



2nd International Conference on Risk Assessment

Workshop 1: Terminology

January 2011, Brussels, Belgium

Risk Assessment Terminology

- Deal with and express uncertainties covering in particular the concepts, words and expressions which are used to communicate the contents and results of a risk assessment to policy makers, stakeholders and the public
- The relationship between the data, models, assumptions, methods, procedures used by risk assessors and the way in which these are reflected and explained in a risk assessment



Goal of working group

to identify, discuss and report to the Plenary the key issues related to the way in which the **process, contents and results** of risk assessment are expressed and communicated to risk managers and the public, with a view to recommend initiatives for promoting **more consistent, improved practices.**



Questions

- Where are the successes, gaps, barriers (real/perceived)?
- What are the priorities for future work?
- How we may collegiately do the work and utilize the products?
- When do we start?
- Who should be involved?

Main Issues





Issues 1

1. Harmonisation becomes more and more difficult going from lower to higher levels of integration (intersectoral, sectoral, legal frameworks, backgrounds such as research, public health etc.). The issues here are what will be the focus of harmonisation and where we should start.
2. Three target groups: risk assessors, risk managers, public. Communication specialists in between. Terminology at technical level up to layman's level, giving the same message



Issues 2

- Complicating factors: different languages, different products, giving the same message
- Numerous reasons for diverging terminology.
- Harmonisation is needed in definition of general terms and expression of uncertainty



Considerations for further action

- Start within legal frameworks → sectors → across sectors.
- Build on what has been done (WHO/OECD, EBM, Global Dialogue, EFSA projects, hazard based classification schemes)
- Take account of different user groups; encourage basic education and communications on risk assessment
- Harmonisation requires much interaction between risk assessors, managers, stakeholders



Priorities, recommendations 1

- Focus on a sectoral approach first. Start in house, within organisations to decrease ambiguities among risk assessors. Then proceed within legal frameworks and sector.
- Systematic approach:
 - Stocktaking of the work done and existing best practices
 - Choose platforms to use for further discussions

Priorities/recommendations 2

- Focus on key terms which are essential in the interaction between risk assessors and risk managers and the general public:
 - expressing sources and nature of uncertainty and variability,
 - level of confidence,
 - levels of risk,
 - seriousness of effects,
 - grading of evidence in experimental, clinical/epidemiological work
 - exposure levels
- Research: background for concerns in relation to terminology used and social sciences should be engaged here to develop the correct language in communication
- Training and education at all levels

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