

## ENSO<sub>r</sub> – WS topic 4 – International cooperation

### Summary of two sessions

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#### Questions discussed:

How to organize international cooperation on the topic of emerging contaminants in soil and groundwater? What are your ideas?

- On what level? (international / EU / between countries, regions, ...)
- Who are the stakeholders? How to involve them?
- New initiatives / Joining existing partnerships?
- Organizational and financial aspects: who pays?
- Other issues?

#### 1. On what level do we need to organize international cooperation?

Most participants agreed that the European level is the most suitable level to cooperate.

Often one country is faced with a problem, and takes the lead in developing solutions, other countries follow then. It is important to connect as soon as possible.

Especially, small countries are in need of partnerships with other countries.

However, flexibility should be build in. Cooperation on a worldwide scale is needed as well.

**Goal:** (Before starting the discussion, clarification on the goal of international cooperation was asked). The goal of international cooperation on emerging contaminants in soil and groundwater, is to exchange knowledge and experience. We are lacking a common European policy. The aim of this international cooperation is not developing a uniform policy, but rather to ensure we are using the same data and principles, and similar methodologies.

#### 2. Who are the stakeholders? How to involve them?

Stakeholders are: industry; researchers; consultants; authorities; public; ...

Industry: large companies are often global actors, and can have a lot of information; also less obvious ones should be included; the group needs to be identified.

(International) NGO's can be part of the voice of the public. To involve public, adequate communication strategies are needed to avoid public outrage.

Authorities have a special function/task: they are a neutral and connecting partner.

Authorities responsible for air, water, health need to be involved, or at least talked to (integrated approach).

Authorities responsible for economic affairs and responsible for product authorization (prevention) need to be involved as well.

### 3. Do we need a new initiative, or should we join existing partnerships?

A working group with a new focus (on soil) is needed. In the first place, one should look at organizing this inside or in connection with existing partnerships. But a **facilitator** is needed. This should be a **long term** initiative.

Existing initiatives/organizations are:

NORMAN (main focus on water);

Common Forum (could help with prioritization);

Global Soil Partnership (work together with FAO and WHO);

Soil Expert Group;

EEA; IPCHEM; ECHA; ...

European commission is willing to facilitate cooperation.

### 4. Organizational and financial aspects

What is needed?

- A platform for exchange and for action (cannot be disconnected).
- A platform for data exchange: this should be accessible to everyone and be transparent.
- Exchange of best practices and lessons learnt.
- A common framework for risk evaluation, 'harmonisation' of norms.
- Uniform methods on sampling & analysis (comparability of data);
- Agreement on prioritization of substances.

On the financial aspect, REACH was referred to: companies pay to receive information. Also NORMAN asks a contribution from participants and users.