The WHO Chemical Risk Assessment Network

A New Global Collaborative Initiative

November 2012

World Health Organization
Presentation Outline

- Background
- Consultation & Feedback
- Goals & Objectives
- Nature of Network
- Anticipated Outcomes
- Status & Next Steps
Background

- Increase in production, use and transport of chemicals
- Globalization
- Transborder distribution of chemicals and trade in intermediate and finished products
- Shift in production of both chemicals and products from developed to developing countries
Shared problem of risk of chemical exposures

Recognition of need to devise solutions on global level

Requires extensive and dedicated collaboration

SAICM objective to achieve sound management of chemicals to minimize effects on human health and the environment
International Consultation

- WHO convened two meetings
  - Geneva 2010 (WHO/IPCS Meeting on Strengthening Global Collaboration in Chemical Risk Assessment)
  - Bonn 2012 (Second WHO Meeting on Global Collaboration in Chemical Risk Assessment – Strengthening Capacity Building and Networking & Pre-Meeting Workshop on Risk Assessment Methodologies)

- Survey of institutions on capacity building needs and vision of WHO Network to focus discussions and assist in planning
Recommended Areas of Focus

Activities related to:
- Capacity building/training
- Chemical risk assessments/sharing knowledge
- Risk assessment methodology
- Research

Establishment of WHO Chemical Risk Assessment Network
Future RA Issues

- **Low and middle income countries**
  - Assessing risks of more different types of chemicals, industry associated chemicals, waste streams
  - Aspects of coordination, information sharing, provision of guidance & advice, capacity building

- **Developed countries**
  - Chemicals associated with newer technologies/alternatives
  - More emphasis on more subtle endpoints
  - Advanced RA methodologies
  - Incorporation of emerging technologies/information sources in RA
Capacity Building/Training Needs

- Low & middle income countries see need for increased capacity in all areas related to RA
  - Trained staff at all levels; emphasis on general principles, but also complex methods
  - Early life stage exposures and susceptibility
  - Application to industrial streams, wastes, etc
  - Access to toolkits/methodologies

- Developed countries needs generally lie more in areas associated with emerging technologies
  - Use of predictive tools, alternative testing data
  - IM/IT tools

- Common need for increased international collaboration
Goals & Objectives of Network

• Overall goal:
  • To improve chemical risk assessment globally through fostering and facilitating sustainable interaction between institutions on chemical risk assessment issues and activities.
Goals & Objectives of Network (cont.)

Specific Objectives:

- To bring together experts in chemical risk assessment to exchange ideas, share knowledge and experiences, and engage in joint problem identification/solving.

- To facilitate and contribute to high quality training and capacity building.

- To enhance harmonization and development of chemical risk assessment approaches and methodologies.

- To improve risk assessment by harnessing new science and strengthening the interface between risk assessment and research.

- To provide a platform for coordination of risk assessment activities on a global level to reduce duplication and gain efficiencies through enhancing collaborative efforts and work-sharing as well as assisting in the identification of emerging risks to human health.

- To promote and disseminate best risk assessment practices and principles globally and to develop and promote strategies for transparency and quality.
Nature of Network

- Voluntary, collaborative

- Comprised of contributors from institutions and individuals with expertise in human health risk assessment from:
  - Government, public health and intergovernmental organizations
  - WHO Collaborating Centres
  - Civil society organizations in official relations with WHO
  - Academia
  - Professional societies

- Contributions may be in form of financial support, in-kind input to projects, technical expertise or sharing of information
Nature of Network (cont.)

- Project oriented
  - Initial focus will be on recommended key theme areas
  - International, regional, multilateral or bilateral in scope
  - Report, guidance documentation, training sessions or materials, tools, databases, etc.

- Network Steering Group comprised of
  - Leaders of various project working groups
  - Chairs of WHO-led working groups related to Network
  - Representatives of selected international or supranational organizations
  - Others participants selected by WHO

- Network meeting every approximately 2 years, with communications by other means between meetings
Creating the Network

- Initial Steering Group formed summer 2012

- Two Core Groups focusing on:
  - Operational aspects
    - Business plan
    - Operational framework
    - Communications strategy
  - Short-term activities/projects
    - Bring existing projects under umbrella (MoA, Uncertainties, training...)
    - New projects
      - Mapping of available training resources
      - Mapping of methodologies & tools
Anticipated Outcomes

- Enhanced collaboration between institutions on RA issues
- Increased capacity to conduct high quality RA
- Incorporation of harmonized methodology and emerging science
- Efficient and timely knowledge transfer
Next Steps

- Start “soft launch” early spring 2013

- Official “hard launch” early summer 2013