Chemicals in Products
An overview of systems for providing information regarding chemicals in products and of stakeholders’ needs for such information

Beatrice Kogg & Åke Thidell,
Sector-expert Consultation for the Chemicals in Products Project
Geneva, December 9, 2010

Agenda

• Overview of CiP information systems
• Stakeholders’ need for CiP information
• Gaps
• Reflections on closing gaps
Overview of CiP information systems

Generic components of CiP information systems

- Template for/definition of information to be provided and presentation
- Method/criteria for evaluation/interpretation of data
- Defined method for generation/provision of information
  - Information from upstream tiers
  - Inquiries, literature
  - Laboratory testing
- Platform for information provision
  - Database
  - Product/packaging
  - Documentation
Generic components of CiP information systems

• Information ownership and access
  – Open, limited
• Routines for updating and verification of information
  – Testing procedures, sampling procedures, required proofs etc.
• Organisation & resources for support and training

Categorising CiP systems
actor – chain perspective

• Inter-chain information exchange
• Producer – consumer/customer information
• Producer to end-of-life actors
• External stakeholders to consumers/customers and the public
• “System like” initiatives
  – SIN-list, sector RSLs
  – Green procurement manuals
Inter-chain information exchange

- Primarily supply chain actors
- Well-established rules of information provision
- Proprietary information – access on permission
- Drivers: legal requirements
  - IMDS, IPC 1752
  - JAMP & BOMCheck

Producer – consumer/customer information

- Producers inform (concerned) customers
- Producers may request upstream information
- Both producer, user and third party evaluation of information
- Drivers: both legal and market
  - California’s Proposition 65
  - Declarations, eco-labels
Producer to end-of-life actors

- Producer to user and EoL
- Required/set rules for information provision
- Information on the product
- Drivers: legal requirements
  - Heavy metals in batteries, mercury lamps, etc.

External stakeholders to consumers/customers and the public

- External organisations collects, interpret and present information to consumers and general public
- Different ways to source information
  - Tests, literature, producer inquireries
- Information on the web, apps, etc.
- Drivers: insufficient available information
  - GoodGuide, Healthy stuff, Pharos
The found CiP information systems

- Most components in place in all systems
- But look and work differently
  - stakeholder involvement
  - information quality
  - type of information
  - openness
  - organisational structure and resources

Stakeholders’ need for CiP information
• Producers (production, distribution and sale of products)
• Consumers
• EoL actors

• Government agencies and policy makers
• NGOs

---

**CiP information needs**

• **Chemicals related information:**
  – content, amounts, hazard and risk
• **Producer related information:**
  – traceability, monitor compliance
• **Supply chain related information:**
  – companies behind the final product
• **Information regarding precautions for safe use/handling and disposal:**
  – Also accidents, recycling
• **Information related to the end-of-life management:**
  – Chemical content, location of substances, waste disposal
Example: a textile supply chain

Cotton farming → Ginning → Yarn production → Greige fabric production → Fabric dyeing & finishing → Garment production → Distribution

Farmers

Ginners

Cotton co-ops

Traders/Merchants

Agents

Textile production

Dyeing & finishing

Apparel manufacturers

Apparel factories, including sub-contractors

Agents

Fashion retailer

Fertilizers, pesticides and seeds are provided by large multinationals and/or smaller local suppliers.

Dye-stuff and chemical inputs are provided by large multinationals and/or smaller local suppliers.

In addition to the fabric, apparel manufacturers will have suppliers for all necessary items such as buttons, zippers etc.
On stakeholders’ information needs

- Tremendously heterogeneous:
  - Skills, knowledge and capacity
  - Resources
  - Priorities and values of individuals and organisations
  - Contexts (social, cultural, environmental, regulatory)

Gaps
Systems, stakeholders and needs for CiP information

- Several and different stakeholders with different information needs all over the world
- Different abilities to utilise the information (evaluate, interpret data for decisions)

Many systems – patchy information and accessibility
- Chain interaction and coverage works, as alternative to sample the product
- Great variation in system design and provided information
- Provides information between many different types of actors
- Systems and users identified in all parts of the world
  - Often initiated in Japan, Europe and North America
Some conclusions on gaps

- Many actors in all stakeholder groups and all regions express need for better information
- Mainly on chemical content
- Different ability to make use of the information
- Few comprehensive systems broadly adopted

Reflections on closing gaps
Potential CiP information systems

• Many challenges: balancing interests, levels of ambition, etc
• Heterogeneous needs
• Practical matters, for instance:
  – Type of information
  – Format for information exchange
  – Technical platforms
• Harmonized, user-friendly, and appropriate

One way of harmonizing a CiP information system

• Tier 1: know what substances are present in the product or able to migrate from it – easier to harmonize
• Tier 2: information on/interpretation of what the chemical content means, should be evaluated, and instructions for actions – tailored support functions to be harmonized by and for certain stakeholder groups to meet different needs
Further challenges

- Full disclosure or pre-defined substances
- Rules and principles
- Information access
- Control and verification (incl. ownership and responsibilities)
- Sanctions
- Information format and technical platform
- Legal status

Role of policy-making

- Defining and shaping requirements and responsibilities
- Considering use of hazardous substances in permit processes
- Voluntary agreements
- Stricter information requirements in EoL
- Foster public knowledge
- Build and improve knowledge and capacity
- Well-designed policy-mixes
Thank you! Questions?

Introduction to the study:

Chemicals in Products
An overview of systems for providing information regarding chemicals in products and of stakeholders’ needs for such information
Report outline

- Report covers:
  - Chapter 1: Introduction
  - Chapter 2: Descriptions of identified CiP information systems
  - Chapter 3: Overview of stakeholders need for CiP information
  - Chapter 4: Discussion regarding gaps identified between stakeholder needs and existing systems
  - Reflections on closing the gap

Two key terms

- Products:
  - Article means an object which during production is given a special shape, surface or design which determines its function to a greater degree than its chemical composition

- CiP Information system:
  - Systematic, formalised, and recurring information transfer on:
    - Chemicals in products
    - Health and/or environmental performance of a product based (at least in part) on chemical content
    - All chemicals in products, guidelines for interpretation of whether these chemicals are cause for concern