

ESTABLISHING A DIALOGUE ON RISKS FROM ELECTROMAGNETIC FIELDS



RADIATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH
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PHOTO CREDITS

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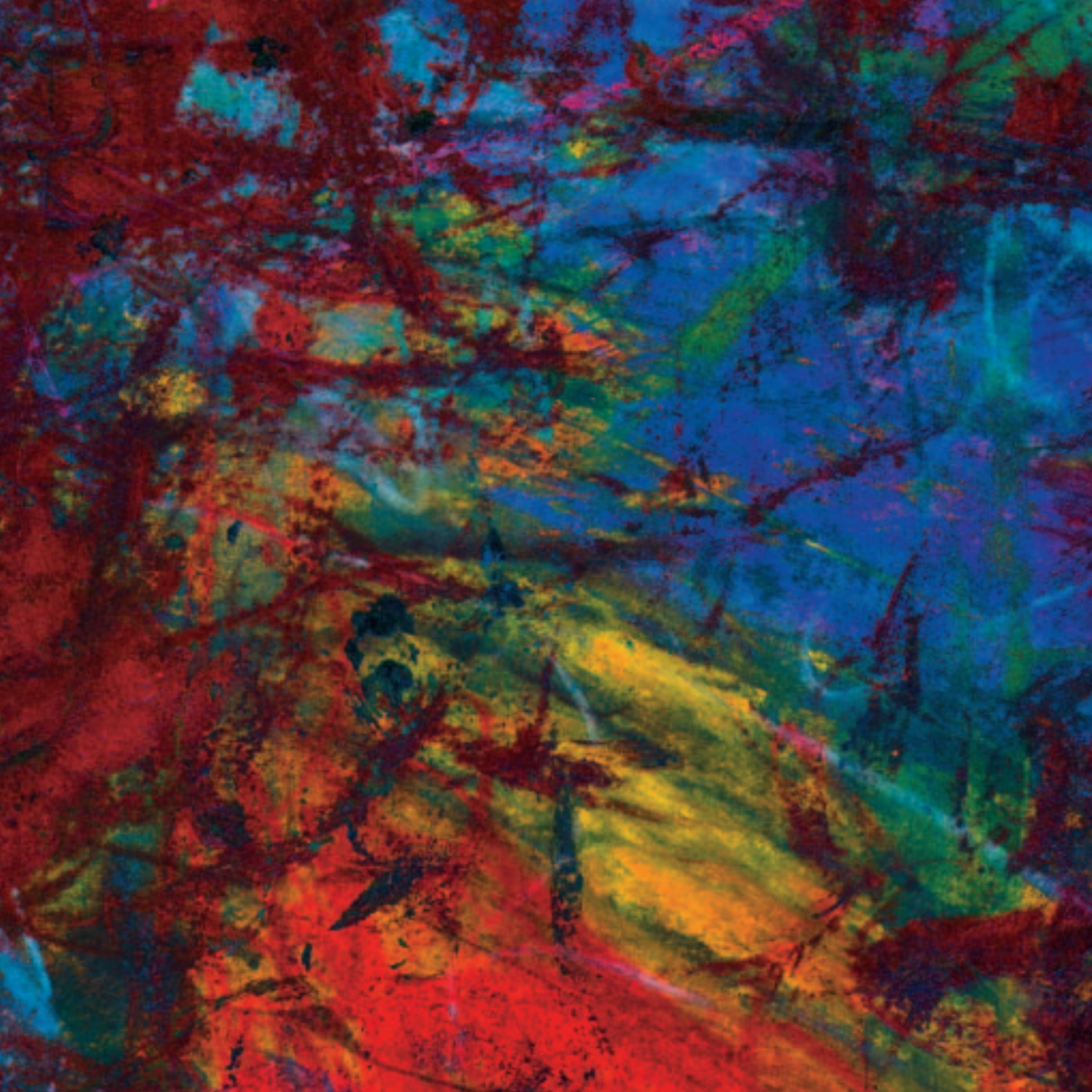



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FOREWORD

Public concern over the possible health effects from electromagnetic fields (EMF) has led to the preparation of this handbook. Potential risks of EMF exposure from facilities such as power lines or mobile phone base stations present a difficult set of challenges for decision-makers. The *challenges* include determining if there is a hazard from EMF exposure and what the potential health impact is, i.e. risk assessment; recognizing the reasons why the public may be concerned, i.e. risk perception; and implementing policies that protect public health and respond to public concerns, i.e. risk management. Responding to these challenges requires the involvement of individuals or organizations with the right set of *competencies*, combining relevant scientific

expertise, strong communication skills and good judgement in the management and regulatory areas. This will be true in any *context*, be it local, regional or even national or global.

WHY A DIALOGUE?

Many governmental and private organizations have learned a fundamental, albeit sometimes painful, lesson; that it is dangerous to assume that impacted communities do not want, or are incapable of meaningful input to decisions about siting new EMF facilities or approving new technologies prior to their use. It is

<p>therefore crucial to establish a dialogue between all individuals and groups impacted by such issues. The ingredients for effective dialogue include consultation with stakeholders, acknowledgement of scientific uncertainty, consideration of alternatives, and a fair and transparent decision-making process. Failure to do these things can result in loss of trust and flawed decision-making as well as project delays and increased costs.</p>	<p>misunderstandings and improving trust through better dialogue. Community dialogue, if implemented successfully, helps to establish a decision-making process that is open, consistent, fair and predictable. It can also help achieve the timely approval of new facilities while protecting the health and safety of the community.</p> <p>It is expected that many other public officials, private groups and non-governmental organizations will also find this information useful. This guide may assist the general public when interacting with government agencies that regulate environmental health, and with companies whose facilities may be sources of concern. References and suggestions for further reading are provided for those who seek more information.</p>
<p>WHO NEEDS THIS HANDBOOK?</p> <p>This handbook is intended to support decision-makers faced with a combination of public controversy, scientific uncertainty, and the need to operate existing facilities and/or the requirement to site new facilities appropriately. Its goal is to improve the decision-making process by reducing</p>	