Chemicals in Products Project
Synthesis of findings

UNEP Chemicals
Workshop of the CiP Project - March 16, 2011

What the synthesis report covers

• Brief history of the CiP Project
  - ICCM2 through the priority sector case studies
• General review of
  - the stakeholder groups, their needs for CiP information and gaps
  - the drivers to chemicals information exchange
  - the systems that already exist
    (drawn primarily from Needs Survey and Kogg&Thidell reports)
• Sector case studies: their major findings and conclusions
• Common issues among the sectors
• Sector-expert Consultation (Dec 2010)
• Common obstacles
• How to address gaps and obstacles
• General conclusions
• Recommendations
Common drivers for chemicals information exchange

• A major driver for most current chemicals in products information systems has been a need to meet legislative requirements.
• Other drivers include:  
  - requirements from consumers and public interest groups who are increasingly concerned to have safe products;  
  - industry concern for product liability and brand and corporate image;  
  - corporate policies regarding environmental performance  
• These drivers are present in all countries. However in developing countries few initiatives have been seen so far.

Common issues

• Manufacturers can affect change by insisting that chemical information is provided to them, although smaller companies may not have the influence on their suppliers to accomplish this.
• Numerous initiatives exist where manufacturers or distributors exceed the legal requirements – these proactive measures are the leading edge of CiP information exchange and control.
• The chemicals industry has made efforts at the start of the productions chain to “push” GHS / SDS data down the chain with the chemicals.
Information systems in common use

- Globally Harmonized System for the Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS), including Safety Data Sheets (SDS)
- Restricted Substances Lists
- ICCA’s Global Product Strategy (GPS) chemicals portal
- Eco-labels
- Environmental Product Declarations (EPDs)
- Material Data Sheets (MDSs)
- Third-party supplied data (web portals)
- Full content declarations (rare)

Sector expert Consultation

- Held in Geneva in December 2010
- Provided a forum for discussions as the sector case studies neared completion:
  - with the business sector representatives
  - and the institutes carrying out the work
- Objectives:
  - to share the research results of the institutes;
  - to exchange experts’ experiences and knowledge from the different sectors on product chemical information;
  - to identify critical issues with regard to CiP information exchange, especially on the data provider’s side; and
  - to discuss possible measures or options that could help overcome obstacles for providing information
Obstacles to information exchange

• Complexity of the issue
• Cost
• Lack of standardized systems
• Ability to process the information
• Changing requirements (legislative, for specific substances)
• Information is not carried through the production chain / life-cycle
  – lack of a request or of a perceived need to transmit the information
  – confidential nature of the information
  – has not been done in the past → a new activity which needs time and effort to establish

Gaps in information exchange

Production chain “pull” and “push” of information access and provision

PUSH
• Long supply chains with many tiers
• Complex networks with
  – large number of materials/substances in each product
  – large number of applications for each chemical
  – many actors involved

PULL
• Chemicals manufacturers and Brand owners feel regulatory pressure
Tier I and Tier II information

- Tier I: Information on Chemicals in Products
  - Toxicity
  - Migration
  - Dispersion
  - Etc

- Tier II: Information on Products’ use and EoL treatment
  - Risk prevention/management

Identification of Potential Risks

Some ways of addressing gaps and obstacles

- Build on systems currently in place
- Development of harmonized standards and formats
- Account for the needs of small and medium-sized enterprises
- Foster communication between different stakeholders in the manufacturing process and along the entire lifecycle
- Address concerns on confidential information disclosure
- Account for the need for improved information access on chemicals in products being recycled
General conclusions

- Regulation and voluntary initiatives were complementary and both play an important role.
- General awareness on the dangers of chemicals in products is growing.
- There is a potential positive business impact that improved knowledge, oversight and actions on chemicals in products could bring.
- A harmonized industry-wide effort by sector is likely to be more efficient and effective than individual company actions.
- Exchange of information on chemicals in products in the supply chains is potentially the basis for other efforts to meet the SAICM objective 15(b).
- Tailoring that information to the needs of actors/stakeholders along the product lifecycle is a separate task.

Recommendations

A pilot project could be the most useful and positive next step forward. To identify:

- Clear objectives (information on which chemicals, in what format, etc.)
- Ways to engage stakeholders leading in CiP information exchange, including companies
- Potential existing systems to build upon