

Hazardous Substances Advisory Committee (HSAC)

Meeting Minutes – 43rd HSAC Meeting

22nd October 2024

Item 1 Welcome by the chair and approval of the draft agenda

- 1.1 The Chair, Professor Iseult Lynch, welcomed all attendees to the meeting (see Annex A).
- 1.2 The draft agenda was approved with no additional items added under any other business. No conflicts of interest were declared with items on the agenda.

Item 2 Approval of the minutes from the 42nd meeting, and review of actions – Iseult Lynch, Chair

- 2.1 The minutes from the 42nd meeting were accepted without objections. The Chair updated on the previous minutes actions as follows:

- **Action: HSAC Secretariat to investigate including members of the public in the committee, introducing a mentoring scheme for committee members, and whether the HSAC could have a role in decisions around OECD test guidelines.**
 - Progress is ongoing and this item will be reported at the next meeting.
- **Action: HSAC to prepare structured feedback based on Cecile Brich's questions on the human health impact of flame retardants and identifying methodologies for chemicals prioritisation.**
 - The HSAC Secretariat took an action to set this document up and to share it with the HSAC for input. This has been done. There is a meeting slot later to discuss the progress of these items.
- **Action: Stuart Harrad to share the data his group has on dermal exposure with Cecile Brich.**
 - Stuart to confirm that he has done this.
- **Action: Jason Weeks to share documents on Food Standards Agency prioritisation process with Cecile Brich.**
 - Jason to confirm that he has done this.
- **Action: The Committee to provide written feedback on the EA report on the review of options to assess the “sufficiency” of environmental**

endocrine disruptor databases for regulatory purposes by the end of July.

- This was completed and Ian Doyle has provided a response to the comments sent by the HSAC. There is a slot later in the meeting to discuss this also.
- **Action: Ahamad Akbor, Defra economist, to share the “Valuing environmental risk from chemical pollution” report with the Committee with the condition that it is not shared further until it is published.** ○ Done
- **Action: Ahamad and Julia Sussams to come back to the Committee with suggested next steps for this area of work** ○ This will be brought to the Committee in future
- **Action: HSAC Secretariat to send round a poll for the remaining meetings of 2024.** ○ This was actioned. The next HSAC meeting is the 3rd of December, 9:30 am – 1 pm. We will shortly be sending around the poll for meetings for the rest of the academic year.

Item 3 Forward look, upcoming meeting topics and commissions in progress, improvements to the HSAC – Yasmin Wright, Secretariat

- 3.1 Yasmin Wright provided the forward look with upcoming meeting topics for the December HSAC meeting. Yasmin also discussed proposed improvements to the HSAC including increasing the visibility of the HSAC by making sure the website is updated more regularly and the proposed plan to produce a bi-yearly newsletter which summarises the work that has been done by the HSAC over the past six months.
- 3.2 Marc Casale provided an update on the report regarding new approach methodologies (NAMs). A publication is expected soon, reflecting government focus on making progress in this area.

Item 4 Prioritisation Report for Benzotriazoles - Dr. Morné van der Mescht, Chemicals Evaluation Scientist, Environment Agency

- 4.1 Dr. Morné van der Mescht presented the report findings to the HSAC. The draft report was sent to the HSAC and the Panel were asked to review and provide any comments by November 7th.
- 4.2 Stewart Owen noted a lack of monitoring data for human exposure, questioning the implications for human health. Dr. van der Mescht emphasized the Environment Agency's focus on environmental exposure, which indirectly protects human health.

- 4.3 Luigi Margiotto-Casaluci discussed the classification of compounds as endocrine disruptors, noting reliance on screening level data and potential read-across from similar substances.
- 4.4 Suzie Qassim asked about the prioritisation of Benzotriazoles compared to other substances and highlighted the need for timely environmental monitoring data. Morné said that it is a relatively high priority due to the endocrine disrupting property, but that there are still gaps in our knowledge.
- 4.5 Ioanna Katsiadaki asked about oestrogen and androgen activity and whether this is a test Morné is planning to do. Morné confirmed that he will pick this up with Ioanna once he has had further time to digest the report.
- 4.6 Iseult Lynch wondered if the report would provide some evidence to consider whether a focus on essential uses might be relevant here. For example, in PFAS work is ongoing to distinguish between where we need to maintain the chemical functionality that PFAS provide, versus PFAS being present as they have always been included or because they're a component of a mixture. Morné confirmed that essentially of use will be considered during a more formal substance evaluation. It is early days for benzotriazoles analysis but it is important to ensure that restriction does not lead to regrettable substitutions.
- 4.7 Ovnair Sepai commented that the results from the EU project 'Partnership for the Assessment of Risks from Chemicals (PARC)' would be relevant here and should be considered. She also highlighted that Benzotriazoles are easy to buy and get hold of.

Action Items

- HSAC to review the draft report and provide consolidated feedback by November 7th.

Item 5 HSAC comments on the draft Pro-Additive Containing (PAC) plastics review paper – Iseult Lynch, Chair

- 5.1 Iseult Lynch presented the PAC plastics review and acknowledged the late finalisation of the review draft hence it hasn't been circulated amongst the HSAC yet. She encouraged participants to provide feedback by October 31st.
- 5.2 Luigi Margiotto-Casaluci pointed out the limited number of toxicity studies since 2019, with conflicting results regarding the impact of metal release during degradation.
- 5.3 No conclusive studies demonstrate effective degradation or compostability of PAC plastics under realistic environmental conditions. There is also a need for improved testing methods and understanding of the real-world impact of these additives and formulations.
- 5.4 Stewart Owen raised concerns about potential greenwashing in marketing oxo- and bio-degradable plastics.
- 5.5 Freya Holby from the Defra Waste Team expressed appreciation for the team's work and highlighted the report's significance for informing future policies on alternative plastics.

Item 6 Structured feedback update: Discussion on Flame Retardants and Chemicals Prioritisation structured feedback progress.

- 6.1 Both Jason Weeks and Stuart Harrad were unable to join the meeting for this agenda item. It was agreed that the Secretariat would pick this item up with them separately. Susan Chilton volunteered to look across both feedback items.

Flame retardants

- 6.2 Iseult Lynch to ask Stuart Harrad how he would like to manage the commenting process on this report.
- 6.3 Stewart Owen offered to pull information together as a first draft to help Stuart.
- 6.4 Yasmin Wright, Secretariat, to arrange a meeting with Iseult, Stuart and Stewart to progress.

Chemicals prioritisation

- 6.5 Yasmin Wright, Iseult Lynch and Jason Weeks to have a meeting to progress.
- 6.6 Luigi Margiotta-Casaluci to pull together feedback to support Jason. The report will be circulated when ready.

Action

- Yasmin will follow up with an e-mail confirming all of the steps of the process and the deadlines.

Item 7 Next HSAC policy advice paper – Julia Sussams

- 7.1 Julia Sussams presented the options for the next paper focused on key policy advice. These had been narrowed to two options based on discussions at previous HSAC meetings.
- 7.2 There was agreement that the next paper should be a follow up to the New Approach Methodologies (NAMs) paper completed by the HSAC earlier this year.
- 7.3 It was discussed whether the Alternative Transitional Registration model (ATRM) under the UK Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation, and Restriction of Chemicals (REACH) legislation could be considered. The paper may be able to use the ATRM as an example of how we use best available science to support policy making, using NAMs case studies to focus on the integration or the translation of science into regulation.
- 7.4 Stewart Owen suggested that the biological effects of chemicals on species could also be included.
- 7.5 Iseult Lynch felt that some prioritisation within the NAMs report will be necessary in terms of what aspects of NAMs should be tackled first, and what should be considered on longer timescales.

Action

- Julia to arrange meeting with Jess and HSAC members to discuss the next paper.

Item 8 Responses to HSAC comments on EA paper “A review of options to assess the “sufficiency” of environmental endocrine disruptor databases for regulatory purposes”

- 8.1 Ian Doyle (Environment Agency) provided responses to the HSAC comments ahead of the meeting.
- 8.2 All agreed that, unless Ian wants to come back to us, we are happy with the report and thank Ian for responding to the feedback that the HSAC provided.

Item 9 Feedback session - Open discussion on ways to improve the effectiveness of the HSAC - Yasmin Wright, Secretariat

- 9.1 Susan Chilton highlighted that momentum can often get lost after meetings and there have been discussions in the past about tackling this by having afternoons to write papers or brainstorm particular drafts. Iseult Lynch agreed and suggested having a 30min slot every few weeks to have informal check in's as a reminder in between formal HSAC meetings.
- 9.2 Julia Sussams expressed her appreciation for those who volunteer to lead the write up on papers. She highlighted the importance of the process to capture lack of consensus and diversity of thought within the group, as well as consensus, as to the best possible course of action. She put a question to the group as to what the best course of action would be to ensure that this happens.
- 9.3 Iseult Lynch suggested the HSAC representative with the most expertise in a specific topic taking the lead. She stressed the importance of not trying to drive consensus where there isn't consensus, and the papers should make a point of highlighting this.

Action

- HSAC secretariat to set up a couple of informal check in's between meetings to maintain momentum on key activities.

Item 10 Emerging evidence – HSAC members

- 10.1 Stewart Owen shared that as of last week the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) have changed their approach to use of fish bio-accumulation studies. They have agreed that the use of OECD Test Guideline number 305 for most waterborne substances is not always necessary, and a higher-level invertebrate study could be used instead.
- 10.2 Ioanna Katsiadaki flagged a recent news article that showed the PFAS are 400 times more concentrated in seaweed than in fish or other animals.

- 10.3 Ioanna flagged that ECHA's work on NAMs is also proceeding with care and there is a roadmap to transition.
- 10.4 The EU's Joint Research Centre (JRC) are doing work on effectively using science to support chemicals risk assessment. A guidance document has been prepared. Iseult Lynch will share this with the HSAC Secretariat.
- 10.5 Luigi Margiotta-Casaluci shared that the mixture challenge has been picked up by The Royal Society and they are preparing a policy statement.

Action

- Iseult to share JRC guidance document with HSAC Secretariat.

Item 11 AOB

- 11.1 Congratulations to Laura Carter on her promotion to Professor.
- 11.2 Julia Sussams notified everyone that the UK - Japan partnership conference will take place on Weds 20 and Thurs 21 Nov this year. The conference will be fully streamed online for the first time.
- 11.3 The HSAC report on NAMs will be published in the first week of November.

End of meeting – 1:00pm

ANNEX A

ATTENDANCE LIST HSAC:

- Iseult Lynch
- Stewart Owen
- Susan Chilton
- Luigi Margiotta-Casaluci

Secretariat:

- Yasmin Wright
- Julia Sussams
- Iqra Raja

Defra Policy Officials

- Marc Casale (Deputy Director, Chemicals, Pesticides and Hazardous Waste)
- Mark Chandler (Head of Evidence & Analysis Hub, Chemicals, Pesticides and Hazardous Waste)
- Holly Alpren (Evidence and Analysis Hub, Chemicals, Pesticides and Hazardous Waste)
- Keegan Schroeder (Evidence and Analysis Hub, Chemicals, Pesticides and Hazardous Waste)
- Ussama Mohyuddin (Evidence and Analysis Hub, Chemicals, Pesticides and Hazardous Waste)
- Ed Latter (Chemicals Policy Team, Chemicals, Pesticides and Hazardous Waste)
- Sarah Heathcote-Jones (Chemicals Policy Team, Chemicals, Pesticides and Hazardous Waste)
- Julia Machalska (REACH Work Programme Team, Chemicals, Pesticides and Hazardous Waste)
- Freya Holby (Defra Waste Policy Team, Resources and Waste)
- Ellen Ron (Defra Waste Policy Team, Resources and Waste)

Defra Agency Representatives

- Suzie Qassim (Natural England)
- Morné van der Mescht (Environment Agency)

Other Government Department and Agencies

- Ovnair Sepai (UKHSA)
- Olivia Osborne (FSA)
- Ioannna Katsiadaki (CEFAS)

External Stakeholders

- Roger Pullin (Chemical Industries Association)
- Chloe Topping (ChemTrust)
- Inga Becker-Hansen (British Retail Consortium)
- Stephanie Metzger (RSC)
- Charlie Stevenson (Cruelty Free International)
- Mohamed Elkhailifa (British Plastics Federation)

Devolved Governments

- Ailbhin Corrygan (Department of Agriculture, Environment & Rural Affairs, Northern Ireland)