European Union Invests Over €30m to Implement Five Safety Projects

2019-07-24

The EU invests around €30m to fund five projects on nanomaterials safety. All of these projects directly support the Malta initiative, which aims to develop safety instructions and guidance documents related to the legal aspects of nanomaterials.

The EU is providing over €30m to fund five new projects on nanomaterial safety through application of the ‘safe by design’ concept. Under safe by design principles, designers aim to integrate hazard identification and risk assessment early in the development process.

Two of the projects focus on a computational approach. NanoInformaTIX has 36 partners from across the world and is developing a sustainable informatics framework for the risk assessment of engineered nanomaterials. "The tool will be based on the significant amounts of data on properties of engineered nanomaterials generated over the last decades, as well as new data coming from research," its website says.

NanoSolveIT is aiming to "advance nanoinformatics well beyond the state of the art" by developing an integrated approach to testing and assessment (Iata) for nanomaterials. This will be accomplished through stand-alone open software and a cloud-based platform. Both projects are funded until February 2023.

Two other projects, NANORIGO and RiskGONE, focus on a nanotechnology risk governance framework. These are also funded until February 2023. And Gov4Nano will design and establish a sustainable Nano Risk Governance Council by December 2022.

All of these projects directly support the Malta initiative, which aims to develop and amend test guidelines and guidance documents to address nano-specific regulatory issues. A number of upcoming EU research funding calls will also support the Malta initiative. These calls are expected to bridge the transition to Horizon Europe, where there will be even more focus on material design. The EU received twelve proposals for its call for research proposal,

NMBP-15-2019, which is currently in its second stage of submissions and focuses on the safe by design metrics.

Open calls include NMBP-34-2019, which addresses documentary standards and NMBP-16-2020, which addresses safe by design of multi-component nanomaterials. The former is a single-stage call, with a deadline of September. The latter is a multi-stage call and its first-stage deadline is December. Open calls include one to address documentary standards and another looking at safe by design of multi-component nanomaterials. The former is a single-stage call, with a deadline of September. The latter is a multi-stage call and its first-stage deadline is December.

Additionally, the European Union Observatory for Nanomaterials (EUON), is expecting to complete several nanosafety projects in the next year. These include:

- a study on the state of play of the market for next-generation nanomaterials;
- a critical review of studies on reproductive and developmental toxicity; and
- a critical review of factors determining dermal absorption and their assessment tools.

Last month, an "informal working group" of experts from the Dutch government, academia and industry, including Echa, the European Environment Agency (EEA) and technology platform SusChem, published a report outlining a safe-by-design "innovation programme" for the EU.

Read the original article on Chemical Watch.