



The European Centre for Ecotoxicology and Toxicology of Chemicals (ECETOC) and European Chemical Industry Council (Cefic) Long-Range Research Initiative (LRI) Environment Progress Review and Scoping Meeting 2018

The *European Centre for Ecotoxicology and Toxicology of Chemicals (ECETOC)* and the *European Chemical Industry Council (Cefic) Long-range Research Initiative (LRI)* convened the *Environment Progress Review and Scoping Meeting 2018* that took place on the 30th and 31st of January 2018 in Brussels, BE. The meeting was attended by approx. 50 invited participants from Europe and North America representing ECETOC and Cefic member companies, consultancies, academia, regulators and authorities.

The meeting had three aims:

1. Inform attendees of progress on relevant ECETOC and Cefic LRI actions since the 2017 Environment Progress Review and Scoping Meeting;
2. Review specific activities and progress in two focus themes:
 - Hazard assessment of persistent, bioaccumulative and toxic (PBT) substances;
 - Microplastics in the environment;
3. Share and prioritise proposals for ECETOC action (e.g. task forces (TFs) or workshops) and/or Cefic LRI research projects that would contribute to improving the environmental hazard and risk assessment of chemicals and chemical products.

After a summary of ECETOC and Cefic LRI environmental activities over the past year, two presentation sessions reviewed the status of activities in the two focus themes and identified knowledge gaps and the need for action.

Session 1: *Hazard assessment of PBT substances* encompassed the following presentations:

- **Björn Hidding** (BASF SE, DE): PBT context and introduction to Session 1: Current status in a nutshell;
- **Johanna Peltola-Thies** (European Chemicals Agency (ECHA), FI; dial-in presentation): Update and perspectives from the ECHA;
- **Michelle Embry** (Health and Environmental Sciences Institute (HESI), USA): Toxicokinetics and new developments for in vitro bioaccumulation;
- **Björn Hidding**: Introduction to the Persistent, Mobile, Toxic (PMT) concept;
- **Andreas Schäffer** (RWTH Aachen University, DE): Characterisation of non-extractable residues (NERs) of chemicals in the environment.

These presentations were followed by a *PBT brainstorming session* resulting in the proposal of new topics for further consideration by ECETOC and / or Cefic LRI:

Key issues that were highlighted during the discussions included the need to establish benchmark substances to improve PBT hazard and risk assessment, and to design and conduct case studies to show how such benchmark substances could be used in practice. The current key issues showed how closely science was interlinked with policy initiatives. Therefore, it was pivotal to involve all relevant stakeholders at all stages of the ECETOC or Cefic LRI actions. Similarly, ECETOC and Cefic LRI, just as individual member companies, should continue to engage in sharing scientific needs, e.g., for updating the ECHA Guidance on PBT substances. All ECETOC and Cefic LRI actions should aim at using a more



holistic approach, based on real-world calibration, to use P, B, and T information in a regulatory context.

Session 2: Microplastics in the environment encompassed the following presentations:

- **Gordon Sanders** (Givaudan, CH): *Introduction to Session 2; summary ECETOC/LRI activity to date;*
- **Valentina Bertato** (EU Commission, General Directorate Environment): *Regulatory perspectives on microplastics in the environment;*
- **Albert Koelmans** (Wageningen University, NL): *Towards risk assessment of plastic debris.*

During the subsequent *plenary discussion on microplastics and the environment*, the need to define 'microplastics', also as compared to 'nanomaterials', was highlighted as fundamental for all science and policy actions. The EU Commission had taken the lead in initiating action related to microplastics, expecting that international activities, e.g., by the World Health Organisation, would follow. ECETOC, Cefic LRI, and individual member companies should seek opportunities for dialogue with, e.g., the ECHA. Whilst the recent EC request to the ECHA to prepare an Annex XV dossier is focused on intentionally added microplastics in products, it is recognised that there is a wider aspect of non-intentionally added microplastics, which includes addressing the issue of the waste habits of consumers, e.g., by adequate policy measures.

On Day 2, four breakout groups discussed 40 actionable topics that had been suggested by ECETOC / Cefic member companies and other interested parties ahead of the meeting. The Organising Committee of the meeting had assigned these actionable topics to one of four main topics:

1. *Ecotoxicology* (acronym Eco): 12 proposals;
2. *Environmental Fate and Behaviour* (acronym Fate): 9 proposals;
3. *Exposure and Risk Assessment* (acronym: E-RA): 11 proposals;
4. *Risk Management / Man via Environment* (acronym: RM): 8 proposals.

Each breakout group addressed one of these main topics and discussed, refined and sometimes combined the proposals, also taking into account the knowledge gaps and research opportunities identified during the Day 1 discussions.

The breakout group discussions were summarised by the rapporteurs in a final plenary session and subsequently voting took place to prioritise actionable topics for recommendation as potential ECETOC activities and/or Cefic LRI research projects.

In closing the meeting, Olivier de Matos (Secretary General, ECETOC, BE) thanked all participants for their valuable contributions. The outcome of the meeting will enable ECETOC and Cefic LRI to define areas where specific action would be most important.

The actionable topics that were prioritised during the meeting will be presented to the ECETOC Scientific Committee and the Cefic LRI Issue Team for evaluation and decision on further progression.