

OPERA



Summary - "1st working group meeting" on Pesticide Risk Indicator

Milan, 10th November 2009

OPERA's main objective is to analyse and interpret the evolution in development, use and implementation of the risk indicators for pesticides into National and European legislation, in order to give scientific support to the decisions of the different stakeholders involved in the process

As a first phase of its activity, OPERA organised a face to face meeting inviting representatives of various stakeholders including government, industry, NGO, farmers and academic.

The objective of the workshop was to give indication to help MS implementation in their National Action Plans of the Chapter V article 15 of the Directive on Sustainable Use of Pesticide. A primary goal of this workshop was to identify obstacles to effective use of existing research findings and tools and to suggest ways of overcoming these obstacles. The meeting was held under the Chatham House rule, meaning that the participants are not externally quoted in the minutes giving them more freedom to speak up.

Previous to the meeting, experts were asked specific questions related to the design, use and implementation of risk indicators. The following four topics emerged as a discussion point:

Sustainability: Should risk indicators rather be called sustainability indicators, including not only the environmental aspects but also the economic and social aspect (risk benefit)?

Framework: The framework to be chosen for the implementation of the risk indicators could follow a linear approach but a more flexible approach

Data: What data are available, how much willingness do the Member States show to provide the data, how well understood are the data

Communication: What are the communication strategies towards the farmer/ user and towards the policy makers? How do the relevant stakeholders get the information?

During the meeting the working parties are confronted to the very pertinent questions, such as:

What should be the goals of risk indicators?

What should be measured by whom, when, where and for what?

What use can be made of existing and to be processed data?

How can the legislation contribute to Society improvement based on a stakeholder's consensus instead of being just used as a yardstick?

What are the definitions of the different stakeholder's vocabularies?

The outcome of the meeting is as follows:

The goals and objectives of the directive should be risk mitigation and use reduction and its measurement. The first task could be a situation analysis on data and information available, then a concrete goal can be defined. Although it is still unclear who is setting the goal and the subsets, the process to achieve the goal should be transparent. Indicators are needed to allow setting the goals, to guide farmers, and provide politicians with easy to use information that could contribute to increase transparency and social control.

At national level, some countries do already know the situation but Member States can be very different in their knowledge of the situation.

Indicators have a purpose. Out of practicality DPSIR should be used as a kind of basis, but ecosystem service etc need to be included to create mitigation drive and measurement instead of just confirming the constant status.

Landscape use and management is there to improve productivity , biodiversity etc, which are all linked. However, if we look at landscape management we need to look at other factors than just pesticides and other policies. Furthermore they have to be pragmatic, by confirming the outcome with measurements. Ideally, all systems (water, soil, air) should be taken into account but due to practicality this might be difficult. However, we can take it as a goal to provide systems criteria and Member States can choose.

A lot of data are available and a lot of data are in progress, but no efficient database exists. OPERA should perform a gap analysis based on questions to the relevant stakeholders:

- What data are available?
- What data are in progress?
- Where the data should be collected?
- What are the monitoring programs?

Opera need to provide for solutions to control and steer the development of indicators and of policy development including the feedback system. The required actions entail:

- Inventory on exiting risk indicators (review)
- Proposal on recommendations of National Action Plans
- Glossary or anthology of various definitions to achieve a common language between stakeholders and countries
- Development of a database on available information
- Questionnaire to Member States regarding the data availability