

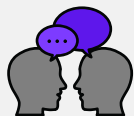
1. Introduction

Chemicals are important components in many of the products that modern society uses and relies on. They may be released at any stage of a product's life cycle (including production, use, recycling or reuse, end-of-life disposal), resulting in exposures for humans and the environment, and potential adverse effects.



2. Why is it relevant?

The Overarching Policy Strategy of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) includes the objective of “ensuring that information on chemicals throughout their life cycle, including, where appropriate, chemicals in products, is available, accessible, user-friendly, adequate and appropriate to the needs of all stakeholders.”



Information exchange in the value chain is fundamental for identifying and soundly managing any chemicals of concern in products.

It is closely linked to the right to know, a basic human right defined by the United Nations.



CiP was identified as an issue of concern under SAICM at the second meeting of the International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM2) in 2009,

“with a view of taking appropriate cooperative actions, to consider the need to improve the availability of and access to information on chemicals in products in the supply chain and throughout their life cycle.”



SAICM stakeholders also identified four priority sectors: textiles, toys, electronics, and building products.

3. Existing instruments and actions



In 2015, at ICCM4, governments and stakeholders welcomed the CiP Programme, which sets out three information objectives for CiP information exchange related to broader knowledge exchange, disclosure to stakeholders outside the supply chain for better management, and information that is accurate and accessible.

The exchange of important aspects of CiP information throughout the supply chain has been advanced by diverse stakeholder actions. In several sectors, such as for cosmetics, personal care products and food additives, communication of chemicals used in products has long become mandatory through labelling of the full ingredient list in many if not all parts of the world.

However, in other sectors, legal requirements of CiP information exchange have been limited, e.g., through narrower scopes in terms of geographical coverage, chemicals coverage (i.e. defined chemicals of concern) and sector coverage (e.g., electrical and electronic products).

3. Existing instruments and actions (cont.)

CiP information exchange relies instead primarily on voluntary initiatives by individual industrial sector, or individual companies within the sector, mostly within the supply chains, either through:

A **passive approach**, which focuses on providing suppliers with a declarable or restricted substance list for products or manufacturing processes; in some cases, a positive list of approved chemicals; or

An **active approach**, where companies may actively invest in knowing which chemicals are used by their suppliers, and set up or join an existing system to collect and manage CiP information.

Companies may choose to take either of the approaches, or both.

CiP information exchange is supported and facilitated by specific guidance and tools that have been developed. Many of these focus on supply chains, whereas multiple initiatives specifically target actors outside supply chains. Other activities include building capacity, expanding guidance and tools, and promoting best practices across countries.



4. Challenges and opportunities



The passive approach is the most commonly used but it has its limitations. As the science around chemicals evolves fast, new chemicals of concern may be identified before companies can update their lists, and companies may have a hard time keeping up with changes.

In many sectors, the existing instruments and actions have focused on information exchange within supply chains, but not further transfer of the information to designers, consumers, regulators, waste managers and workers. Lack of data on the chemical content in products hampers assessing and managing chemical exposure through products by these stakeholders, including those who may be considered vulnerable populations (e.g., pregnant women, children and elderly people).

CiP information needs to be relevant, accurate, current, and accessible, which is still often not the case.

The more active approach should be promoted and fostered by building on existing regulatory and voluntary initiatives, including existing legal labelling requirement. This approach has the ability to quickly address rapid changes in market and regulatory requirements with much lower costs for crisis management, increased sales and improved brand reputation, supply chain reliability and quality, and better and more innovative products.

CiP information exchange should be extended to actors outside supply chains. Studies are warranted on the feasibility of existing instruments such as taxes and fiscal policies, and new public-private partnerships.

Effective monitoring and enforcement is a key component to ensure the proper functioning and trust of the whole system of communicating CiP information. For this, both regulatory and voluntary approaches may be considered, and voluntary approaches may learn from (and build on) existing initiatives.

