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Joint press release of BAuA, BfR, UBA, BAM and PTB

Successful nanotechnology research strategy protects man and the environment

Federal authorities take stock of research projects on nanomaterials safety of

Nanotechnology is considered *the progressive technology of the 21st century*. It is highly innovative and dynamic, and it opens up new ways to conserve resources and save energy. As with every new technology, however, its potential impact on the environment and the health of consumers and those who handle the materials raises a number of questions. The Federal Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (BAuA), the Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR) and the Federal Environment Agency (UBA) developed a joint research strategy in 2007 to weigh the risks and opportunities of these questions about nanomaterials. The National Metrology Institute of Germany (PTB) and the BAM Federal Institute for Materials Research and Testing were involved in updating and further developing the strategy. The first review has now been completed in which the status of more than 80 research projects on the opportunities and risks of nanotechnology was carefully examined. Some of the progress registered has been in the development of metrology and testing procedures, the identification of impacts on man and his environment and in risk assessment.

The joint research strategy of the participating federal authorities pools their resources to build the necessary bridges between the innovativeness of new technologies and the safety of man and the environment. Structured collaboration among the parties is intended to detect and assess the risks of these new technologies at an early stage of development - and serve as a basis for policy recommendations and the development of practice-oriented solutions. Public debate has focussed on the possible risks of nanomaterials. The research strategy developed by the higher federal authorities in 2007 identifies areas of research as yet unexplored and set priorities. Special emphasis was placed on the characterisation of nanomaterials in terms of their make-up and composition, the identification of harmful properties, and methods to measure the impacts on man and the environment of nanomaterial particle emissions. The research strategy also describes the conditions under which the risks associated with nanomaterials can be assessed, and it drafts guidelines for successful risk management and appropriate risk communication.

The review which has now been issued reports on the status and important results of 85 research projects which were launched or monitored under the joint research strategy. It reflects the multidimensionality of the issues but also allows an initial outline of areas of risk. Future research should aim to help prevent elaborate testing of many individual nanomaterials while making it possible to derive reliable information about how to protect workers, consumers and the environment.

This 125-page initial review of the joint research strategy of the departmental research institutions of the Federal Government can be downloaded from the web pages of the federal authorities or from the BMU (Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety). It is entitled *Nanotechnologie - Gesundheits- und Umweltrisiken von Nanomaterialien*.

Results of the stock taking will be presented to the public on 30 April 2013 at the BMU in Berlin. Registration is required due to limited seating capacity. Please send an e-mail to patricia.adolf@bmu.bund.de.

To download the review *Nanotechnologie - Gesundheits- und Umweltrisiken von Nanomaterialien* from the UBA web site, click here:

http://www.umweltbundesamt.de/chemikalien/publikationen/gesundheits_und_umweltrisiken_nanomaterialien.pdf

Dessau-Roßlau, 20 March 2013