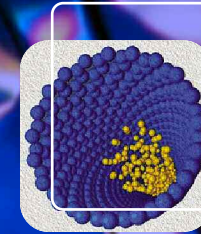




Meridian Institute
Connecting People to Solve Problems

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meridian institute

Meridian Institute is a non-profit organization that helps people solve problems and make informed decisions about some of society's most contentious and complex issues.

Meridian's mission is accomplished through facilitation, mediation, and strategy development services that include: convening and facilitating multi-party problem-solving and conflict resolution processes; assisting diverse parties in creating alliances and partnerships; and, designing processes that help organizations develop strategic priorities and sustainable policies.

Meridian works at the local, national and international levels.

Our work focuses on a wide range of issues related to the environment, natural resources, agriculture, science and technology, health, and security.

For more information, please visit <http://www.merid.org>.

“Meridian does an outstanding job helping people make informed decisions about complex problems by designing and facilitating collaborative decision-making processes and through their news services including Nanotechnology and Development News.”

Sir Gordon Conway, Chief Science Advisor,
UK Department for International Development

nanotechnology

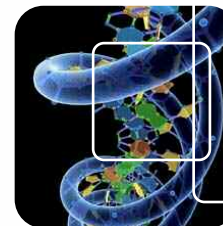
Skyrocketing private and public investments, a rush to patent new inventions, growing numbers of publications, and increasing public dialogue around the globe are indicators that nanotechnology is fast becoming a huge phenomenon. Nanotechnology, which encompasses a broad range of tools, techniques, and applications, is widely perceived as one of the most significant technologies of the 21st century. Many see nanotechnology as the next “transformative technology,” like the Internet or electricity.

Products developed with nanotechnology or that incorporate nanoscale materials are already on the market. Regulatory agencies, industry, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders are becoming aware of the potentially far-reaching implications of nanotechnology as the science evolves and applications proliferate.

Nanotechnology involves the study and manipulation of matter on a very small scale: generally in the range of 1-100 nanometers (1 meter = 1 billion nanometers). By way of comparison, viruses range in size from 20 to 300 nanometers. Nanotechnology is not one technology, but many, all writ small.

Why is nanotechnology generating so much discussion?

Many observers argue that it is because today's knowledge and scientific tools enable scientists to begin to do what has been previously impossible: controlling and observing the manipulation of matter at the atomic scale and eventually, some people believe, building new products and compounds atom by atom.



Nanotechnology enables technological break-throughs in multiple sectors (e.g., health, agriculture, energy, IT, manufacturing), which extends its effects throughout society. It is also likely to “converge” with other technologies such as biotechnology and information technology, making the transformative aspects of nanotechnology even more significant.

While many people see tremendous opportunities in nanotechnology, there are a growing number of individuals and institutions that are raising questions about the potential environmental, human health, socio-economic, and ethical effects of nanotechnology.

solving problems

Selected Nanotechnology Projects

As people everywhere begin to grapple with the broad range of issues that result from the real and potential implications of this emerging technology for society, Meridian Institute has been engaged with numerous projects and initiatives that are focused on exploring both the potential opportunities and risks of nanotechnology. This includes, for example, national and international processes focused on research and product development that could meet pressing societal needs, and governance questions to ensure the technology is developed and used responsibly. Participants in these projects include representatives from government, industry, civil society organizations, academic institutions, international institutions, and donor organizations. Our international projects involve representatives from both developed and developing countries. In an effort to help people track the rapidly evolving issues, we manage a free, daily news service. More information about these and other projects is below. For a comprehensive overview of our experience, please visit <http://www.merid.org/nano>.

US EPA Ad Hoc Work Group on Nanoscale Materials

Meridian staff facilitated an Interim Ad Hoc Work Group on Nanoscale Materials, which was convened by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The Work Group discussed potential elements for a voluntary program regarding engineered nanoscale materials, began consideration of regulatory actions US EPA could undertake, and identified issues that needed further consideration. [more]

Dialogue Series on Nanotechnology and US Federal Regulations

In 2003 and 2004, Meridian Institute and the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars convened a series of dialogue sessions focused on the relationship between nanotechnology and federal regulation in the United States. [more]

Global Dialogue on Nanotechnology and the Poor

Meridian Institute, with support from The Rockefeller Foundation, International Development Research Centre, and UK Department for International Development, has convened the Global Dialogue on Nanotechnology and the Poor: Opportunities and Risks (GNDP). Goals of the GNDP include: raising awareness about the implications of nanotechnology for the poor; closing the gaps within and between sectors of society to catalyze actions that address specific opportunities and risks; and, identifying ways that science and technology can play an appropriate role in the development process. [more]

International Dialogue on Responsible Research and Development of Nanotechnology

Meridian Institute facilitated a dialogue, sponsored by the National Science Foundation, among leading nanotechnology science policy representatives from 25 countries and the European Union on June 17-18, 2004. The meeting brought together governmental representatives from countries with significant nanotechnology R&D programs to discuss how these programs could be carried out in a responsible manner. At the conclusion of the meeting, participants agreed to meet on an annual basis. Participants met in Brussels in 2005 and in Tokyo in 2006. [more]

International Risk Governance Council

Meridian Institute facilitated a meeting of the International Risk Governance Council's (IRGC) Nanotechnology Project. The overall aim of the workshop was to establish concrete, practical recommendations for national and international risk assessment and management frameworks for nanotechnology. [more]

Presentations & Conferences

In addition to the projects Meridian has convened and facilitated, Meridian staff have participated in and presented at numerous conferences and meetings including, but not limited to the following.

UNIDO North-South Dialogue on Nanotechnology (Italy)

Environmental Law Institute and Vanderbilt University
Conference – Nanotechnology Governance:
Environmental Management from a Global Perspective (USA)

The Rockefeller Foundation Senior Leadership Meetings (USA)

Consultative Group on International Agricultural
Research, Annual General Meeting (Mexico)

SwissRe, Conference on Nanotechnology (Switzerland)

Foresight Institute, Annual Conference (USA)

Canadian Federal Nanotechnology Network (Canada)

Visit <http://www.merid.org/nano> for a more comprehensive list of projects, presentations, and conferences,

informing decisions

Information & Resources

Nanotechnology and Development News is a free, daily news service covering the most important global developments at the nexus of nanotechnology, poverty alleviation, and the role of science and technology in development. Nanotechnology and Development News draws information from a diverse range of sources on scientific innovations and technological applications; policy issues; risk-related information; intellectual property rights and access to data; technology transfer and capacity building; global and regional networks; and economic development. [more]

To Subscribe to Nanotechnology and Development News, please visit <http://www.merid.org/NDN>

Paper on Nanotechnology and the Poor: Opportunities and Risks.

Meridian Institute developed this paper, subtitled "Closing the Gaps Within and Between Sectors of Society," to raise awareness about the potential opportunities and risks of nanotechnology for poor people. [more]

Paper on Nanotechnology, Water, and Development

Meridian Institute commissioned this paper to address the range of complex development issues related to nanotechnology applications for improving basic sanitation and access to clean water. [more]

More Information

To learn more about Meridian Institute, please visit <http://www.merid.org>.

For more on Meridian Institute's Nanotechnology activities, please visit <http://www.merid.org/nano>, or contact us by email at nano@merid.org

XML Updates about our nanotechnology work are available via RSS news feed.

