

WATCH COMMITTEE PAPER		WATCH/2007/6	
Meeting date:	19 <sup>th</sup> June 2007	Open Govt. Status:	Fully Open
Type of paper:	For debate	Paper File Ref:	
Exemptions:			

## WATCH COMMITTEE

### IGHRC (Interdepartmental Group on Health Risks from Chemicals) document “Chemical Mixtures: A framework for Assessing Risks”

#### Issue

1. The opportunity for WATCH to comment on an IGHRC draft document “Chemical Mixtures: A Framework for Assessing Risks”.

#### Timing

2. All relevant government scientific advisory committees, including WATCH, will be asked to comment on this draft document over the next few months, 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. More recently, in October 2005, WATCH members heard a presentation from Len Levy about the current work programme of the IGHRC and commented on the draft document “Guidelines on route-to-route extrapolation of toxicity data”.

6. IGHRC is now at the end of its current work programme, running from 2003 to 2007. The programme was 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

7. A new programme of work for the IGHRC is under discussion.

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

### **Argument**

9. One of the projects within the current work programme is for the IGHRC to develop a framework for assessing the risks to health from exposure to chemical mixtures. 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 guidance to help risk assessors think about chemical mixture issues.

### **Link to HSC Strategy**

11. The chemical mixtures document 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 on the chemical mixtures document, via the government department/agency most closely associated with each committee.

### **European Context**

13. When the final version of the 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:

- comment on the draft document “Chemical Mixtures: A Framework for Assessing Risks”, attached at Annex 1; and
- note that other IGHRC work is likely to come to WATCH at future meetings

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**References / Attachments**

Annex 1 Chemical Mixtures: A framework for Assessing Risks, IGHRC draft document, version 6.0, April 2007

Annex 2 Cover note to accompany IGHRC draft document, for discussion at WATCH meeting in June 2007