These activities are always performed from a risk assessment viewpoint. Until now, the focus was on engineered, free, insoluble and non biodegradable nanomaterials and their possible toxicological and ecotoxicological risks.

The communicative function of KIR nano is put into practice via participation in national and international networks such as:

- FP7 projects (European Nano Observatory, NanoImpactNet, FramingNano),
- OECD Working Party for Manufactured Nanomaterials
- Working Group on Health Safety and Environment of the European Committee for Standardisation (CEN)
- International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO)
- Scientific Committee on Emerging and Newly Identified Health Risks (SCENIHR)
- Expert panel of the Task force Novel Foods and Nanotechnology of the International Life Sciences Institute (ILSI)
- Society of Environmental Toxicology And Chemistry (SETAC)

Furthermore, KIR nano advises the Dutch government who participates in the REACH Competent Authorities Subgroup on Nanomaterials. In 2009, KIR nano will bring experts together into national expert panels on different topics (environment, food, consumer products, medical applications, and workers). In this way, KIR nano acts as an information exchange platform without performing research itself.

As a first major deliverable, a report giving a global overview of risks for man and the environment and knowledge gaps in the entire field of nanotechnology was published in 2008 (RIVM, 2008a, b).

References

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