Alliance for Risk Assessment (ARA)

About

The Alliance for Risk Assessment (*ARA*) was a collaboration of organizations that fosters the development of technical chemical risk assessment products and services, through a team effort of specialists and organizations dedicated to *protecting* public health by improving the process and efficiency of risk assessment, and to increasing the capacity for developing risk values to meet growing demand. The *ARA* coordinated with Federal and State Agencies whenever possible, to ensure the best use of available resources, and to avoid duplication of effort.

To this end, the *ARA* provided a framework for the advancement of risk assessment by:

– implementing a multi-stakeholder decision-making process to deliver the best use of science with openness and transparency

– enabling groups with limited resources access to toxicological and risk assessment expertise

– facilitating the harmonization of risk assessment procedures across organizational lines

– increasing the capacity for developing risk information by pooling technical and financial resources to ensure their most effective applications, by minimizing duplication of effort

– promoting the use of risk assessment by fostering the exchange and dissemination of information.

The goal of ARA was to develop risk assessments where there was a need — for example where up-to-date assessments by major governmental agencies on the topic of interest do not exist or are not near finalization. This criterion was critical in selection of suitable projects.

Benefits of the Alliance Model

Credibility

Projects were evaluated by the ARA Steering Committee and were composed of a broad range of experts from various backgrounds and perspectives. The involvement of diverse interests:

- – enhances credibility
- – ensures careful consideration of all key data and ideas
- – provides thoughtful management of potential biases
- – indicates the importance of a project to the broader risk assessment community

Sharing of Resources

The collaborative nature of the ARA centered on the pooling of resources. ARA participants benefited from access to:

- – *Technical resources*– ARA provides access to experienced scientists and experts not typically found within a single organization.
- – *Financial Resources*– For organizations with limited funding, ARA offers help covering the costs of a project, and will assist in identifying potential co-sponsors.
- – *Information*– ARA participants keep each other informed of their activity, creating opportunities for collaboration.

Exposure

The ARA encouraged the free-flow of information across organizations. Projects that utilized the ARA process were broadcasted within the risk assessment community via:

- – *RiskIE*- The Risk Information Exchange was a free internet database that tracks in-progress risk and toxicity assessments
- – *ITER*- The International Toxicity Estimates of Risk database lists chronic human health risk values
- – *ARA Newsletter/Website*– ARA maintained an up-to-date website with descriptions of ongoing projects. Newsletter updates were sent regularly to the risk assessment community

Alliance for Risk Assessment Steering Committee

While the management and operation of the *ARA* was the responsibility of the *ARA* Collaborators, the Steering Committee provided guidance and recommendations for *ARA* activities. The *ARA* Steering Committee's role was to provide input regarding whether requested work was likely to benefit public health, whether any clear conflicts of interest or ethical issues need to be considered, and to provide guidance on prioritization of work requests. The impact of the Steering Committee was two-fold. First, input on the issues noted assisted the *ARA* Leadership Team in staging work requests in an optimum manner. Second, the Steering Committee membership provided an opportunity for involvement of multiple stakeholders, increasing the credibility of technical products and concurrence of diverse parties. This collaborative approach driven by non-profit and academic centers was a unique feature of the *ARA* process. The Steering Committee consisted of individuals with scientific credentials in risk assessment and related fields and that had current affiliations with diverse stakeholder groups. Steering Committee members served three-year terms.

Final Members

- **Anita Meyer,** United States Army Corps of Engineers
- **Annette Dietz**, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality
- **Michael Habeck**, Indiana Department of Environmental Management
- **Edward Ohanian**, United States Federal Employee
- **Michael Dourson**, Toxicology Excellence for Risk Assessment (*TERA*)
- **Michael Honeycutt**, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
- **Moiz Mumtaz**, Agency for Toxic Substance & Disease Registry
- **Ralph Perona**, Neptune & Company, Inc.

Emeritus

- **Barbara Harper**, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation
- **William Hayes**, State of Indiana
- **Bette Meek**, University of Ottawa/Health Canada
- **Ruthann Rudel**, Silent Spring Institute
- **Phil Wexler**, National Library of Medicine (NLM)

* Affiliations are for identification purposes only. Steering Committee members serve as individuals representing their own personal opinions.