

observatoryNANO Press Release

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The FP7 project observatoryNANO got underway on Monday 7th April 2008 when it held its kick-off meeting in London. This 4 M€ Support Action is funded for four years¹ from April 1st and includes 16 partners from 10 European States. Its mission is *"to create a European Observatory on Nanotechnologies to present reliable, complete and responsible science-based and economic expert analysis, across different technology sectors, establish dialogue with decision makers and others regarding the benefits and opportunities, balanced against barriers and risks, and allow them to take action to ensure that scientific and technological developments are realized as socio-economic benefits."*

Such activities are timely. European decision-makers in governments, industry, and finance lack objective information for their decisions when considering a rapidly changing field of technology such as Nanoscience and Nanotechnology (N&N). The observatoryNANO project will help address this issue. It brings together leading EU organizations who collectively have expertise in the scientific; technological; economic; societal/ethical; health, safety, and environmental analysis of nanotechnologies. It will collate and analyse data regarding scientific and technological (ST) trends (including peer-reviewed publications, patents, roadmaps, published company data) and economic realities and expectations (including market analysis and economic performance, public and private funding strategies). The ST and economic analysis will be further supported by assessment of ethical and societal issues, impacts on health, environment and safety, as well as regulation, standardization, and legislative issues. Analyses will be elaborated through constructive discourse with leading academics, industrialists, investors, and other key stakeholders. The consortium has established liaisons with relevant groups within international organizations such as the European Patent Office (EPO), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), and will establish liaisons with relevant European Technology Platforms (ETPs), ERA NETs, and other EU-funded projects, to maximise the impact of its own and others work. The purpose of this integrated approach is to develop validated methodologies that yield accurate indicators of the socio-economic impact of N&N RTD.

The ultimate goal of the observatoryNANO project is to establish a permanent European Observatory on Nanotechnologies, to provide ongoing, independent support to decision-makers. This will take account of the methodologies developed and validated during the project, the functions and activities of other similar initiatives, and input from a balanced Governing Board of high-level stakeholders that will be formed during the second year of the project.

The project is led by the Institute of Nanotechnology (IoN) (UK), and includes: VDI Technologiezentrum (DE), Commissariat à l'énergie atomique (CEA) (FR), Institute of Occupational Medicine (IOM) (UK), Malsch TechnoValuation (MTV) (NL), triple innova (DE), Spinverse (FI), Bax and Willems Consulting Venturing (B&W) (ES), Dutch National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (RIVM) (NL), Technical University of Darmstadt (TUD) (DE), Associazione Italiana per la Ricerca Industriale (AIRI) (IT), Nano and Micro Technology Consulting (NMTC) (DE), Eidgenössische Materialprüfungs und Forschungsanstalt (EMPA) (CH), University of Aarhus (DK), MERIT - Universiteit Maastricht (NL), Technology Centre AS CR (CR).

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¹ subject to completion of grant agreement