



The Interdepartmental Group
on Health Risks from Chemicals

WATCH/2007/6
Annex 2

Draft Guidance Document “*Chemical Mixtures: A Framework for Assessing Risks*”

The Interdepartmental Group on Health Risks from Chemicals (IGHRC) comprises representatives from 14 different UK government departments, research councils and agencies¹, and aims to stimulate the development of new, improved approaches to the assessment of risks to human health from chemicals. Its remit is to consider ways of enhancing the risk assessment process for chemicals, by providing guidance, as a part of the general drive to improve the basis of scientific advice and its translation into policy. The risk assessment of chemicals is of importance to a number of different Departments and Agencies, and by pooling expertise in IGHRC, and by promoting information dissemination and presentation of risk it is hoped to improve coherence between the procedures used in the different Departments and Agencies as well as securing improvements in risk assessment practice itself.

As part of its Forward Plan to 2006 the IGHRC agreed to produce guidance for conducting risk assessments for chemical mixtures.

The document that has been produced discusses the different types of mixtures for which UK Government may need to conduct a risk assessment and the kinds of data that may be available for these mixtures. It looks at the types of joint actions that components in a mixture may show and suggests ways to take these joint actions into account in a risk assessment. It looks at different approaches that have been used for mixture risk assessments and provides a framework in the form of a decision tree to help risk assessors consider the different issues that arise when carrying out a risk assessment for a chemical mixture. The current risk assessment approaches that are used for chemical mixtures by different regulatory agencies in the UK are described in an Annex.

The first draft of the document was written by Dr Karin Fletcher under the supervision of Prof Alan Boobis, with input from a steering group drawn from the IGHRC Executive Committee members and other experts including Tim Marrs and Prof John Groten. Further drafts were produced by Mrs Elanor Ball from the Health and Safety Executive.

The IGHRC now wishes to seek views on this document from UK Government Advisory Committees that may be faced with the need to carry out risk assessments for chemical mixtures. We will be particularly grateful for comments on the technical

¹ BBSRC, Defra, Dept Health, DTI, Environment Agency, Food Standards Agency, Health & Safety Executive, Home Office, MHRA, Medical Research Council, NERC, Health Protection Agency, Veterinary Medicines Directorate, Pesticides Safety Directorate

content of the document and on the applicability of the framework to the mixture situations faced by each committee. The draft document is also being placed on the IGHRC website at: <http://www.silsoe.cranfield.ac.uk/ieh/ighrc/ighrc.html> to gather views from the wider scientific community.

IGHRC Secretariat