



Contact: Dr. Kristen Kulinowski 1-713-348-8211

ICON Issues Review of Nanotechnology Practices

Broad-based Council Collates Information on Occupational Safeguards

HOUSTON, October 18, 2006 – The International Council on Nanotechnology (ICON) today issued a comprehensive review of existing efforts to develop “best practices” for handling nanomaterials in the workplace. The work was performed by researchers at the University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB) as part of a two-phase project to catalogue how industry is managing the potential occupational safety risks posed by nanomaterials.

ICON, which paid for both phases of the project, is a coalition of academic, industrial, governmental and civil society organizations. ICON is administered by Rice University’s Center for Biological and Environmental Nanotechnology (CBEN).

The Phase 1 report, *Current Knowledge and Practices regarding Environmental Health and Safety in the Nanotechnology Workplace*, offers a review and analysis of existing efforts to develop “best practices.” This report finds that efforts to catalogue workplace practices have not systematically documented current environment, health and safety practices in a variety of workplace settings and geographies. Moreover, it finds that some existing documents are not publicly available.

In the second phase of this project, the researchers interviewed a range of U.S. and international firms to produce an international snapshot of workplace practices in nanotechnology industries. ICON plans to issue a report of those findings Nov. 13.

“This first report shows the need for better information about how industries are dealing with the unknowns about nanomaterials,” said ICON director Kristen Kulinowski. “The phase-two survey will shed light on existing practices so that a global dialogue can move forward on safe handling practices.”

The project leader at UCSB is Patricia Holden, associate professor of environmental microbiology. The UCSB team includes Magali Delmas, associate professor of corporate environmental management, Richard Appelbaum, professor of sociology and global and international studies, and Barbara Herr Harthorn,

research anthropologist, PI, and co-director of UCSB's NSF Center for Nanotechnology in Society (CNS-UCSB).

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The **International Council on Nanotechnology** is a multi-stakeholder group convened within the Center for Biological and Environmental Nanotechnology whose mission is to assess, communicate, and reduce nanotechnology environmental and health risks while maximizing its societal benefit. Our efforts are founded on the belief that partnership activities, between governments, industry, academia and non-governmental organizations are the key to an environmentally responsible nanotechnology industry. For more information visit <http://icon.rice.edu>.

The **Center for Biological and Environmental Nanotechnology** is a National Science Foundation Nanoscale Science and Engineering Center dedicated to developing sustainable nanotechnologies that improve human health and the environment. Located at Rice University in Houston, CBEN is a leader in ensuring that nanotechnology develops responsibly and with strong public support. For more information visit <http://cben.rice.edu>.

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