

The International EMF Project

Position and Activities

Dr E. van Deventer



**World Health
Organization**

OUTLINE

- **Introduction**
- **Assessing the health risk**
- **Managing the potential risk**
- **Communicating to stakeholders**
- **Conclusions**





World Health Organization

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HIGHLIGHTS




WHO

[Ebola fever](#)
Photos from Democratic Republic of the Congo



[Cholera](#)
Updated fact sheet



New guide on building age-friendly cities

1 October 2007 -- WHO today releases the first guide on building age-friendly cities. The guide, which is based on consultations with older people in 33 cities in 22 countries, has identified the key physical, social and services attributes of age-friendly urban settings.

[More about the guide on age-friendly cities](#)
[10 facts on ageing and the life course](#)

WHO Regional Committee for the Americas meets

1 October 2007 -- The 59th session of the WHO Regional Committee for the Americas began today in Washington, DC, USA.

[Director-General's address to the meeting](#)

Cancer



AVIAN INFLUENZA

[Full coverage](#)

DISEASE OUTBREAKS

Cholera

Iraq - update 3

[Full text](#)

Ebola haemorrhagic fever

Democratic Republic of the Congo - update 4

[Full text](#)

[Disease outbreak news](#)

EMERGENCIES

[Health action in crises](#)

GENERAL WHO INFORMATION

[Media centre](#)

News, events, fact sheets, multimedia and contacts

[Director-General](#)

Biography, speeches and photos

[Governance](#)

WHO Constitution, and Executive Board and World Health Assembly documents

WHO's Definition of Health

"HEALTH is a state of COMPLETE physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the ABSENCE of disease or infirmity"

(WHO Constitution)



Non-ionizing radiation

Ionizing radiation

POWER LINES



RADAR



TRAINS

0 Hz 10^2 10^4 10^6 10^8 10^{10} 10^{12}

FREQUENCY (Hz OR CYCLES PER SECOND)



VISIBLE LIGHT



X-RAY



PERSONAL COMPUTER



CELL PHONE

The Present EMF Context

The background of the slide is a photograph of a busy city street. In the foreground, a large crowd of people is walking, some looking towards the camera and others looking away. The street is paved and has a crosswalk visible. In the background, there are tall, multi-story buildings with many windows, some of which are lit up. There are also some trees and streetlights visible. The overall scene is a typical urban environment.

- Increasing EMF human exposure due to electricity demand, medical technologies and wireless devices
- Increasing concern from the public

The Present Scientific Knowledge

- Large and increasingly sophisticated database
- Known mechanisms
- Health effects not established below international guidelines
- Scientific uncertainty ... precaution?

Mobiles 'boost cancer'

Radiation may make tumours grow faster

By **Tim Utton**
Science Reporter

NEW safety fears about mobile phones emerged yesterday over a possible link with cancer.

Radiation from the phones could promote the growth of tumours, according to scientists.

A new study suggests the radiation can kick cancer cells into 'high gear' and make tumours grow much more aggressively.

There are 40 million mobile users in the UK, but despite the millions spent on research in the last decade, the health implications of sustained

use are still unclear.

The biggest British study, led by Sir William Stewart two years ago, could find no evidence of a risk to health. But Sir William still recommended a precautionary approach, particularly in children.

The World Health Organisation has called for more research and has urged people to limit mobile use.

Now Italian scientists believe they could be closer to the truth.

Dr Fiorenzo Marinelli, of the National Research Council in Bologna, exposed leukaemia cells in the laboratory to 48 hours of continuous radio waves at a similar power and frequency to mobile phone emissions.

Initially, the radiation killed the cancer cells. But then the scientists noticed this lethal effect had gone into reverse as a 'survival mechanism' was triggered, which made them replicate at a ferocious speed.

Dr Marinelli said: 'We don't know what the effects would be on healthy human cells.

'But in leukaemia cells the response is always the same.'

The radiation may initially damage DNA, he said, interfering with chemical signals in a way that ultimately triggers the defensive reaction prompting cancer cells to replicate faster.

Cancer develops when control signals in a normal cell go wrong and an abnormal cell results. Instead of destroying itself the mutant cell keeps on dividing and forms a lump or tumour.

The results of the Italian study support the belief of some scientists who say radiation can damage DNA and destroy the cell repair system - making tumours more deadly.

Dr Peter de Pomerai of the University of Nottingham, who studied effects on the body earlier this year, said the research was 'intriguing'.

Radiation may indirectly damage DNA by affecting its repair system, he said. If the DNA repair mechanism does not work as well as it should, mutations in cells could accumulate - with disastrous consequences.

'Cells with unrepaired DNA damage are likely to be far more aggressively cancerous,' said Dr de Pomerai. Dr Marinelli presented his results at the International Workshop on the Biological Effects of Electromagnetic Fields, held in Greece.

The study is published in this week's *New Scientist*.

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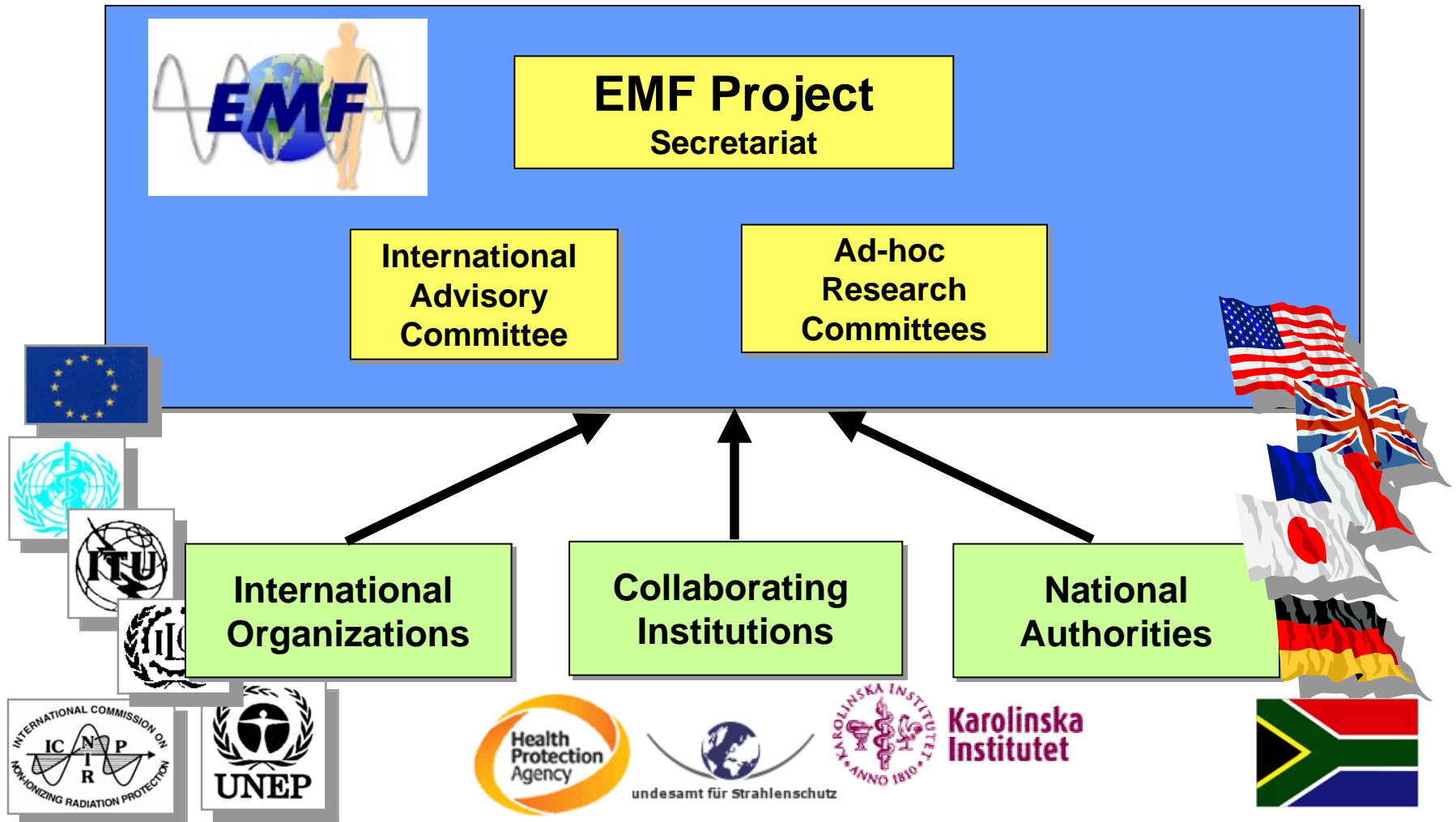
International **EMF** *Project*

- Established in 1996
- Housed in WHO HQ (SDE/PHE/RAD)
- A multinational, multidisciplinary effort to create and disseminate information appropriate to human health risk assessment for EMF

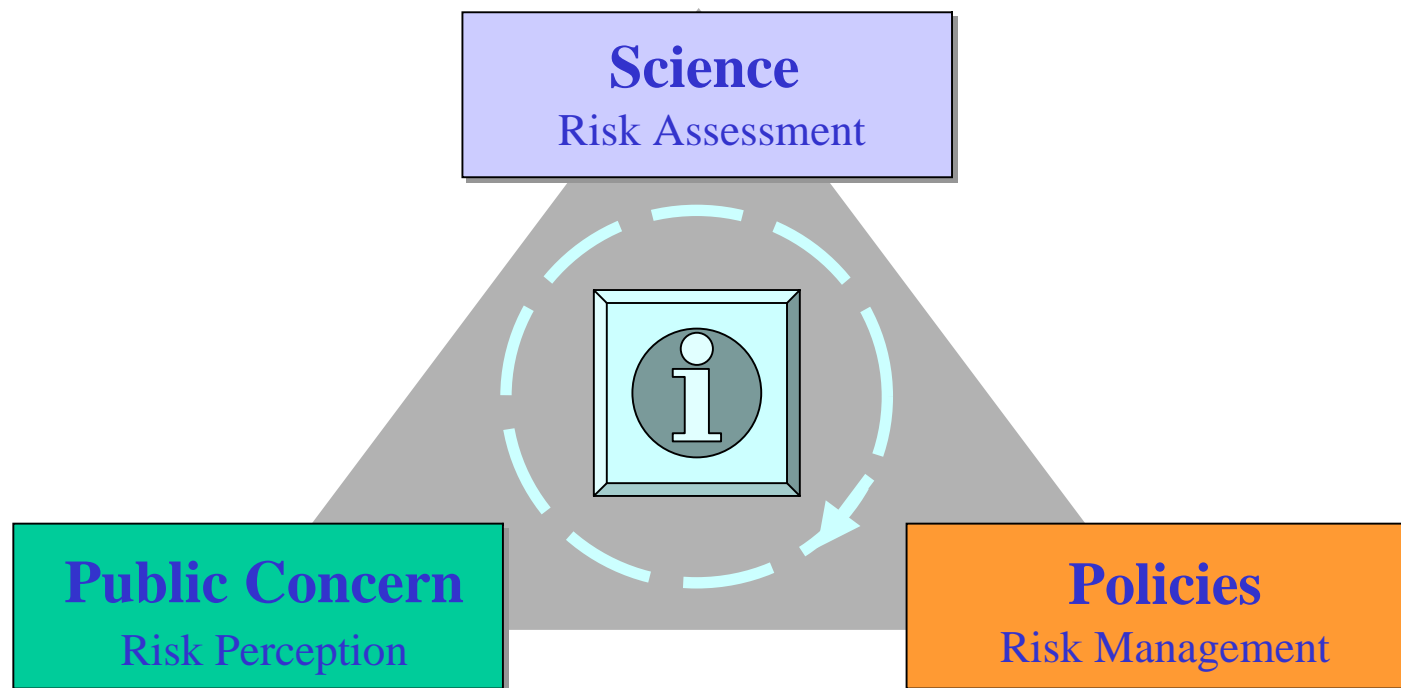
- To **assess health and environmental effects** of exposure to non-ionizing radiation (0-300 GHz)
- To **provide technical assistance** in strengthening national capacities for the sound management of EMF



Structure



EMF: An environmental risk?



US National Research Council,
Risk Assessment in the Federal Government: Managing the Process. 1983, Washington, DC: National Academy Press

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WHO EMF Project and Research

- WHO does NOT perform research
- WHO does NOT fund research
- WHO **coordinates** research
- WHO **assesses** research
 - Scientific workshops
 - Health risk assessments



WHO and EMF Research



<http://www.who.int/emf>

*What has
been done?*

*What is
being done?*

*What needs to
be done?*

- WHO Research reviews
- Health Risk Assessments

WHO Research
Database

WHO Research
Agenda

time →



EMF Research Agenda



Funding Agencies



Sixth Framework Programme
2002 - 2006

MTHR
Mobile Telecommunications and Health Research



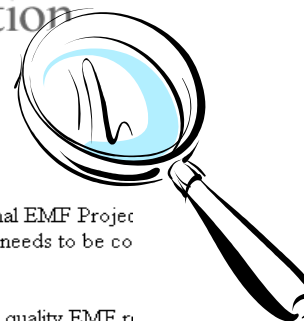
World Health Organization

Research agenda

Introduction

This Introduction is followed by the definitions used by WHO International EMF Project. The next section of the agenda is a list of needed EMF research that still needs to be carried out, including assessments of any health risks from exposure to EMF.

The list of required research is followed by a set of general guidelines for quality EMF research that includes resources for further investigation of the characteristics of good EMF research.





World Health Organization

2006 WHO Research Agenda for Radio Frequency Fields

Introduction

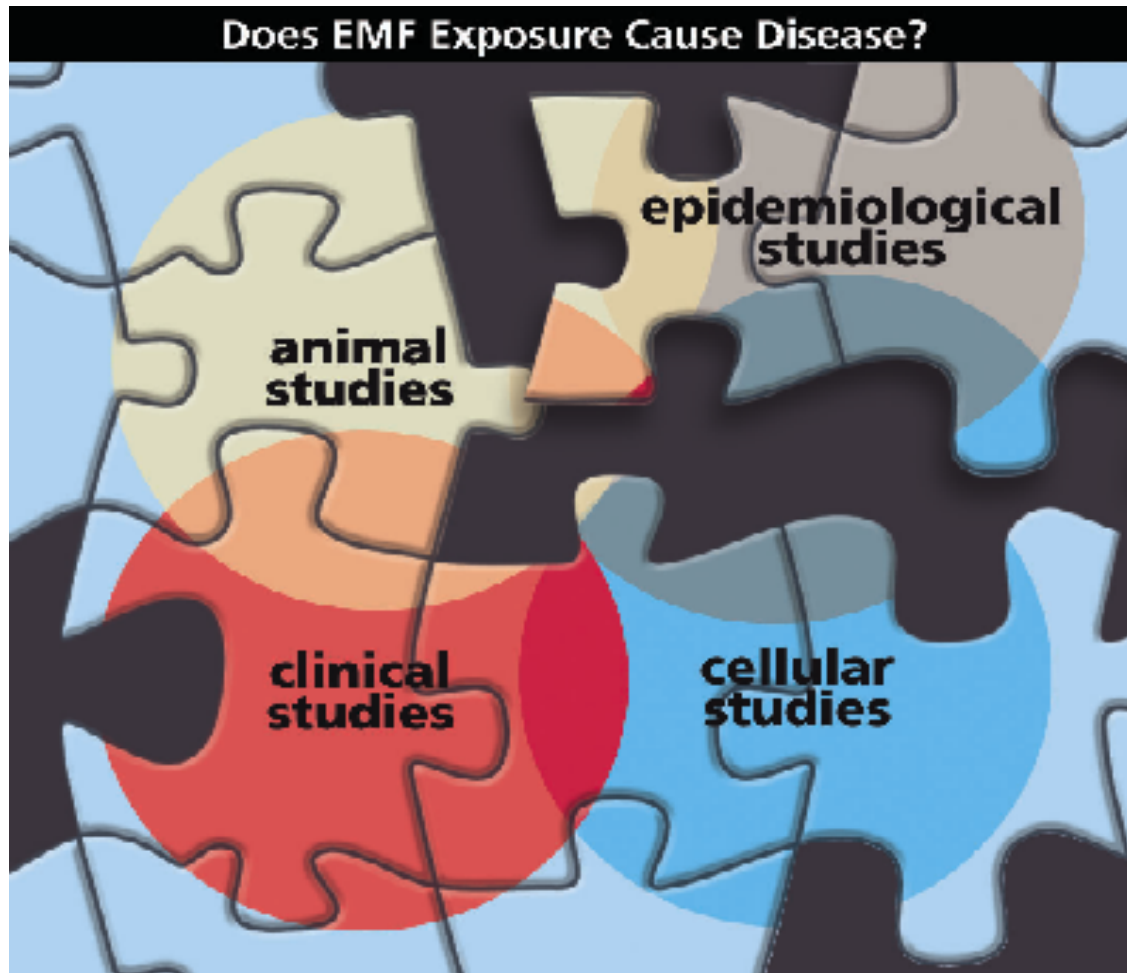
In 1997, the WHO International EMF Project developed a Research Agenda in order to facilitate and coordinate research worldwide on the possible adverse health effects of electromagnetic fields (EMF). In subsequent years, this agenda has undergone periodic review and refinement.

In June 2003, a major update to the radiofrequency (RF) section of the Research Agenda was undertaken with the input of an ad hoc committee of invited scientific experts. Since then, several of the research needs have been addressed and a revision was therefore deemed necessary. Also, three specialized workshops¹ have been held since 2003, where research needs in the RF range were determined. These have been consolidated in October 2005, by an ad hoc committee of scientific experts, into the present RF Research Agenda, which supersedes all previous RF Research Agendas.

The specialized workshops pointed out the need for focused research on children especially regarding brain cancer and cognitive function. The workshop on EMF hypersensitivity (EHS) indicated that there should be further research to characterize EHS but did not recommend further studies on the relationship between EMF and EHS since, from the studies completed so far, there was no substantiated evidence for a causal relationship. Research on potential health effects from base station RF fields was deemed of low priority since studies of cancer risk related to such exposure are unlikely to be feasible and informative because of the difficulty of reconstructing adequately long-term historical exposures.

RESEARCH

Balance of studies needed

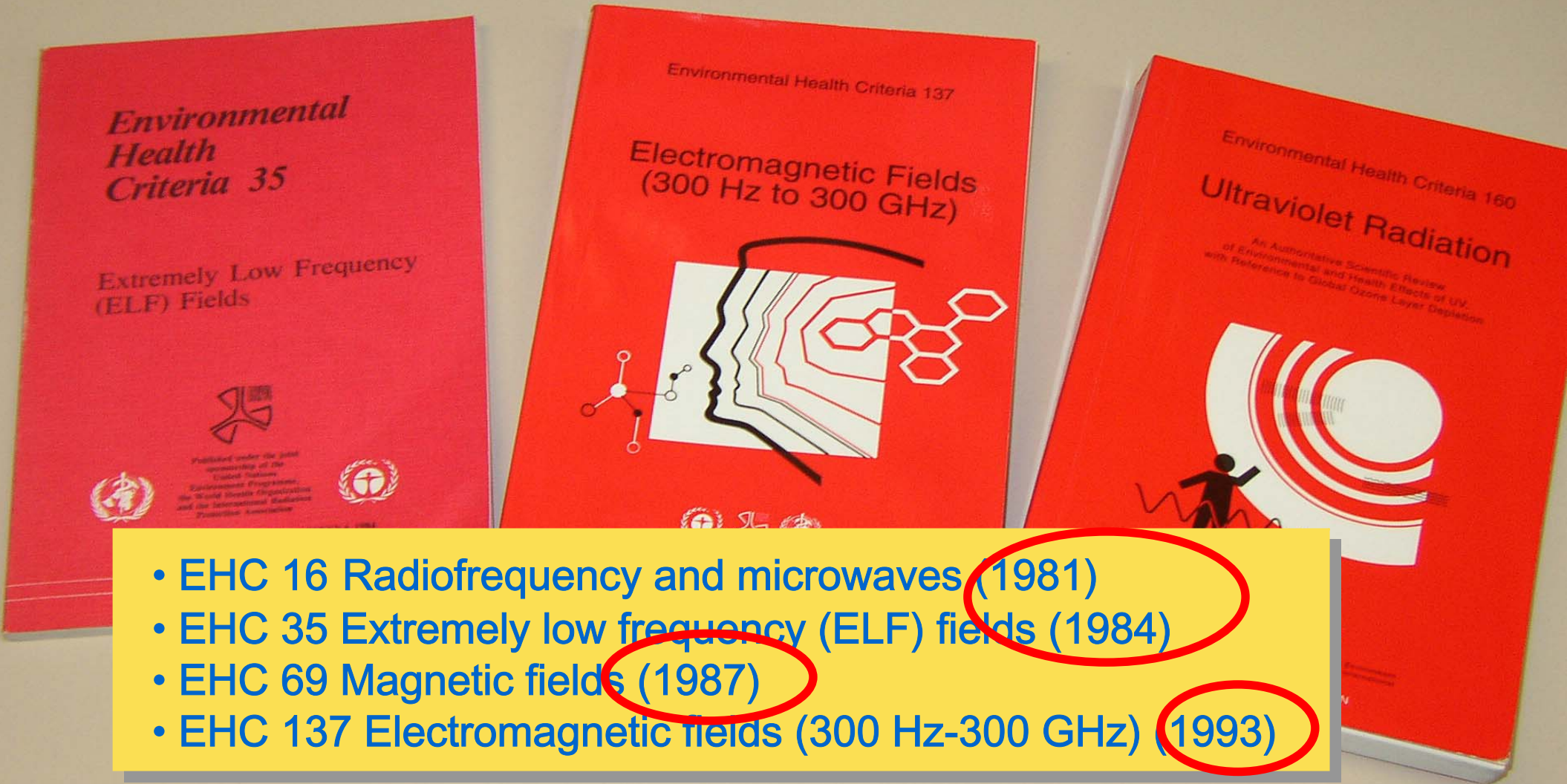


<http://www.niehs.nih.gov/emfrapid/booklet/emf2002.pdf>



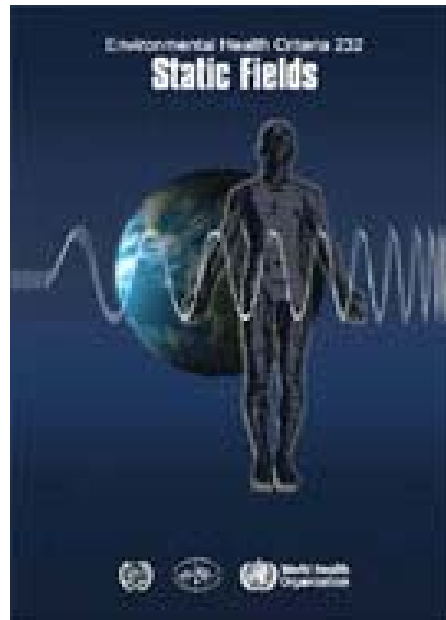
Environmental Health Criteria

Electromagnetic Fields

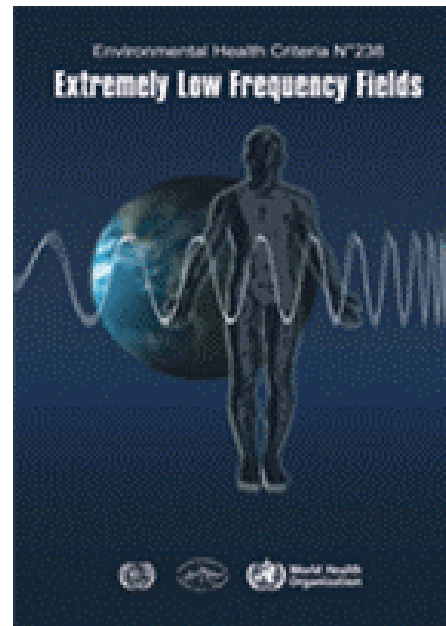


Environmental Health Criteria

Electromagnetic Fields



2006



2007



2010

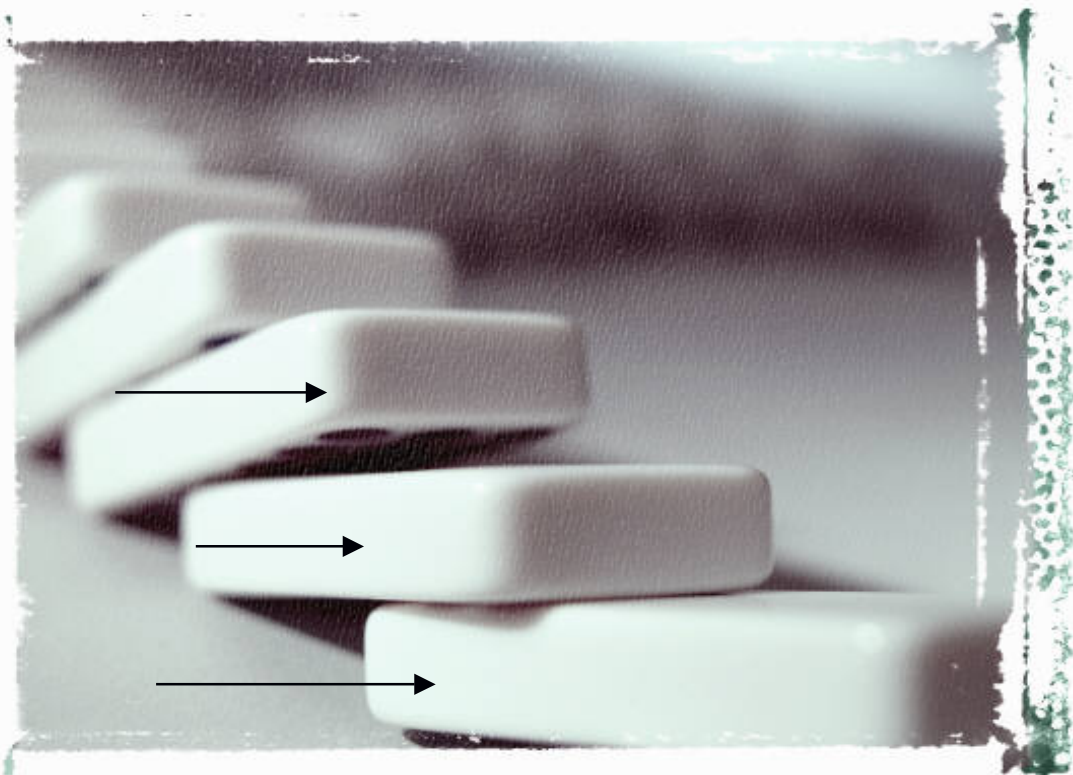


Timing

WHO assessment of all health risks to humans from RF

IARC evaluation of **carcinogenic** risks to humans from RF

INTERPHONE multinational epidemiologic study



Key issues

Static fields

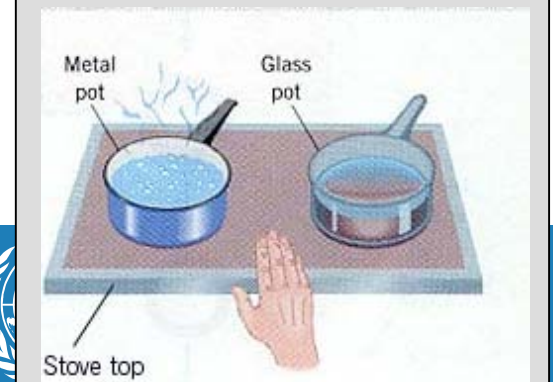
- For static magnetic fields, acute effects only likely when movement in the field (motion of a person or internal body movement)
 - above 2 T, vertigo and nausea, and sometimes a metallic taste in the mouth and perceptions of light flashes.
- Static magnetic fields exert forces on moving charges in the blood, such as ions, generating electrical fields and currents around the heart and major blood vessels that can slightly impede the flow of blood
- No well-conducted epidemiological or long-term animal studies



Key Issues

Extremely Low Frequency Fields

- In 2002, IARC classified ELF magnetic fields as "possibly carcinogenic to humans" based on epidemiological studies of childhood leukaemia.
 - Further studies published after 2002 have not altered this classification.
- A number of other adverse health effects have been investigated for possible association with ELF magnetic field exposure.
 - scientific evidence supporting an association is much weaker than for childhood leukaemia
 - in some instances (e.g. cardiovascular disease or breast cancer) evidence sufficient to give confidence that these fields do not cause them



Key Issues

Radiofrequency Fields

- "From all evidence accumulated so far, no adverse short- or long-term health effects have been shown to occur from the RF signals produced by base stations. Since wireless networks produce generally lower RF signals than base stations, no adverse health effects are expected from exposure to them"

Fact sheet no. 304 (May 2006)



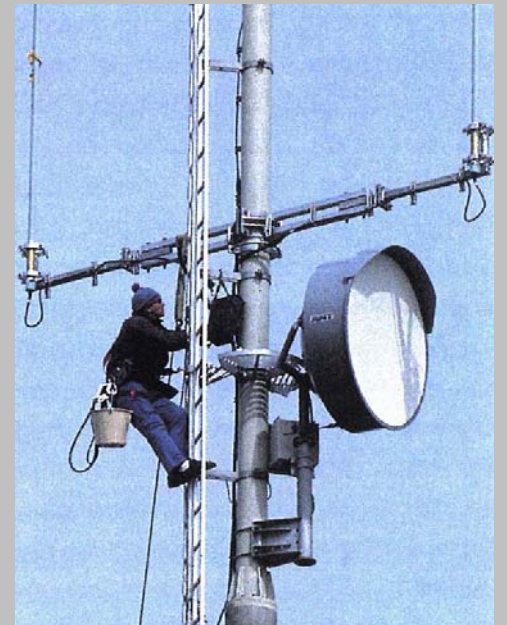


Elderly ?

Children ?



Sick ?



Workers ?

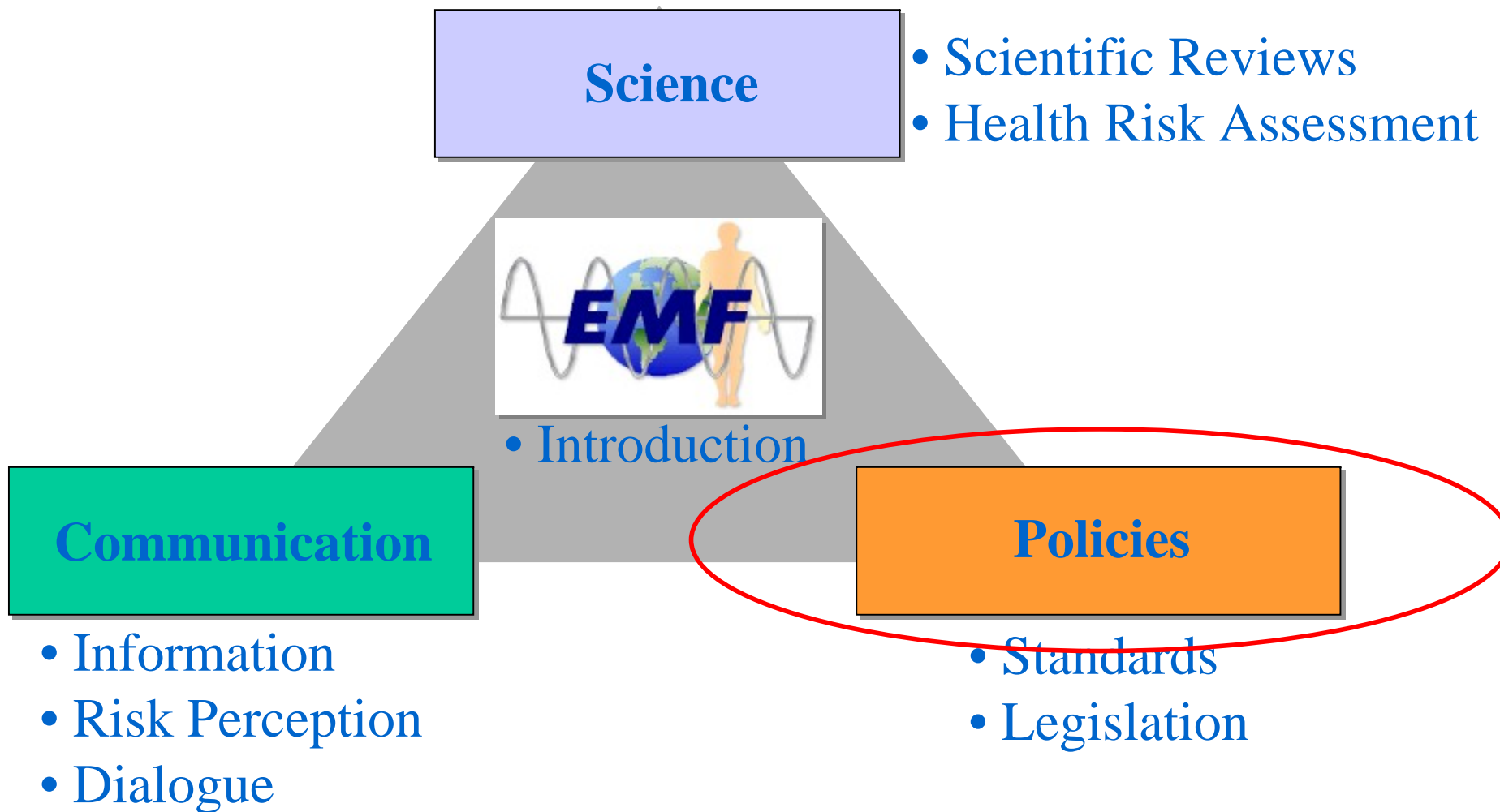
Research Programmes

- Trans-national
 - Joint yearly International Research Program meeting (Brussels, Nov 2007)
 - Europe (EC, FP6, FP7, EMF-NET, ...)
- National programs
 - Variations due to public interest/concern and national expertise
 - Funding sources (government, industry)
 - Funding envelope variable

 - UK, France, Switzerland, Brazil, Germany, Denmark, Australia, Sweden, Finland, South Africa, Netherlands, Japan, Korea, China, ...
- Industry-funded research programs
- Individual research programs

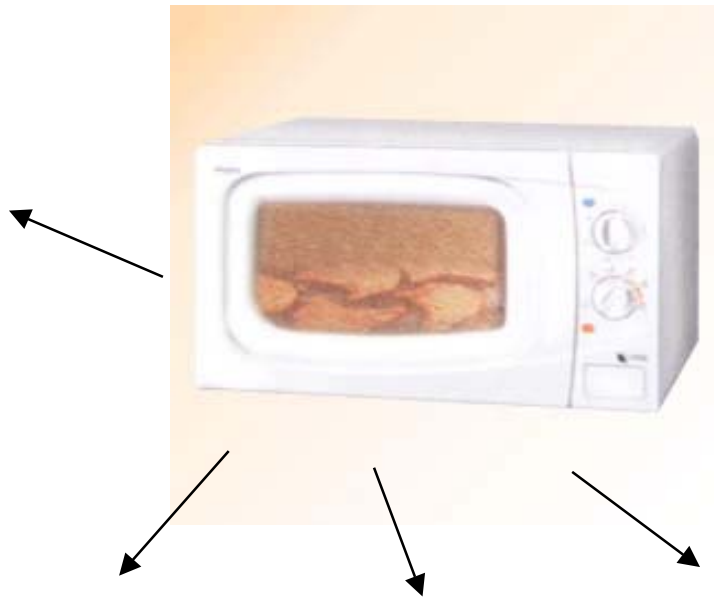


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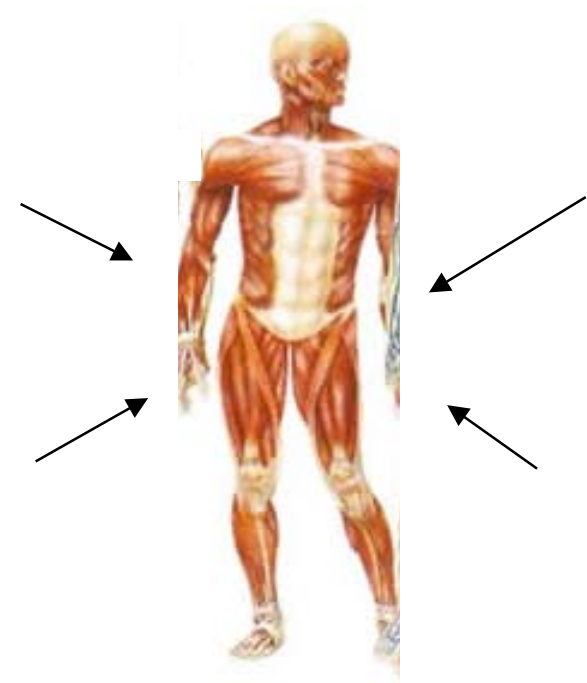


Norms, Standards and Guidelines

- **Emission standards** have specifications that limit the EMF emissions from devices



- **Exposure standards** have specifications that limit EMF exposure to people



Relevant Authorities

Non-governmental and international organizations

- Emission standards



- Exposure standards



Relevant Authorities

National bodies

Ministry of Health

Ministry of Labour

Ministry of the Environment

Ministry of Transport

Ministry of Energy

Ministry of Telecommunications

....



Relevant Authorities

Provincial and local level

- Dispense building and planning permits
- Direct contact with public and operators
- May introduce further conservative measures based on politics rather than science

CHARTRE

La ville s'engage auprès des opérateurs à :

- Être l'interlocuteur et le médiateur entre les opérateurs et les administrés,
- Contribuer à l'information des administrés et favoriser la résolution des conflits,
- Fournir tous les éléments (adresses et /ou plan de cadastre) permettant de recenser les établissements sensibles de la commune au regard de la circulaire du 16 octobre 2001,
- Informer les opérateurs de réactions négatives des riverains concernant certains sites en projet ou en fonctionnement,
- Garder confidentielles les informations concernant les personnes et visées par la loi n° 78-17 relative à l'informatique, aux fichiers et aux libertés, transmises par chaque opérateur, sauf en cas d'autorisation spécifique,
- Donner par écrit son avis et ses remarques sur chaque projet présenté dans un délai maximum d'un mois.

Les opérateurs s'engagent envers la collectivité à :

- A la demande de la mairie, transmettre un dossier sur chaque site existant, après avoir obtenu les autorisations nécessaires auprès des autorités compétentes,
- Informer sur les schémas prévisionnels d'implantation sur la commune de sites futurs,
- Accepter les discussions sur une installation existante ou future dans un souci de respect de l'environnement et de la qualité esthétique des lieux,
- Fournir un dossier sur chaque projet d'implantation ou de modification majeure comprenant les principales

Rapport
"Téléphonie mobile et santé"
www.senat.fr



**World Health
Organization**

WHO and STANDARDS

- WHO does **NOT** develop EMF standards
 - ICNIRP, an NGO in formal relations with WHO, develops international guidelines for human protection from EMF exposure
- The EMF Project facilitates international consensus on standards
- Most countries with EMF radiation protection programmes are involved in the EMF Project

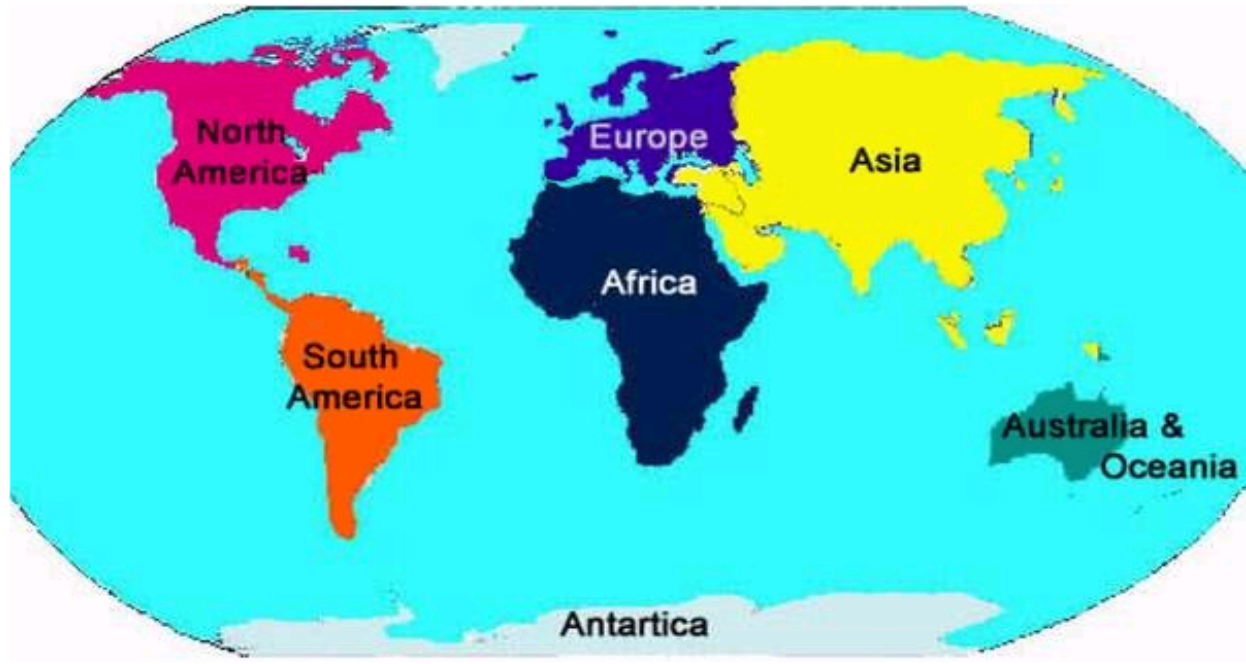





International **EMF** Project



EMF WORLD WIDE STANDARDS

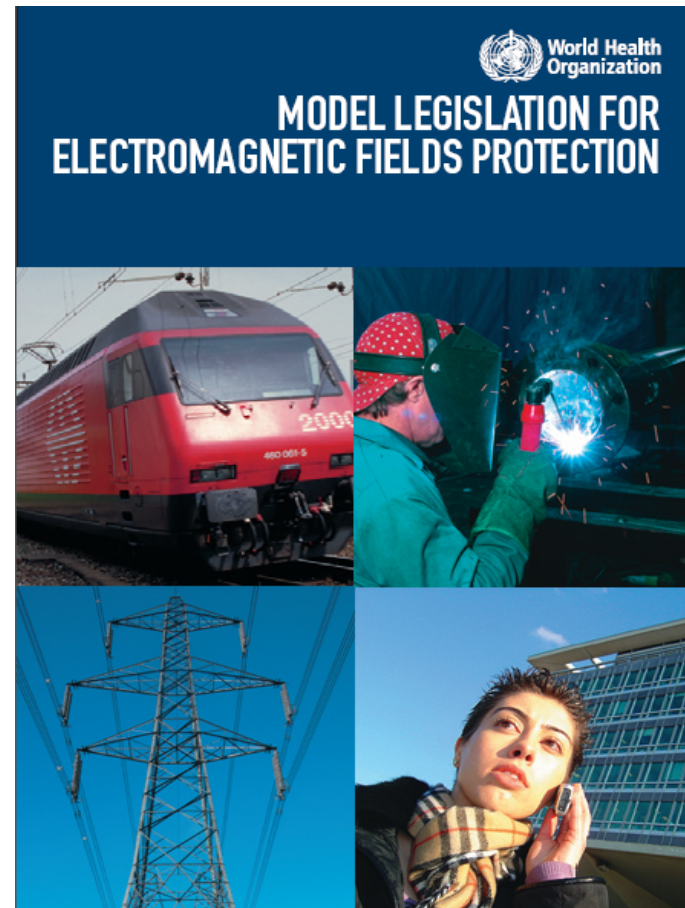


Compiled by Dr. Dina Suman

	Electromagnetic Fields (EMF) Protection
Country #1	South Africa
EMF protection #2	Yes
Instrument type #3	Law
Instrument coverage #4	National
Title of Instrument #5	
a.	Hazardous Substances Act, 1973 (Act 15 of 1973)
b.	Schedule of Listed Electronic Products (Regulation R1302)
Issued by whom? #6	National Department of Health
Issued when? #7	
7a	1973
7b	1991
Is there a revision pending? #8	Yes
Are the limits based on ICNIRP? #9	No exposure limits are specified in Regulation R1302; Department of Health recommends voluntary compliance with ICNIRP.
Compliance #10	Voluntary
If mandatory - how is compliance verified? #11	
Group protected #12	Public and occupational
Frequency range covered #13	up to 300 GHz
Quantities #14	According to ICNIRP98
Basic restriction quantities #15	According to ICNIRP98
SAR details #16	According to ICNIRP98
a. averaging time	According to ICNIRP98
b. averaging mass	According to ICNIRP98
c. measurement method reference	According to ICNIRP98

Model Legislation

- To assist countries without appropriate legislation to protect their population from EMF
- Uses international standards for exposure and emission limits
 - Model Act and
 - Model Regulation
 - Explanatory Memorandum



http://www.who.int/peh-emf/standards/emf_model/en/index.html

Model Legislation

- Purpose
 - to establish limits on human exposure to EMF that will provide protection against known adverse health effects from any installation or device emitting such fields
- Scope
 - Minimum requirements for the protection of the public and workers
 - EMF frequency range 0 to 300 GHz
- EMF limits:
 - Adoption of ICNIRP guidelines as exposure limits
 - Minister to introduce the necessary regulations and to ensure compliance
 - Uniform application of the Act across the national jurisdiction

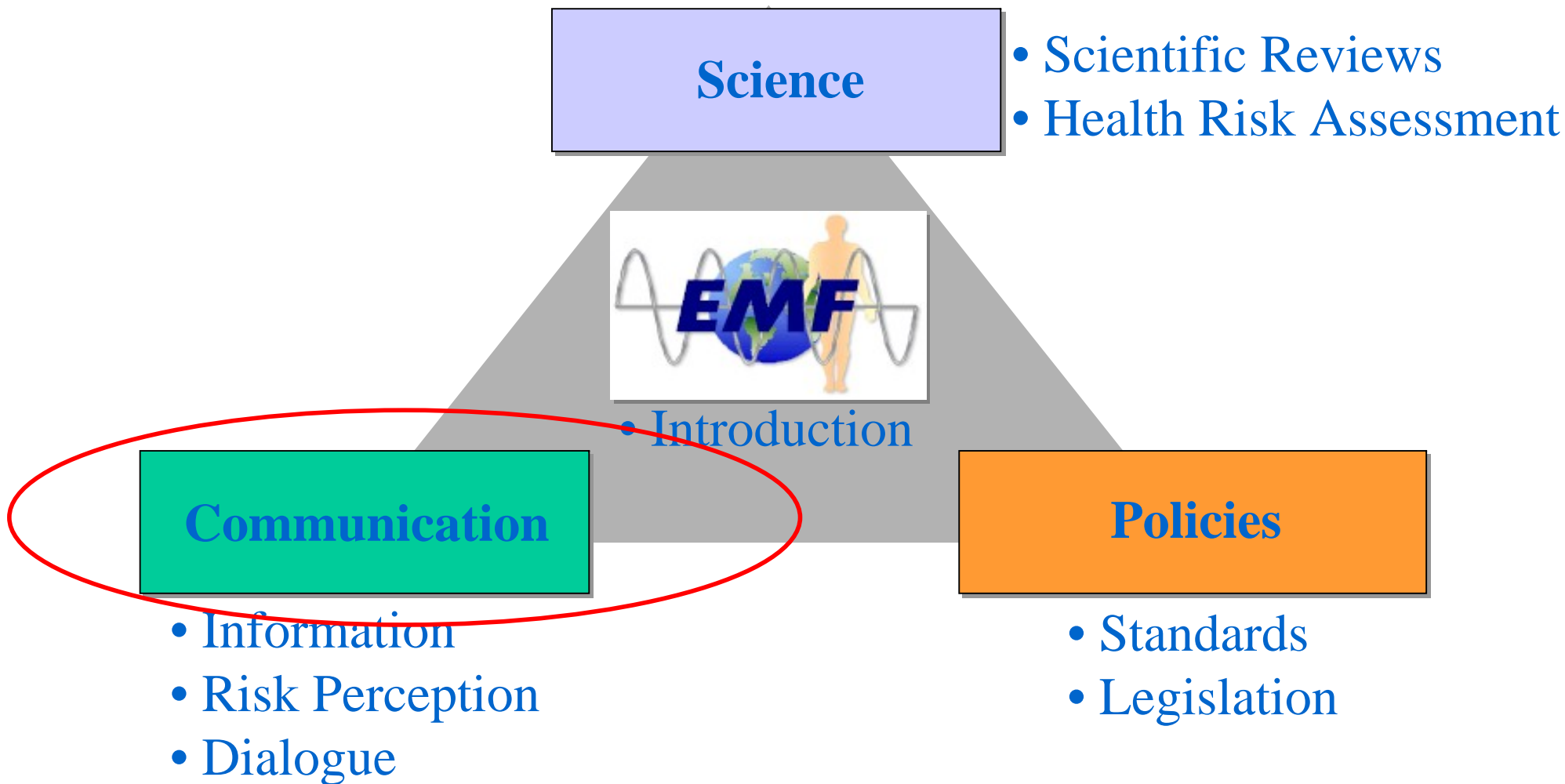


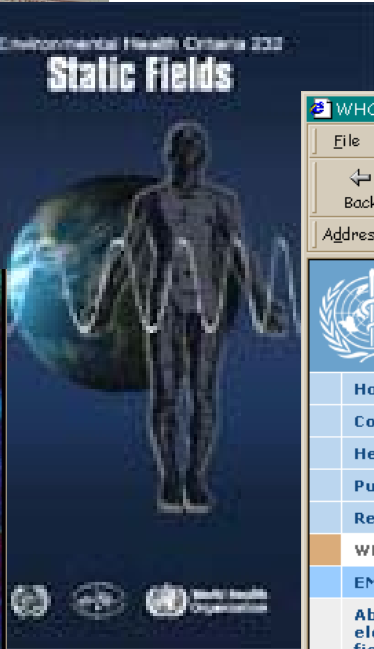
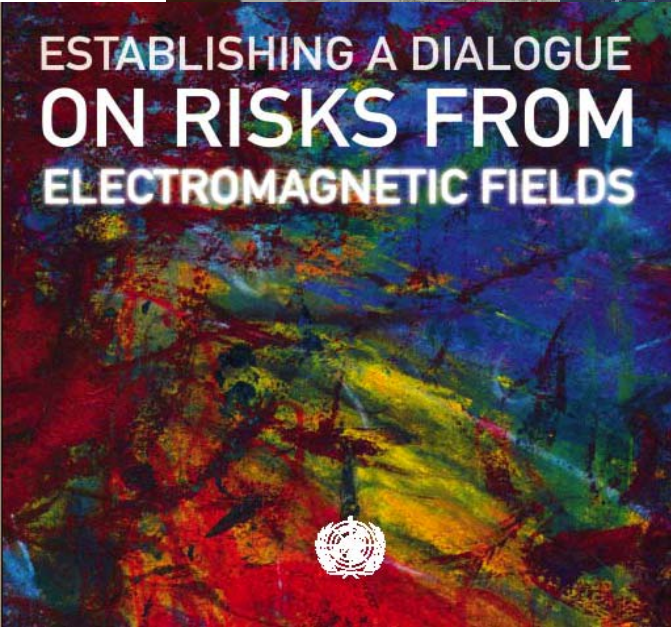
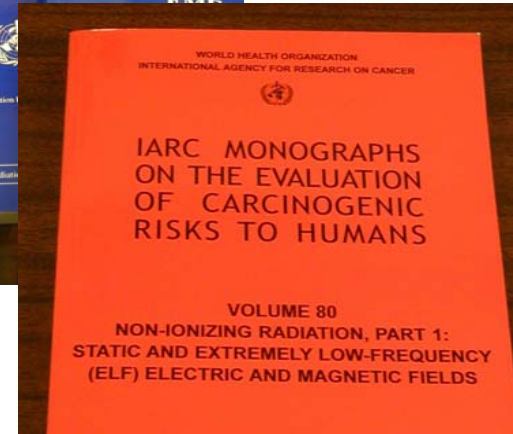
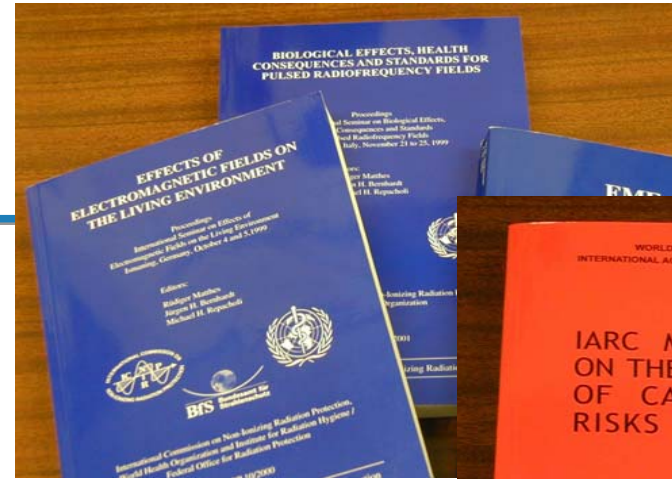
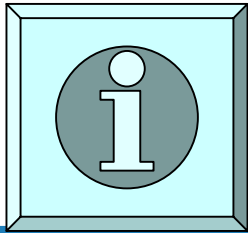
Model Legislation (cont'd)

- Compliance
 - Range of options that the Minister may consider appropriate (surveillance, mitigation, measurement, penalties,..)
 - Establish or nominate an agency to administer compliance
- Enforcement
 - Owner of installation to ensure compliance in public places and to provide training to workers (else general public status)
- Record keeping
 - Maintenance of records of exposure measurements
 - Information provision as appropriate



OUTLINE





WHO: Electromagnetic fields (EMF) - Microsoft Internet Explorer provided by WHO

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

Back Forward Stop Refresh Home Search Favorites History Mail Print Edit

Address <http://www.who.int/emf/> Links >>

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Electromagnetic fields (EMF)

Electromagnetic fields of all frequencies represent one of the most common and fastest growing environmental influences, about which anxiety and speculation are spreading. All populations are now exposed to varying degrees of EMF, and the levels will continue to increase as technology advances.

As part of its Charter to protect public health and in response to public

WHAT'S NEW!

Sensitivity of children to EMF exposure, June '04
Istanbul, Turkey
Abstracts deadline 30 April 2004, more information

New RF research agenda - July 2003
[More information](#)

Recent Powerpoint Presentations
[Click here](#)

Framework for developing EMF Standards
We invite public comment on the draft

Internet

Start

16:45

posium - Johannesbu

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- Introduction
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Challenges

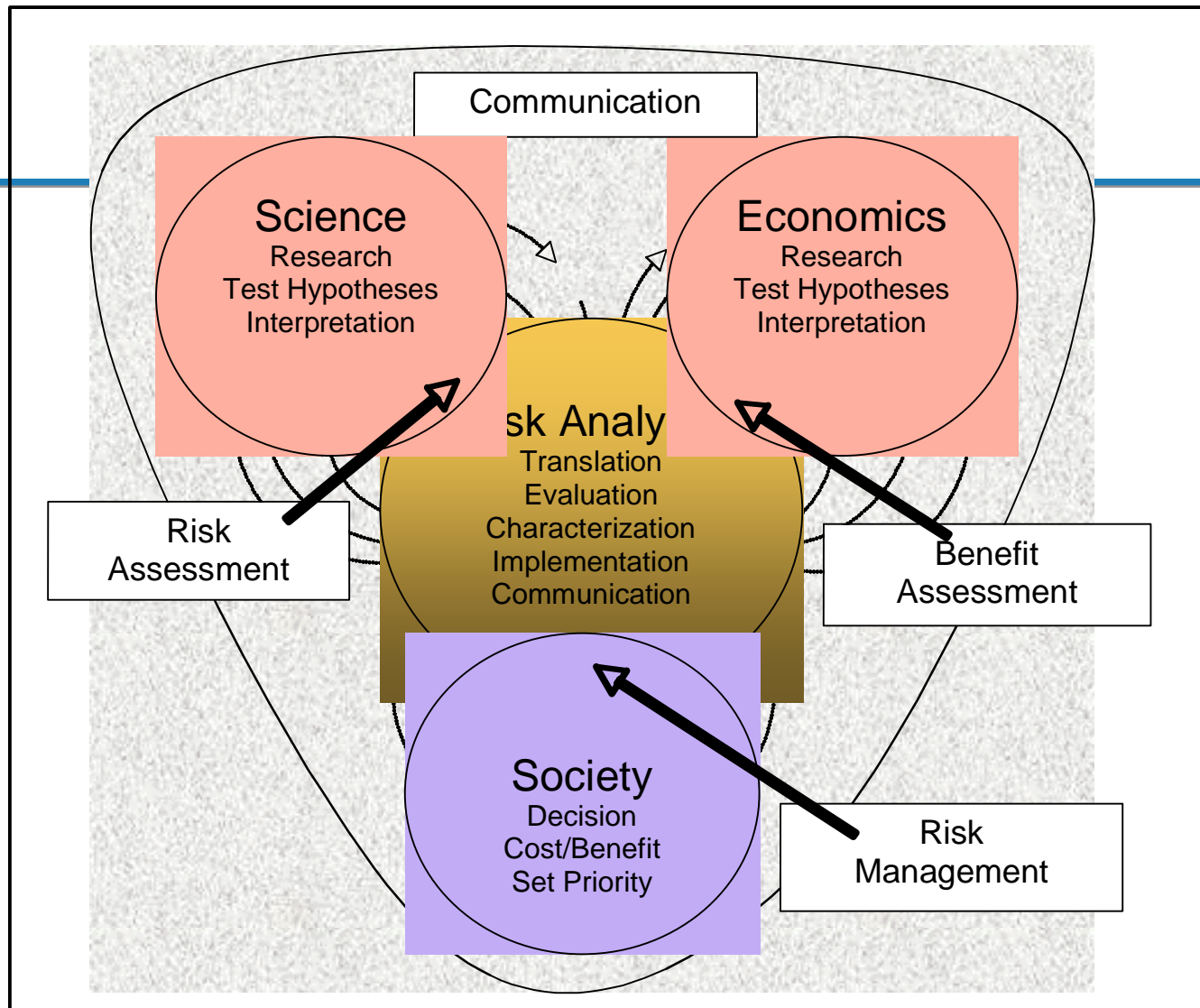
- Technologies on the market before health evaluation
- Lack of harmonization in standards
- Public concern
 - Need for scientists and decision-makers to communicate with all stakeholders



Practical Recommendations

- Adopt international health-based standards
- Ensure compliance with standards
- Establish a public information program
- Dialogue with stakeholders before installing siting new facilities





*Evidence-based decision making for environmental health:
Improving risk analysis*



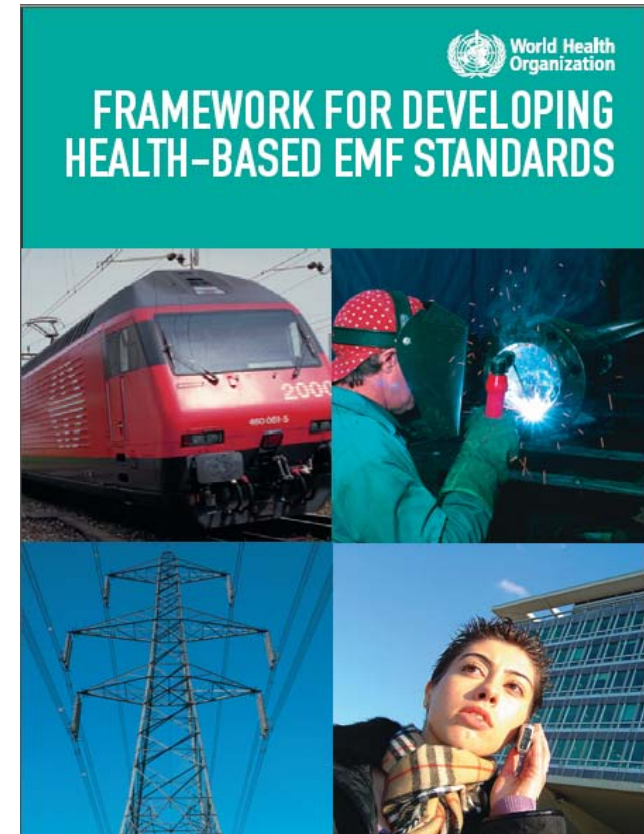
The International EMF Project
Radiation and Environmental Health
Public Health and Environment
World Health Organization
21 Avenue Appia
CH-1211 Geneva 27
Switzerland

email: emfproject@who.int
website: www.who.int/emf

Framework for Developing EMF Standards

Motivation

- Many countries currently considering new EMF standards
- Concerns about public safety and anxiety about increasing EMF exposures from new technologies
- Large differences between national standards



<http://www.who.int/peh-emf/standards/framework/en/index.html>