

Meeting date: 5&6th October 2005**Open Govt. Status:** Fully Open**Type of paper:** For debate**Paper File Ref:****Exemptions:**

WATCH COMMITTEE

IGHRC (Interdepartmental Group on Health Risks from Chemicals): update, current 3-year programme and specific paper “Guidelines on route-to-route extrapolation of toxicity data”

Issue

1. Information for WATCH on the IGHRC initiative and its current 3-year work programme; and the opportunity to comment on an IGHRC draft document “Guidelines on route-to-route extrapolation of toxicity data”.

Timing

2. All relevant government scientific advisory committees, including WATCH, are being asked to comment on the draft document on route-to-route extrapolation in the period May-October 2005, so that the final version can be completed by the end of the year.

Recommendation

3. That WATCH acts in accordance with the Actions in paragraph 14.

Background

4. IGHRC (and its forerunner the “Initiative on Risk Assessment and Toxicology”) has operated since 1996. It is a forum in which representatives from all relevant UK government departments and agencies come together with the following aims – to:

- Promote coherence and consistency in the practice of toxicological risk assessment as used within the different risk management and regulatory frameworks used in Government;
- Promote the development of methods and techniques that will improve information used in the toxicological risk assessment process;
- Promote improved approaches to toxicological risk assessment for use in the regulatory context; and
- Act to disseminate and advance best practice within UK government and through EU and international fora.

5. The previous (pre-2004) WATCH Committee received periodic updates about this initiative. Members of the previous WATCH committee might recall contributing to the IGHRC document “Uncertainty Factors: their use in human health risk assessment by UK government”, a project led by Julian Delic of HSE on behalf of IGHRC and published in 2003.

6. The Institute for Environment and Health (IEH) has provided the secretariat for IGHRC for much of its period of operation and continues to fulfil this role.

7. IGHRC is currently mid-way through a 3-year work programme running from 2003 to 2006. The programme is a blend of:

- Holding training and experience-sharing courses for those involved in assessing toxicological hazard, exposure and risk to health from chemicals
- Producing guidance documents
- Convening issue-specific workshops

8. WATCH members might like to access the IGHRC website: <http://www.le.ac.uk/ieh/ighrc/ighrc.html> to view the reports and documents that have been produced and are freely available.

Argument

9. Len Levy, who is a key figure in the IEH secretariat for IGHRC, will present to WATCH a summary of the IGHRC initiative and the 2003-06 work programme. Copies of Len's slides will be tabled at WATCH on the day.

10. One of the guidance document projects within this 3-year programme is on route-to-route extrapolation. The current draft version is attached at Annex 1. A cover note for WATCH from the IGHRC secretariat is also provided at Annex 2. WATCH is asked to examine the draft and to comment and/or endorse it as a guide to be followed when faced with the need to consider extrapolating toxicological data on a substance obtained via one exposure route, in predicting the toxicology of the same substance when exposure is via a different route, for which no data exist. Such a situation can occur regularly with industrial chemicals.

Link to HSC Strategy

11. The document on route-to-route extrapolation is a generic, "business enabling" issue of relevance to HSE's substance-specific assessments within both Statutory work and the Disease Reduction Programme.

Consultation

12. All relevant government scientific advisory committees are being consulted, via the government department/agency most closely associated with each committee, on the route-to-route extrapolation document.

European Context

13. When the final version of the guidance document is produced, it is expected that each UK government department and agency will carry forward the principles into any relevant EU-wide work and debates in which it is engaged.

Action

14. WATCH is asked to:

- consider Len Levy's presentation
- comment on the draft guidance document on route-to-route extrapolation, attached at Annex 1; and
- note that other IGHRC work is likely to come to WATCH at future meetings

Contact:

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References / Attachments

Annex 1 Guidelines on route-to-route extrapolation of toxicity data when assessing health risks of chemicals, IGHRC draft document, version 6.0, August 2005

Annex 2 Cover note to accompany IGHRC draft document, for discussion at WATCH meeting in October 2005

