



## **BioInitiative Report 2012 is structured on flawed procedure and biased perceptions**

- *BioInitiative Report (BIR) and the Building Biology Institute are NOT “recognized standards bodies” in the area of EMF*
- *BioInitiative Report (BIR) does not follow a consistent approach and there is no consensus among the authors*
- *It is not an objective comprehensive review and does NOT rationalize its recommendations*
- *The report has been severely criticized by many health and radiation bodies internationally*
- *WHO is already carrying out a risk assessment of RF and it is expected to come out with its recommendations by mid-2013*

**New Delhi, 8<sup>th</sup> January 2013:** The Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) has stated that the recently released BioInitiative Report 2012 is just an update on their 2007 report which had been heavily criticized as being biased, without balance and for not being an objective comprehensive review, or a weight-of-evidence assessment. Several credible Health Organisations across the world had disowned the 2007 version of the report as having clear scientific weaknesses including selection bias in several research areas, lack of multidisciplinary weight-of evidence method which leads to a scientifically sound judgment, lack of updated info, no consideration of the scientific quality of the cited reports, amongst others.

The 2012 BioInitiative Report, like its predecessor, is an informal interpretation of a limited selection of the available scientific information on electromagnetic fields (EMF). The report is largely critical of the internationally accepted and most widely adopted EMF exposure standards developed by the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP), which have been endorsed by the World Health Organization (WHO), and the International Committee on Electromagnetic Safety of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers. The report does not include any new scientific data but reflects the interpretations of individual authors who do not have consensus among themselves.

### **The European Initiative EMF-NET<sup>1</sup> states on the BioInitiative Report 2012:**

*...the ‘Summary for the public’ is written in an alarmist and emotive language and whose arguments have no scientific support from well-conducted EMF research.*

*There is a lack of balance in the report; no mention is made in fact of reports that do not concur with authors’ statements and conclusions.*

### **The Committee on Man and Radiation (COMAR) Technical Information Statement<sup>2</sup>:**

*The BioInitiative Report...has a number of weaknesses and is a selective, rather than a comprehensive, review of the literature in various topical areas.*

### **The German Federal Office for Radiation Protection<sup>3</sup>:**

*The BioInitiative report has clear scientific weaknesses including selection bias in several research areas.*

<sup>1</sup> [http://ihcp.jrc.ec.europa.eu/our\\_activities/public-health/exposure\\_health\\_impact\\_met/emf-net/docs/efrtdocuments/EMF-NET%20Comments%20on%20the%20BioInitiative%20Report%2030OCT2007.pdf](http://ihcp.jrc.ec.europa.eu/our_activities/public-health/exposure_health_impact_met/emf-net/docs/efrtdocuments/EMF-NET%20Comments%20on%20the%20BioInitiative%20Report%2030OCT2007.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> COMAR Technical Information Statement: *Expert reviews on potential health effects of radiofrequency electromagnetic fields and comments on the BioInitiative Report*. Health Phys. 2009 Oct;97(4):348-56.

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.emf-forschungsprogramm.de/int\\_forschung/wirk\\_mensch\\_tier/Synopse\\_EMFStudien\\_2008.pdf](http://www.emf-forschungsprogramm.de/int_forschung/wirk_mensch_tier/Synopse_EMFStudien_2008.pdf) (in German)

**The Health Council of the Netherlands<sup>4</sup>:**

*[WHO's and ICNIRP's] multidisciplinary weight-of evidence method leads to a scientifically sound judgement that is as objective as possible. The BioInitiative report did not follow this procedure.*

*And concluded: (The report) is not an objective and balanced reflection of the current state of scientific knowledge and does not provide any grounds for revising the current views as to the risks of exposure to electromagnetic fields.<sup>5</sup>*

**The Australian Centre for Radiofrequency Bioeffects Research (ACRBR)<sup>6</sup>:**

*Overall we think that the BioInitiative Report does not progress science, and would agree with the Health Council of the Netherlands*

*(The report) is not an objective and balanced reflection of the current state of scientific knowledge. As it stands it merely provides a set of views that are not consistent with the consensus of science, and it does not provide an analysis that is rigorous-enough to raise doubts about the scientific consensus.*

**The Danish National Board of Health<sup>7</sup>:**

*The BioInitiative report (a) does not provide any reason to change the current health risk assessment on exposure to electromagnetic fields and (b) does not include new data and has not taken the scientific quality of the cited reports into consideration in the way that is customary.*

It is pertinent to note that **The BioInitiative Report and the Building Biology Institute are not recognised standards bodies in the area of EMF, and it is misleading to suggest that they are. The World Health Organisation (WHO) recognizes only two organizations (ICNIRP and IEEE) on developing EMF exposure standards or guidelines. (See WHO Fact Sheet #193) It should also be noted that the BioInitiative Report has not resulted in any change in the conclusions arrived at by over 100 reviews, reports and government statements that have been published in this area<sup>8</sup> from countries around the world. The conclusions from those studies have been similar to that of ICNIRP and WHO – “that there is no established evidence that EMF exposure within the internationally accepted limits causes any adverse health effects”.**

In fact, there have been revelations that the report relies for 'evidence' on studies from Oberfeld - who claimed to have found an **increase in cancer from a base station that was not in existence at the location** claimed - resulting in the ultimate withdrawal of the study; and also from De Pomerai - who claimed to have found 'non-thermal' effects on nematodes but who later admitted that his earlier study design was flawed and did cause heating - he was essentially cooking and starving the nematodes. Hence we can see that the authenticity of the report in question is highly ambiguous and does not qualify for applicability in an issue as critical and sensitive as public health and well-being.

Also, while the BioInitiative Report 2012 claims to have updated its studies from the 2007 version, it needs to be understood that agencies like the WHO, ICNIRP and IEEE are responsible organisations who have been tracking and testing the developments in this sphere continuously and updating their reports accordingly. The WHO, being a directing and coordinating authority for health within the United Nations system, is responsible for providing leadership on global health matters, shaping the health research agenda, setting norms and standards, articulating evidence-based policy options, providing technical support to countries and monitoring and

<sup>4</sup> Health Council of the Netherlands. BioInitiative report. The Hague: Health Council of the Netherlands, 2008; publication no. 2008/17E

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.gr.nl/en/publications/bioinitiative-report-0> (in English)

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.acrbr.org.au/FAQ.aspx>

<sup>7</sup> [http://www.sst.dk/Forebyggelse/Miljo\\_hygiejne\\_og\\_sol/Ikke\\_ioniserende\\_straalning.aspx?lang=da](http://www.sst.dk/Forebyggelse/Miljo_hygiejne_og_sol/Ikke_ioniserende_straalning.aspx?lang=da) (in Danish) – TB: this link is broken and the file with this particular quote is not accessible anymore.

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.gsma.com/publicpolicy/mobile-and-health/science-overview/independent-reviews>

assessing health trends. The WHO is already carrying out a risk assessment of RF and it is expected to come out with its recommendations by mid-2013. To avoid unnecessary duplication of effort and to make sure that all important questions are being studied, research coordination on a global level is important. To that end, the **WHO International EMF Project** (<http://www.who.int/peh-emf/project/en/>), in collaboration with major national and multinational research funding institutions, has been providing such an umbrella for worldwide coordination and exchange of information about planned and on-going projects. **The Government of India too**, has commissioned the **Department of Science and Technology (DST)** to study the potential effects of EMF emissions with an India-specific approach to the issue and based on the latest scenario.

The COAI would once again like to assure the people that the operators in India follow one of the most stringent exposure norms in the world based upon the standards prescribed by the most credible international bodies in this area of expertise such as ICNIRP and WHO, which were **further reduced by the Government of India by 90%** so as to ensure abundant precaution. COAI also recommends that critical policies and guidelines on sensitive issues such as public health should be based on studies and recommendations by established and sanctioned international organizations such as the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers International Committee on Electromagnetic Safety and the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection, which is formally associated with the World Health Organization.

**About COAI:**

The Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) was constituted in 1995 as a registered, non-governmental society dedicated to the advancement of communication, particularly modern communication through Cellular Mobile Telephone Services. With a vision to establish and sustain a world-class cellular infrastructure and facilitate affordable mobile communication services in India, COAI's main objectives are to protect the common & collective interests of its members. (<http://www.coai.in/>).