



# **Guide to Carcinogenicity ISS Model version 1.0.2**

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# 1. Model explanation

## 1.1 Introduction

The model provides a qualitative prediction of carcinogenic potency according to specific requirements of Chemical regulation. It is implemented inside the VEGA online platform, accessible at: <http://www.vega-qsar.eu/>

## 1.2 Model details

The model has been built as a set of rules, taken from the work of Benigni and Bossa (ISS) as implemented in the software ToxTree version 2.6 (<http://toxtree.sourceforge.net>): R. Benigni, C. Bossa, N. Jeliaskova, T. Netzeva, and A. Worth “The Benigni / Bossa rulebase for mutagenicity and carcinogenicity - a module of ToxTree” European Commission report EUR 23241 EN; R. Benigni, C. Bossa, T. Netzeva, A. Rodomonte, and I. Tsakovska “Mechanistic QSAR of aromatic amines: new models for discriminating between mutagens and nonmutagens, and validation of models for carcinogens” *Environ mol mutag*, (2007), 48:754-771; Benigni, R., Bossa, C., & Tcheremenskaia, O. “Nongenotoxic carcinogenicity of chemicals: mechanisms of action and early recognition through a new set of structural alerts” *Chemical Reviews*, 2013, 113(5), 2940-57.

The model implements all the rules related to carcinogenicity and does not implement the full decision tree used by ToxTree. If at least one carcinogen rule is matching with the given compound, a “carcinogen” prediction is given; otherwise, a “non-carcinogen” prediction is given. The training set for the model has been extracted from ToxTree, and consists of 797 compounds.

## 1.3 Applicability Domain

The applicability domain of predictions is assessed using an Applicability Domain Index (ADI) that has values from 0 (worst case) to 1 (best case). The ADI is calculated by grouping several other indices, each one taking into account a particular issue of the applicability domain. Most of the indices are based on the calculation of the most similar compounds found in the training and test set of the model, calculated by a similarity index that considers molecule's fingerprint and structural aspects (count of atoms, rings and relevant fragments).

For each index, including the final ADI, three intervals for its values are defined, such that the first interval corresponds to a positive evaluation, the second one corresponds to a suspicious evaluation and the last one corresponds to a negative evaluation.

Following, all applicability domain components are reported along with their explanation and the intervals used. Note that for purpose of evaluating accuracy and concordance indices, prediction of “suspect mutagen” are considered as “mutagen”.

- **Similar molecules with known experimental value.** This index takes into account how similar are the first two most similar compounds found. Values near 1 mean that the predicted compound is well represented in the dataset used to build the model, otherwise the prediction could be an extrapolation. Defined intervals are:

$1 \geq \text{index} > 0.8$	strongly similar compounds with known experimental value in the training set have been found
$0.8 \geq \text{index} > 0.6$	only moderately similar compounds with known experimental value in the training set have been found
$\text{index} \leq 0.6$	no similar compounds with known experimental value in the training set have been found

- **Accuracy of prediction for similar molecules.** This index takes into account the classification accuracy in prediction for the two most similar compounds found. Values near 1 mean that the predicted compounds falls in an area of the model's space where the model gives reliable predictions (no misclassifications), otherwise the lower is the value, the worse the model behaves. Defined intervals are:

$1 \geq \text{index} > 0.9$	accuracy of prediction for similar molecules found in the training set is good
$0.9 \geq \text{index} > 0.5$	accuracy of prediction for similar molecules found in the training set is not optimal
$\text{index} \leq 0.5$	accuracy of prediction for similar molecules found in the training set is not adequate

- **Concordance for similar molecules** . This index takes into account the difference between the predicted value and the experimental values of the two most similar compounds. Values near 0 mean that the prediction made disagrees with the values found in the model's space, thus the prediction could be unreliable. Defined intervals are:

$1 \geq \text{index} > 0.9$	similar molecules found in the training set have experimental values that agree with the predicted value
$0.9 \geq \text{index} > 0.5$	some similar molecules found in the training set have experimental values that disagree with the predicted value
$\text{index} \leq 0.5$	similar molecules found in the training set have experimental values that disagree with the predicted value

- **Atom Centered Fragments similarity check.** This index takes into account the presence of one or more fragments that aren't found in the training set, or that are rare fragments. First order atom centered fragments from all molecules in the training set are calculated, then compared with the first order atom centered fragments from the predicted compound; then the index is calculated as following: a first index RARE takes into account rare fragments (those who occur less than three times in the training set), having value of 1 if no such fragments are found, 0.85 if up to 2 fragments are found, 0.7 if more than 2 fragments are found; a second index NOTFOUND takes into account not found fragments, having value of 1 if no such fragments are found, 0.6 if a fragments is found, 0.4 if more than 1

fragment is found. Then, the final index is given as the product RARE \* NOTFOUND. Defined intervals are:

index = 1	all atom centered fragment of the compound have been found in the compounds of the training set
$1 > \text{index} \geq 0.7$	some atom centered fragment of the compound have not been found in the compounds of the training set or are rare fragments
$\text{index} < 0.7$	a prominent number of atom centered fragments of the compound have not been found in the compounds of the training set or are rare fragments

- **Global AD Index.** The final global index takes into account all the previous indices, in order to give a general global assessment on the applicability domain for the predicted compound. Defined intervals are:

$1 \geq \text{index} \geq 0.9$	predicted substance is into the Applicability Domain of the model
$0.9 > \text{index} \geq 0.65$	predicted substance could be out of the Applicability Domain of the model
$\text{index} < 0.65$	predicted substance is out of the the Applicability Domain of the model

## 1.4 Structural Alerts for carcinogen compounds

Following, the list of the rules for carcinogenicity extracted from ToxTree:

SA1 Acyl halides  
 SA2 Alkyl (C<5) or benzyl ester of sulphonic or phosphonic acid  
 SA3 N-methylol derivatives  
 SA4 Monohaloalkene  
 SA5 S or N mustard  
 SA6 Propiolactones and propiosultones  
 SA7 Epoxides and aziridines  
 SA8 Aliphatic halogens  
 SA9 Alkyl nitrite  
 SA10 alfa, beta unsaturated carbonyls  
 SA11 Simple aldehyde  
 SA12 Quinones  
 SA13 Hydrazine  
 SA14 Aliphatic azo and azoxy  
 SA15 Isocyanate and isothiocyanate groups  
 SA16 Alkyl carbamate and thiocarbamate  
 SA17 Thiocarbonyl (Nongenotoxic carcinogens)  
 SA18 Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons  
 SA19 Heterocyclic Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons  
 SA20 (Poly) Halogenated Cycloalkanes (Nongenotoxic carcinogens)  
 SA21 Alkyl and aryl N-nitroso groups  
 SA22 Azide and triazene groups  
 SA23 Aliphatic N-nitro

SA24 alfa,beta unsaturated alkoxy  
SA25 Aromatic nitroso group  
SA26 Aromatic ring N-oxide  
SA27 Nitro aromatic  
SA28 Primary aromatic amine, hydroxyl amine and its derived esters (with restrictions)  
SA28bis Aromatic mono- and dialkylamine  
SA28ter Aromatic N-acyl amine  
SA29 Aromatic diazo  
SA30 Coumarins and Furocoumarins  
SA31a Halogenated benzene (Nongenotoxic carcinogens)  
SA31b Halogenated PAH (naphthalenes, biphenyls, diphenyls) (Nongenotoxic carcinogens)  
SA31c Halogenated dibenzodioxins (Nongenotoxic carcinogens)  
SA37 Pyrrolizidine Alkaloids  
SA38 Alkenylbenzenes  
SA40 Substituted phenoxyacid  
SA41 Substituted n-alkylcarboxylic acids  
SA42 Phthalate diesters and monoesters  
SA43 Perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA)  
SA44 Trichloro (or fluoro) ethylene and Tetrachloro (or fluoro) ethylene  
SA45 Indole-3-carbinol  
SA46 Pentachlorophenol  
SA47 O-phenylphenol  
SA48 Quercetin-type flavonoids  
SA49 Imidazole and benzimidazole  
SA50 Dicarboximide  
SA51 Dimethylpyridine  
SA52 Metals, oxidative stress  
SA53 Benzensulfonic ethers  
SA54 1,3-Benzodioxoles  
SA55 Phenoxy herbicides  
SA56 Alkyl halides

## 1.5 Model statistics

Following, statistics obtained applying the model to its original dataset:

- Training set: n = 797; Accuracy = 0.76; Specificity = 0.58; Sensitivity = 0.81

## 2. Model usage

### 2.1 Input

The model accepts as input two molecule formats: SDF (multiple MOL file) and SMILES. All molecules found as input are preprocessed before the calculation of molecular descriptors, in order to obtain a standardized representation of compound. For this reason, some cautions should be taken.

- **Hydrogen atoms.** In SDF files, hydrogen atoms should be explicit. As some times SDF file store only skeleton atoms, and hydrogen atoms are implicit, during the processing of the molecule the system tries to add implicit hydrogens on the basis of the known standard valence of each atom (for example, if a carbon atoms has three single bonds, an hydrogen atom will be added such to reach a valence of four). In SMILES molecules, the default notation uses implicit hydrogen. Anyway please note that in some cases it is necessary to explicitly report an hydrogen; this happens when the conformation is not unambiguous. For example, when a nitrogen atom is into an aromatic ring with a notation like "cnc" it is not clear whether it corresponds to C-N=C or to C-[NH]-C, thus if the situation is the latter, it should be explicitly reported as "c[nH]c".

- **Aromaticity.** The system calculates aromaticity using the basic Hueckel rule. Note that each software for drawing and storing of molecules can use different approaches to aromaticity (for instance, commonly the user can choose between the basic Hueckel rule and a loose approach that lead to considering aromatic a greater number of rings). As in the input files aromaticity can be set explicitly (for instance, in SMILES format by using lowercase letters), during the processing of the molecule the system removes aromaticity from rings that don't satisfy the Hueckel rule. Please note that when aromaticity is removed from a ring, it is not always possible to rebuild the original structure in Kekule form (i.e. with an alternation of single and double bonds, like in the SMILES for benzene, C=1C=CC=CC1), in this case all bonds are set to single. Furthermore, please note that aromaticity detection is a really relevant issue, some molecular descriptors can have significantly different values whether a ring is perceived as aromatic or not. For this reason it is strongly recommended:

- Always use explicit hydrogens in SDF file.
- Avoid explicit aromaticity notation in original files; in this way, the perception of aromaticity is left to the preprocessing step and there is no chance of mistakes due to the transformation of rings that were set to aromatic in the original format but not recognized as aromatic in VEGA.

Note that when some modification of the molecule are performed during the preprocessing (e.g. adding of lacking hydrogens, correction of aromaticity), a warning is given in the remark field of the results.

### 2.2 Output

Results given as text file consist of a plain-text tabbed file (easily importable and processable by any spreadsheet software) containing in each row all the information about the prediction of a molecule. Note that if some problems were encountered while processing the molecule structure, some warnings

are reported in the last field (Remarks).

Results given as PDF file consists of a document containing all the information about the prediction. For each molecule, results are organized in sections with the following order:

#### *1 – Prediction summary*

Here is reported a depiction of the compound and the final assessment of the prediction (i.e. the prediction made together with the analysis of the applicability domain). Note that if some problems were encountered while processing the molecule structure, some warnings are reported in the last field (Remarks).

A graphical representation of the evaluation of the prediction and of its reliability is also provided, using the following elements:



Compound is classified as non-carcinogen



Compound is classified as carcinogen



Prediction has low reliability (compound out of the AD)



Prediction has moderate reliability (compound could be out of the AD)



Prediction has high reliability (compound into the AD)

#### *3.1 – Applicability Domain: Similar compounds, with predicted and experimental values*

Here it is reported the list of the six most similar compounds found in the training and test set of the model, along with their depiction and relevant information (mainly experimental value and predicted value).

#### *3.2 – Applicability Domain: Measured Applicability Domain scores*

Here it is reported the list of all Applicability Domain scores, starting with the global Applicability Domain Index (ADI). Note that the final assessment on prediction reliability is given on the basis of the value of the ADI. For each index, it is reported its value and a brief explanation of the meaning of that value.

#### *4.1 – Reasoning: Relevant chemical fragments and moieties*

If some rare and/or missing Atom Centered Fragments are found, they are reported here with a depiction of each fragment.

If some relevant fragments are found (see section 1.4), they are reported here (one for each page) with a brief explanation of their meaning and the list of the three most similar compounds that contain the same fragment. Note that if no relevant fragments are found, this section is not shown.