

Concluding Comments and Next Steps

Nanotechnology Risk Governance: From Ideas to Action

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I have the impression that IRGC's recommendations for nanotechnology risk governance have received considerable support. Nevertheless there are some 'buts' and contradictory statements, in particular in the distinction between Frame 1 and Frame 2 types of nanotechnology applications, which calls for additional thought on the part of IRGC. Numerous improvements have been proposed which will be looked over closely and taken into consideration during revision of the documents. In particular it has been noted that the benefits and even visions should be included more explicitly alongside the concerns. I was pleased to notice that some organisations and countries have started to use the risk governance framework outlined by IRGC.

I personally take from this workshop that there is still a clear need for developing a risk governance strategy in the field of nanotechnology, including nomenclature and categorisation of applications. A lot of work needs to be done in limited time. Subject to discussion by the Scientific & Technical Council (S&TC) IRGC wants to continue its efforts to build a structure and a framework ("roadmap") for the governance of the various frames of nanotechnology. The focus of this effort is to contribute to a multi-agency approach, in the first instance by preparing a shorter document which can be handed over to governments. We welcome your input within the next two weeks or a few days more - allowing you time to study the report and reflect on statements made at this conference. The presentations will be available on the websites, both of IRGC and Swiss Re while session summaries will follow in time.

We also want to work on implementation of the framework and intend to partner up with other organisations on certain components/elements, for example, OECD (equivalent regulations), ISO (standards), Didion (communication) and Greenpeace. We want to broaden our perspective by including more countries and changing from a general/individual viewpoint to a more country-specific view. We would like to further distinguish between different domains of application by developing a multi-layered concept, e.g. from easy to grasp products to internationally pursued areas of application, and related models and paradigms.

It has been proposed

- to identify political barriers to implementation;
- to include the risk of loss opportunities;
- to provide surveys on work which has already been done;
- to use existing fora by raising awareness and agenda setting regarding nanotechnology risk governance issues, and overarchingly;
- to contribute to the development of a "culture" pertinent to the responsible use of this promising, innovative technology.

All this needs to be discussed but don't forget that IRGC can only continue project work if adequate funding is assured.

From my perspective we have spent two extremely interesting, challenging days on a fascinating subject. I am deeply impressed by the outcome. We had a good representation of countries, unfortunately – although invited – China was missing. We had quite a good, maybe outstanding representation of different groups, and of diverging views within. For me IRGC has demonstrated its capability to bring the right, bright people together and provide a platform for an open multifaceted dialogue. You were a great audience!

Finally I want to thank:

- those members of IRGC's S&TC who developed the concept, in particular Mike Roco and Ortwin Renn;
- the Secretariat of IRGC, in particular Emily Litten who did an excellent job on supporting the project and organizing the workshops;
- the generous funding organisations, and last but not least;
- the Swiss Re Centre for Global Dialogue and the whole team who made this conference such a pleasant stay.

If you did also enjoy these two days and do appreciate IRGC's effort, please pass this on to a broader community and help IRGC to become a visible and esteemed independent organisation.