

# **The WHO Chemical Risk Assessment Network**

**A New Global Collaborative Initiative**

**November 2012**



**World Health  
Organization**

# Presentation Outline

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- Background
- Consultation & Feedback
- Goals & Objectives
- Nature of Network
- Anticipated Outcomes
- Status & Next Steps



# Background

- Increase in production, use and transport of chemicals
- Globalization
- Transborder distribution of chemicals and trade in intermediate and finished products
- Shift in production of both chemicals and products from developed to developing countries



# Background (cont.)

- Shared problem of risk of chemical exposures
- Recognition of need to devise solutions on global level
- Requires extensive and dedicated collaboration
- SAICM objective to achieve sound management of chemicals to minimize effects on human health and the environment



# International Consultation

- WHO convened two meetings
  - Geneva 2010 (WHO/IPCS Meeting on Strengthening Global Collaboration in Chemical Risk Assessment)
  - Bonn 2012 (Second WHO Meeting on Global Collaboration in Chemical Risk Assessment – Strengthening Capacity Building and Networking & Pre-Meeting Workshop on Risk Assessment Methodologies)
- Survey of institutions on capacity building needs and vision of WHO Network to focus discussions and assist in planning



# Recommended Areas of Focus

- Activities related to:
  - Capacity building/training
  - Chemical risk assessments/sharing knowledge
  - Risk assessment methodology
  - Research
- Establishment of WHO Chemical Risk Assessment Network



# Future RA Issues

- Low and middle income countries
  - Assessing risks of more different types of chemicals, industry associated chemicals, waste streams
  - Aspects of coordination, information sharing, provision of guidance & advice, capacity building
- Developed countries
  - Chemicals associated with newer technologies/alternatives
  - More emphasis on more subtle endpoints
  - Advanced RA methodologies
  - Incorporation of emerging technologies/information sources in RA

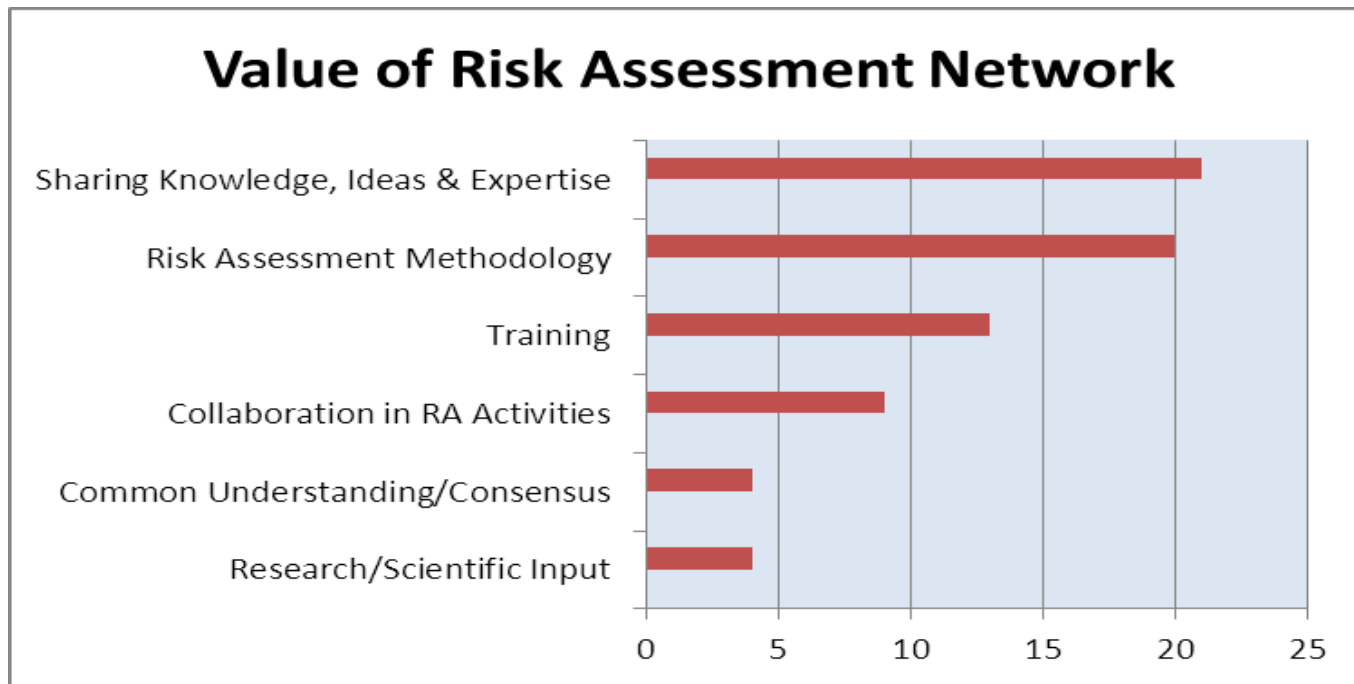
# Capacity Building/Training Needs

- Low & middle income countries see need for increased capacity in all areas related to RA
  - Trained staff at all levels; emphasis on general principles, but also complex methods
  - Early life stage exposures and susceptibility
  - Application to industrial streams, wastes, etc
  - Access to toolkits/methodologies
- Developed countries needs generally lie more in areas associated with emerging technologies
  - Use of predictive tools, alternative testing data
  - IM/IT tools
- Common need for increased international collaboration





# Perceived Value of Network



# Goals & Objectives of Network

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- Overall goal:
  - To improve chemical risk assessment globally through fostering and facilitating sustainable interaction between institutions on chemical risk assessment issues and activities.



# Goals & Objectives of Network (cont.)

## Specific Objectives:

- To bring together experts in chemical risk assessment to exchange ideas, share knowledge and experiences, and engage in joint problem identification/solving.
- To facilitate and contribute to high quality training and capacity building.
- To enhance harmonization and development of chemical risk assessment approaches and methodologies.
- To improve risk assessment by harnessing new science and strengthening the interface between risk assessment and research.
- To provide a platform for coordination of risk assessment activities on a global level to reduce duplication and gain efficiencies through enhancing collaborative efforts and work-sharing as well as assisting in the identification of emerging risks to human health.
- To promote and disseminate best risk assessment practices and principles globally and to develop and promote strategies for transparency and quality.

# Nature of Network

- Voluntary, collaborative
- Comprised of contributors from institutions and individuals with expertise in human health risk assessment from:
  - Government, public health and intergovernmental organizations
  - WHO Collaborating Centres
  - Civil society organizations in official relations with WHO
  - Academia
  - Professional societies
- Contributions may be in form of financial support, in-kind input to projects, technical expertise or sharing of information



# Nature of Network (cont.)

- Project oriented
  - Initial focus will be on recommended key theme areas
  - International, regional, multilateral or bilateral in scope
  - Report, guidance documentation, training sessions or materials, tools, databases, etc.
- Network Steering Group comprised of
  - Leaders of various project working groups
  - Chairs of WHO-led working groups related to Network
  - Representatives of selected international or supranational organizations
  - Others participants selected by WHO
- Network meeting every approximately 2 years, with communications by other means between meetings

# Creating the Network

- Initial Steering Group formed summer 2012
- Two Core Groups focussing on:
  - Operational aspects
    - Business plan
    - Operational framework
    - Communications strategy
  - Short-term activities/projects
    - Bring existing projects under umbrella (MoA, Uncertainties, training...)
    - New projects
      - Mapping of available training resources
      - Mapping of methodologies & tools



# Anticipated Outcomes

- Enhanced collaboration between institutions on RA issues
- Increased capacity to conduct high quality RA
- Incorporation of harmonized methodology and emerging science
- Efficient and timely knowledge transfer



# Next Steps

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- Start “soft launch” early spring 2013
- Official “hard launch” early summer 2013

