Challenges companies face regarding needs of information on chemicals

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ChemSec

Informal Workshop on Stakeholders' Information Needs on Chemicals in Articles/Products
9-12 February, 2009 Geneva, Switzerland

ChemSec
The International Chemical Secretariat

i) A coalition of environmental organisations
ii) serves as a forum for parties working for better chemical control
iii) monitors the development of Chemical policies in Europe and elsewhere
iv) seeks to strengthen support for progressive legislation, in particular among business actors
### NGO Advisory Committee

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<td>Friends of the Earth</td>
<td>GREENPEACE</td>
<td>Health &amp; Environment Alliance</td>
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### ChemSec’s Business group

Established in 2003 with members such as:

- Dell
- Boots the Chemist
- B&Q
- Sara Lee
- Skanska
- Sony Ericsson
- L’Oreal
- Eureau
Building a new regulation in EU... REACH

REACH regulates and gathers information on the chemicals on the market.

Substances of "very high concern" only allowed under authorisation

All substances > 1 t/a to be tested, information submitted to the European Chemicals Agency
"No data – No market"

AUTHORISATION

Production/Use of Substances of Very High Concern only allowed under Authorisation

Carcinogenic
Mutagenic
Toxic to reproduction
Persistent, Bioacc. & Toxic (PBT)
Very Persistent & very Bioaccumulative (vPvB)
Endocrine disrupters
"Substances of equivalent concern"
Identification of Substances of Very High Concern

Fulfills Criteria as SVHC according to art. 57
>1500

Proposed as candidate (Annex XV dossier) 16

Candidate List 15

REACH Information Requirements!

Agency working List 6

Annex XIV & Authorisation

MS CA
Preparation of the REACH SIN List

NGO Advisory Group

Business Reference Group
The Objective

To identify chemicals that meet the REACH criteria for SVHC

…to assist Candidate List process
…to prioritize chemicals for phaseout
…to offer guidance to companies, consumers, regulators
…to promote safer alternatives
ChemSec’s Business group feedback:
Why is this information on chemicals in products required?

- Regulation/compliance
- Brand-name/consumer demands
- Waste management
- Workers protection
- Investor interest
  - The Investor Environmental Health Network, encouraging TUR policies, eg through shareholder resolutions: www.iehn.org

- Damage control/avoidance!

Why we do it

- Experience is Sweden
  - many widely available building materials not fully “legal”

- We use “materials” not “chemicals”
  - “blends” not “molecules”

- We use “brands” not “chemicals”
  - serious cross-border issue

- Rising energy efficiency requirements leading to more air-tight buildings
  - indoor climate critical => must avoid toxics
Therefore we have to proactively……….

Protect our workforce
- Technically illiterate when it comes to chemicals
  => Short-term exposure may create long-term harm

Protect the public
- Buildings typically last many decades
  => Long-term public exposure risk – encourage clients to “future-proof”

Protect ecosystems

Challenges in retrieving information from suppliers

- What info to request?
  - If you don’t know what chemicals are in a material, how do you know what to even look for?
- Cooperation/Compliance
  - “Sometimes they don’t want to tell” what their products contain
- Chemicals used in processes
  - Do you ask the relevant questions?
- What criteria used?
  - Agreement on relevant criteria?
  - Does supplier understand criteria?
Challenges in retrieving information from suppliers

Cooperation/Compliance

- “Sometimes they don’t want to tell” what their products contain
- Really don’t have the data
- Don’t understand what company is asking for
- It’s not their level of transparency
- It may be a trade secret, an issue of intellectual property
- Don’t think hazard data is complete/relevant

Solutions found/developed to increase the flow of information in the supply-chain.

*Introducing a system in a sketchy landscape*

- *Each actor inventing their own wheel?*

- Lists, lists, lists!
  - Dependent on external sources for chemicals safety info
  - Constant monitoring by Safety, Environmental, & Regulatory Affairs Department (in-house experts)
- Informing/educating the supply chain about needs and criteria used, eg through workshops, asking the right questions etc.
- Aligning requirements, eg BASTA, AFIRM, REACH, SIN?
- Regulation?
- Require full disclosure as Sony Ericsson
Skanska Sweden was involved in the creation of the BASTA system, along with others in the Swedish construction industry.

Objective: develop an industry standard for building products and a system to support phase-out of dangerous substances.

One Way forward: The BASTA System

- Based on intrinsic properties
- Register of products, not chemicals
- Suppliers registers products satisfying system requirements

Result
- The supplier has full knowledge of the chemical content of its products
- The supplier has certified that the content of its products have none of the BASTA-specified dangerous properties
One Way forward: The BASTA System

Problem: Limited to Sweden (Scandinavia) whereas these construction companies have a large range of international suppliers.

Efforts now to broaden BASTA.

Serve as a model for other industries, e.g. textiles?

www.bastaonline.se

Needs to achieve increased flow of information in the supply-chain.

- Gradual understanding of “new responsibility for chemicals safety and the safety of consumers”.
- Needed mentality change within companies, industry maturation.
- Realization of “what chemicals management actually is and make it part of the way they do business”
- Early information on alternative, sustainable products
- Harmonisation of requirements, criteria
- Regulation must foresee upstream compliance
What we need from others

**Suppliers**
- Clear and easy to understand information
- Proactive information on alternative "green" products

**Producers**
- Acceleration of "green" product development/availability

**Politicians**
- Harmonise information – address the "brand" issue
- Recognise that "materials" and "chemicals" are different
- Less dependence on scientific measurement to set limits

[REACH S.I.N* LIST](http://www.sinlist.org)
Thank you!

www.chemsec.org