

The Need for International Test Methods for Industry, R&I and Regulation

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1. Introduction

Appropriate, clear and enforceable legislation is a key factor to push innovation and support long-term investments. Legislation has to keep pace with innovative developments to enhance citizens' trust in innovation. This also includes having appropriate, recognised methods in place for determining legally required safety data. Internationally standardised and harmonised test methods are a prerequisite to build people's trust in safe innovation. OECD Test Guideline (TGs) are internationally accepted test methods, help overcome global trade barriers and, hence, increase the competitiveness of European industry. The Malta Initiative



In the [Malta Initiative](#) representatives of European countries, several Directorates-General of the European Commission, the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA), authorities, research institutions, NGOs, universities and industry work together on a voluntary and self-organised basis, hence without an official mandate. They work together to find possibilities for developing and amending the measurement and test methods required to enforce legislation (particularly in the field of chemicals). In order to make REACH enforceable for nanomaterials, the Malta Initiative committed itself in a first step to facilitating projects in which OECD Test Guidelines (TGs) are amended or developed for nanoscale substances. Other legislative areas, such as European regulations on biocides, cosmetics and plastic food packaging also refer to some extent to the OECD TGs when it comes to safety assessments for nanomaterials and thus benefit from the amendments.

The Malta Initiative started 2017 on Malta during the Maltese EU Council Presidency. It asked the EU Directorate-General for Research and Innovation (DG RTD) to politically and financially support the development and amendment of the OECD TGs and Guidance Documents (GDs) to ensure that nano-specific issues are addressed. To achieve this, several projects were put to tender within the framework of Horizon 2020, the 8th EU Framework Programme for Research.

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2. The Malta Initiative Position Paper

The [Malta Initiative Position Paper](#) highlights that a strong European financial support is needed to support the validation and harmonisation of test methods and to coordinate the efforts towards OECD Test Guideline development. Experience has shown that adaptation and development of test methods require intensive effort (in terms of time, human and financial resources), which individual researchers, industrial actors or EU Member States cannot undertake alone. The experiences of the Malta Initiative show that a coordinated effort leads to successful and efficient TG development. Furthermore, a coordinated approach can be more effective and help avoiding duplication of work.

3. Conclusions

To support safe and sustainable innovation, help overcome trade barriers and make legislation enforceable we need a European Test Method Strategy, which includes (a) funding of researchers for the development, validation and harmonisation of test methods, and (b) an international platform for collaboration and exchange between stakeholders.