

50Hz EMF and public health policy: The involvement of the Belgian BioElectroMagnetics Group

Maryse Ledent¹, Annemarie Maes², Maurits De Ridder³, Véronique Beauvois⁴,
Gabrielle Scantamburlo¹ & Luc Verschaeve²

¹Unité de Psychoneuroendocrinologie, Université de Liège, Liège, Belgium

² Unit of Toxicology, Scientific Institute of Public Health (WIV-ISP), Brussels, Belgium

³Public Health Department, Ghent University, Ghent, Belgium

⁴Applied and Computational Electromagnetics (ACE), Université de Liège, Liège, Belgium

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A triple challenge!

Develop high quality
research

Participate in the development of
the Belgian Public Health Policy

Meet concerns
of the general public

Belgian BioElectroMagnetics Group

50 Hz EMF & Health Research Group

- 5 teams
 - Biological effects related to neurodegenerative diseases
 - Effects on cell differentiation
 - Electromagnetic modeling
 - Electrosensitivity
 - Follow-up of epidemiology and risk assessment of exposure of workers
- Research controlled by a Scientific Advisory Committee
and adhesion to the Belgian Ethical Code of Scientific Research

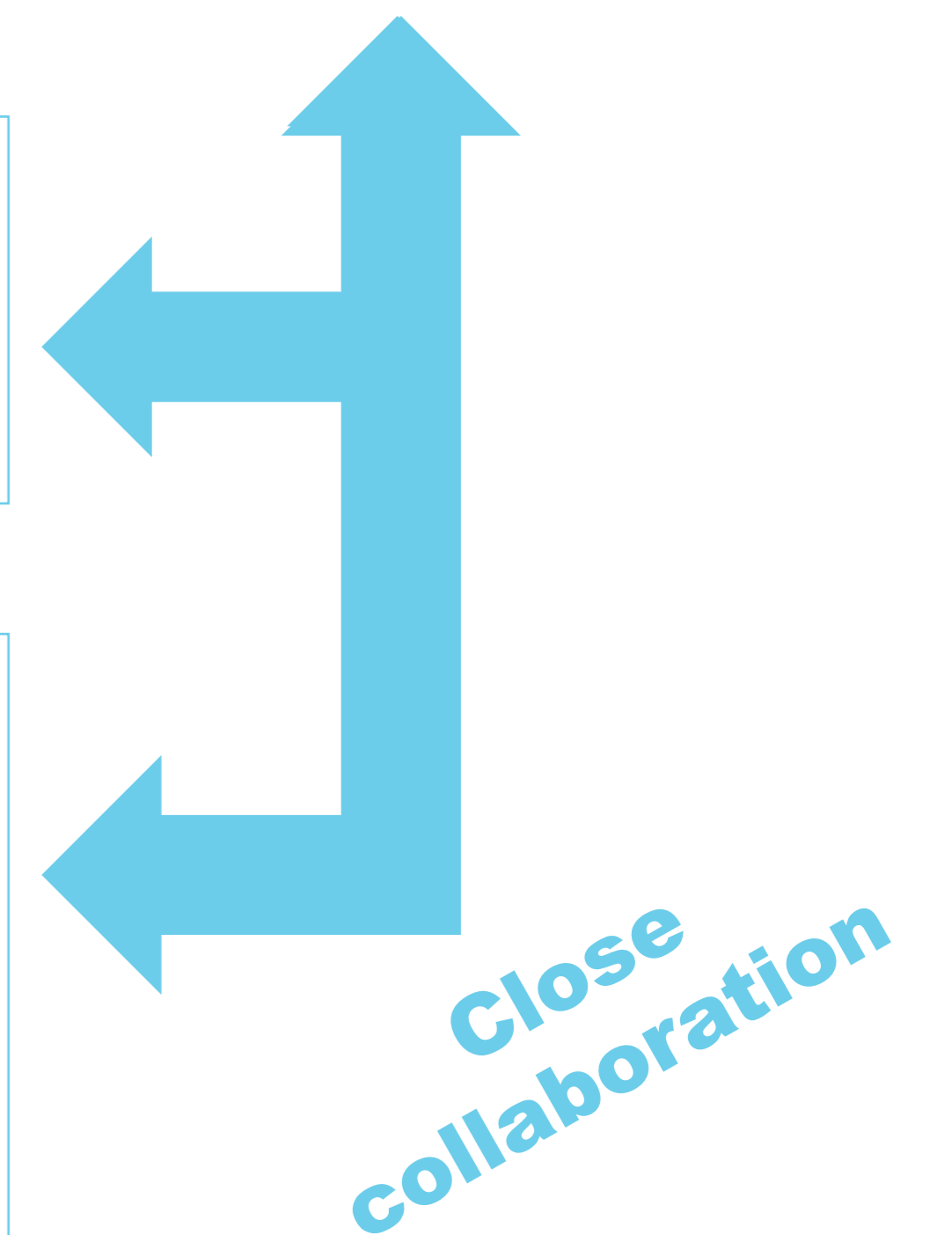


Stakeholder in the Belgian policy landscape

- Active participation in governmental advisory committees
- Direct or indirect contacts with the general public and the media

Web-based information and knowledge

- BBEMG website includes 5 major headers
 - About BBEMG – EMF – Health – Research – Standards
- Contacts and exchanges
- Thematic files, literature reviews, position papers...



BBEMG website: Continuous evaluations and adjustments

Analysis of questions received

Formal evaluation

Critical reviews by experts

- Around 150 questions a year
- 60-70% from Belgium
- 75% from the general public, 5% from workers, 20% from private companies, institutions, architects, journalists or scientists
- A large majority comes through website forms
- Concerns:
 - Buying a house near an overhead power line or a transformer
 - Electrohypersensitivity
 - Health risk from indoor transformers
 - On-site measurements
 - How to reduce exposure? Shielding?
 - Level of fields near various devices (induction cooker, electrical panels, inverter...)...
- + Questions on radiofrequencies

1. Analysis of usage statistics (Google Analytics & Webmaster tools)
2. Evaluation with students

Objectives:

- Initial perceptions when entering the website?
- Interest of particular pages (website objectives)?
- Usability of the site?
- Appropriateness of the new development planned?

Contents	Usability/Tools	Design
Health header A lot of information For everyone: clear and simple language Reliable information « Further » links Humour	Flash=added value Structure/Titles 3 languages	Pictures Tables / Graphs Shaping of the contents
Overload of contents (in EMF, start) More on More on Alzheimer's disease / Leukaemia / Lipoatrophia semicircularis Other diseases studied Hard for inexperienced people Uneven quality Need more details for scientists	Navigation (start) Navigation (Flash) Domain name False links PDF/Flash not seen	Layout/Colours Homepage Logo Not enough pictures Some childish pictures Tables / Graphs

In summary...

A close collaboration between BBEMG members is compulsory to face the challenge.
The participation to the civic and political life is important to maintain a broad understanding of the public needs.

A website is a useful tool to reach a large audience but continuous evaluations and adjustments are needed to keep contents clear and up-to-date. The BBEMG website aims to adopt a position as open as possible, always respecting independence and scientific integrity.