

“MOE’s Further Actions on Endocrine Disrupting Effects of Chemical Substances” (Press Release)

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1. Background

Since “Our Stolen Future” was first published and arouse concern on endocrine disrupting effects of chemical substances in 1996, many potential cases have been identified for their adverse effects on wildlife and humans including those on their reproductive functions.

In 1998, Environment Agency established the “Strategic Programs on Environmental Endocrine Disruptors: SPEED ’98” to respond to growing public concern and scientific uncertainty. Relevant studies and researches were conducted under this framework. Since 2005, various initiatives have been implemented under the revised framework named as “ExTEND 2005”.

In recent years, the United States and the European Union have commenced to evaluate endocrine disrupting effects of chemical substances step by step. In the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), preparation of comprehensive guidance for evaluating the endocrine disrupting effects of chemical substances is being discussed under the cooperation of its member states.

2. What is EXTEND 2010?

Under these circumstances, MOE has reviewed its previous activities conducted under the ExTEND 2005 through “Advisory Committee on Endocrine Disrupting Effects of Substances” and its subcommittees since last November. MOE has considered principles of its future actions, identified major issues to be addressed, and published “MOE’s Further Actions on Endocrine Disrupting Effects of Chemical Substances: EXTEND* 2010”.

(*EXTEND’ stands for Extended Tasks on Endocrine Disruption)

MOE is to proceed with various initiatives on the endocrine disrupting effects of chemical substances under this new framework.

3. Overview of EXTEND 2010

(1) Principles

- 1) Promotion of further actions on endocrine disrupting effects, following in principle the ExTEND 2005’s framework with necessary improvements.
- 2) Acceleration of the establishment of assessment methodologies and its implementation with a view to conduct risk management.

- 3) Priority on the activities relating to effects to the environment as the role allocated to MOE among relevant ministries and agencies, bearing in mind the perspective on human health risks which may be caused by chemical substances in the environment.
- 4) Continued active involvement in international cooperation to establish test methods and assessment methodologies, and keeping track with other countries' activities to take full advantages of their achievements.

(2) Tasks

- 1) Promotion of biological researches on wildlife and fundamental researches
 - Identify subjects clearly reflecting regulatory goals and needs, and prioritize and select research themes that can contribute to environmental risk assessment.
- 2) Development of test methods and establishment of an assessment framework
 - Urgently establish a framework for assessing endocrine disrupting effects based on their test results.
- 3) Environmental monitoring and exposure assessment
 - Grasp environmental concentration through efforts including MOE's Environmental Survey and Monitoring of Chemicals.
- 4) Evaluation of Actions and Effects
 - Select target chemicals for evaluation (about 100 chemicals for 5 years)
 - Accelerate tasks on evaluation of reliability of literature information, testing and hazard assessment.
- 5) Risk Assessment and Risk Management
 - Conduct risk assessment for overall effects including those other than endocrine disruption.
 - Consider timely and appropriate measures for risk management, when risk assessment has identified chemicals in need of risk management.
- 6) Promotion of Information Sharing
 - Actively disseminate information to general public via the Internet and workshops
- 7) Enhancement of International Cooperation
 - Maintain contribution to OECD activities and enhance international cooperation including the bilateral cooperation with the United Kingdom and the United States and regional partnership in Asia.

(Summary of public comments is abbreviated here.)