

COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE ON CHEMICALS IN PRODUCTS

Organized by the SAICM Secretariat and the University of Cape Town

Issue: 4 of 2022

Discussion date: 29th September 2022

Discussion digest

Topic of Discussion: Chemicals Management Toolkit: Is chemical risk management too complex for a "do-it-yourself" guidance?

Chemicals management toolkits are aimed to be a solution to the challenge faced in chemicals' risk management. As toys are one of the focal areas in the "chemicals in products" programme, a toys chemical management toolkit has been developed by United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to support Chemicals management in the toys' supply chain. Furthermore, the Internet-based Toolbox for Decision Making in Chemicals Management developed by the (Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC) Toolbox) is aimed at countries who wish to address specific national issues regarding chemicals management. This discussion was presented by Antonia Reihlen who is a freelance consultant working on chemical policies and risk management and Valérie Frison who is a junior policy analyst at the OECD. It covered three main questions: 1) the main challenges in making useful guidance and tool, 2) how to design guidance relevant to all members of the toys' supply chain in terms of content and form 3) how the IOMC Toolbox can help set-up or improve Chemicals management system cost-effectively.

To view the PowerPoint presentation from this discussion, click [here](#).

ABOUT THE PRESENTERS



Antonia Reihlen studied biology at the Technical University of Aachen, Germany. She works on chemical policies and chemical risk management as a freelance consultant. She is (sub-) contracted amongst others by consulting companies, non-governmental organisations, and the EU Commission to deliver studies, provide expertise and/or develop guidance and tools; as well as being involved in the technical and political discussions on the development or revision of chemicals legislation, mainly in the EU. Antonia has been on the Team of the Baltic Environmental Forum, which developed the "International chemicals management toolkit for the toy supply chain".



Valérie Frison has a master's degree in molecular biology and biotechnology from the Vrije Universiteit Brussels in Belgium. She has been working at the Environment Health and Safety division at the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development since January 2010. She mainly works on capacity building in chemicals management for developing countries and countries with economies in transition. For the past 10 years, she has been collaborating with the other IOMC participating organisations on the IOMC Toolbox for Decision-Making in Chemicals Management. It is a problem-solving tool that enables countries to identify the most appropriate and efficient national actions to address specific Chemicals management problems and all the relevant available IOMC tools and resources.

2022 DISCUSSION 4 ATTENDANCE BREAKDOWN

TOTAL ATTENDEES FOR 2022

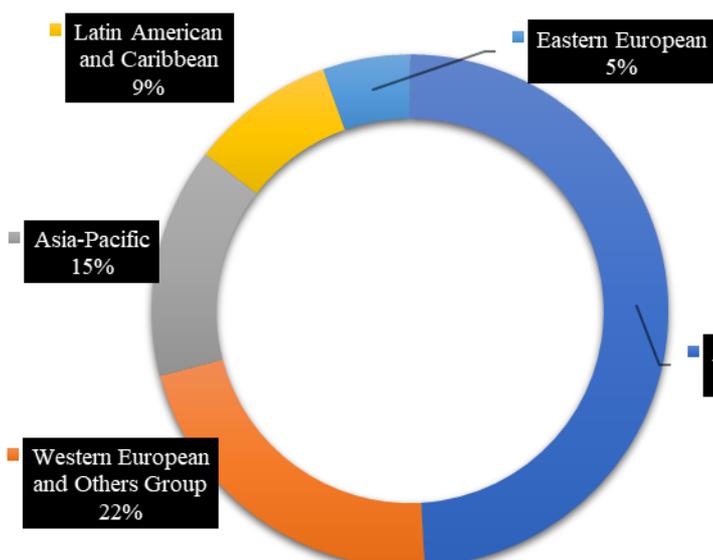
DISCUSSION 4: 55

Female – 34 (55%)

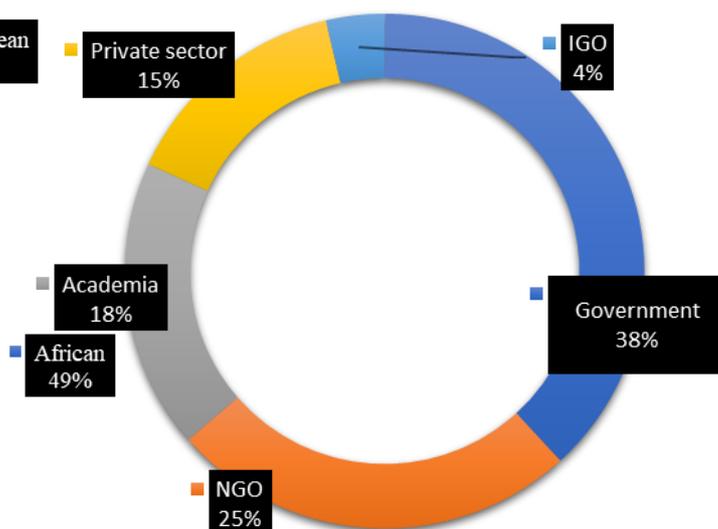
Male – 24 (44%)

Unknown – 1 (2%)

Regional Representation



Sector Representation



Key:
IGO – Intergovernmental organisation
NGO – Non-governmental organisation

Chemicals in Products Community of Practice 2022 Discussion 4 Summary and looking ahead

In this discussion, the presenters took a closer look at the UNEP internet-based International Chemicals Management Toolkit for the Toys Supply Chain, which is under development, and the current Internet-based Toolbox for Decision Making in Chemicals Management (IOMC Toolbox). These toolkits were used as case studies and participants were taken through the development process of toolkits, the content of the toolkits and how to use them for effective chemicals management.

When participants were asked what the core challenges were in making useful guidance for company practitioners and ways to overcome them, they stated that the main challenges were integrating chemical guidance into the current systems used in the supply chain, sharing the knowledge with the people working on the floor, dealing with products containing chemicals, and making the guidance easy to use for users. Participants suggested building capacity for professionals in developing countries; increasing the toolkit's accessibility using a user-friendly online platform (through the internet but also through smartphones); reaching out to suppliers and producers for more guidance while developing these tools. Participants added that the toy industry's supply chain needs more support on stakeholders' collaboration, research, as well as financing of the management system, and ease of access to the toolkits.

Regarding the content of the toolkit, participants stated that having the whole value chain of a product or chemicals visible in the toolkit to understand where the materials come from, how are they processed, used and what happens in the end-of-life phase as well as regulatory information will be beneficial for practitioners. However, it was clarified that toolkits could only support the representation of the supply chains, but the actual implementing is specific for each product. Stakeholders identified the legislative part as the most important part of the toolkit, followed by the background information on classification, and the guidance on communication with suppliers.

This discussion highlighted that it is a key challenge that toolkits are known and used by those people who need them. Depending on the countries, there are various needs, regarding the content of the toolkit from information on how to get finances for e.g., substitution projects or on hazard identification. When the toolkits are not promoted, they do not reach their target group in the supply chain, i.e., the procurement departments (which communicates with the suppliers about what material to be used and not be used- a crucial step? to Chemicals management). Awareness raising is very important because it has a direct impact on how much the toolkit is used.

Participants were given a live demonstration of the IOMC toolbox, what it contains and how to use it to get the information needed. Other than the first toolkit presented, it is addressed to countries and their governments and support the implementation of national chemicals management rather than that in companies. Participants stated that the biggest hurdles they face when setting up or improving their Chemicals management are ensuring compliance and enforcement of chemicals' regulations, maintaining cooperation between stakeholders, and securing finance for the management system in place.

The IOMC toolbox has information readily available on many chemical topics and will be updated with additional information in the next phase of the toolkit (topics such as pesticides and waste management will be added). The OECD and the other IOMC participating organisations offer capacity building to developing countries and countries with economies in transition to train the governments establish or improve their Chemicals management system. Contact Valérie Frison for any request at valerie.frison@oecd.org

This session highlighted the need for more awareness raising and consolidation of toolkits once the toolkits are live to assist other countries with information and capacity building.

ANNEX

DETAILED SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION:

Disclaimer: The information in this digest represents the opinions of members participating, from different stakeholder groups, expressed during the discussion. The views expressed in this document do not necessarily represent the opinion or the stated policy of the United Nations Environment Programme, the SAICM Secretariat, the GEF or UCT, nor does citing of trade names or commercial processes constitute an endorsement.

THE DISCUSSION WAS STRUCTURED AROUND THREE QUESTIONS AND THE KEY DISCUSSION INPUTS FROM PARTICIPANTS ARE PRESENTED UNDER EACH QUESTION:

Q1. What do you think are the core challenges in making a useful guidance /chemicals management toolkit for company practitioners? How can you overcome them?

Country	Participant's responses
BRASIL (PRIVATE)	- The first challenge is to integrate the guidance into procurement's current systems and processes (Business - supply chain). Another challenge is the lack of prioritization and support to have full integration of Chemicals management inside global organizations.
GUYANA (GOVERNMENT)	- Lack of knowledge/understanding the toolkit by countries' personnel in conducting the assessment. There is a need to build capacity for these personnel in developing countries.
GERMANY (IGO)	- Keeping the guidance up to date, - Making it easy for users - Preparing the information specifically for new substances and/ or specific ways of use (tests might be completed in advance - requires resources)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Finding an online platform that can be accessible for everyone in the value chain (Internet, Smartphones, in which language?). - Reaching to the suppliers and producers
OTHERS (COUNTRY AND SECTOR NOT SPECIFIED)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There are difficulties in collaborating with relevant stakeholders when making the guiding document. A more inclusive process where information is shared with all stakeholders and regional collaboration is encouraged. - General hazards' classifications not reflecting in the guidance.
USA (PRIVATE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The greatest challenge is making the leap from a list of chemicals with hazardous properties to the level of risk in products. - Consistent agreement on which chemicals create the greatest risks across jurisdictions, and how to reduce these.

Throughout the discussion, informal polls were conducted to help encourage discussion among the participants. They do not provide any representative data.

- Poll 1, (n=14): What are the aims and principles of the toolkit you consider most important (three can be ticked)?**
- To raise awareness on chemicals of concern in toys, 24%, (n=10)
 - To raise awareness of chemicals risk management using a systematic and continuous approach, 22%, (n=9)
 - To offer a modular approach so that users can access it from different angles and perspectives, 17%, (n=7)
 - To ensure that the toolbox is sufficient to solve most of the specific problems a user might encounter, 15%, (n=6)
 - To be a unique entry point to tools and guidance from other sources, (10%), n=4,
 - To create an understanding of the needs and value of the supply chain, 7%, (n=3)
 - To explain basics rather than try to be complete and cover too many cases, 5%, (n=2)
 - Other (Please specify in the chat), 0%, (n=0)

- Poll 2, n=11: What are the most urgent support needs of actors in the supply chain (Word – cloud)?**
- Most urgent support:**
- Collaboration
 - Research
 - Finance
 - Easy to use
- All needs**
- Raising awareness
 - Financial support
 - Expects Collaboration
 - Legal assistance
 - Instructions
 - Tax-free
 - Research Finance
 - Human resources
 - Training
 - Making it easy to adopt and simple to understand
 - Easy to use
 - Attract attention and education how to use it
 - Incentivizing policies
 - Consumer satisfaction
 - Finance research collaboration
 - Multiple language
 - User friendly
 - Easy to use
 - Hazard and Risk
 - Awareness country specific language training
 - GHS
 - Social media

Poll 2 (cont), n=11: What are the most urgent support needs of actors in the supply chain (Word – cloud)?

Responses from the chat

BRASIL (PRIVATE)

- The toolkit needs to be cost-effective or free to use.
- Toolkit available in multiple languages and user-friendly systems not too complex.

GERMANY (IGO)

- Making the platform well-known and trustworthy. Publicity might be useful or a policy, convention, certificate, or label after use.

Q2. What type of guidance in terms of content and form is useful for (all) the members of the toys' supply chain?

Country	Participant's responses
GERMANY (IGO)	- Having the whole value chain of a product or chemicals visible in the toolkit to understand where the materials come from, how they are processed, used and what happens in the end-of-life phase (what alternatives might be possible - reuse, recycling?) and the risks, hazards, and emissions in every stage of the value chain
OTHERS (COUNTRY NAME AND SECTOR NOT SPECIFIED)	- A checklist with necessary steps for evaluating the risk of products, with a backup of more detailed information. - All levels of the supply chain must provide the Material Safety Data Sheet of the products.
SOUTH AFRICA (PRIVATE)	- Product and regulatory information from manufacturer/ supplier; product formulation (ingredients) registered in country-specific inventory lists where products are sold, country legislation, etc.
TANZANIA	- Regulatory information and Safety Data Sheets
TANZANIA (GOVERNMENT)	- Information on exposure levels and safe levels is important and useful guidance.

Throughout the discussion, informal polls were conducted to help encourage discussion among the participants. They do not provide any representative data.

Poll 3, n=16: What sections of the toolkit do you consider most important? Please rank (1 highest, 6 lowest importance)

- First choice: **Legislation**
- Second choice: **Background and classification**
- Third choice: **Communication with suppliers**
- Fourth choice: **Taking inventory of chemicals**
- Fifth choice: **Substitution**
- Sixth choice: **Customer communication**

Poll 5, n=12: How do you think the use of the toolkit can be best promoted/incentivized? (Word cloud)

Best ways to promote the toolkit:

- **Demonstrations**
- **Social media**
- **Awareness raising**

All suggestions:

- **Industry associations**
- **Public procurement**
- **Webinars**
- **Trade Associations**

Poll 5 (cont), n=12: How do you think the use of the toolkit can be best promoted/incentivized? (Word cloud)

All suggestions:

- Education exhibition
- Safety
- Policy and legislations
- General education
- Translations
- Awareness raising Advocacy
- Social media workshops
- Public awareness
- International label over associations
- Stakeholder engagement
- Mass media
- Campaign Publication
- Chemicals companies
- Regulatory agencies
- Email communication

Q3. How can the IOMC Toolbox help set up or improve your Chemicals management system in a cost-effective way?

Country	Participant's responses
GERMANY (IGO)	- The IOMC toolbox can enrich the sustainability aspects of the value chain.
SOUTH AFRICA (Academia)	- The fact that this toolkit allows for a user to state what level of resources they may have and that the information is then tailored to that is great. Especially for LMICs who are often under-resourced and struggle to obtain sound Chemicals management because of this. Are there members from LMICs who would agree with this and find this aspect of the toolkit useful?

QUESTIONS FROM PARTICIPANTS

RESPONSES FROM PRESENTER

GERMANY (NGO)	The IOMC Toolbox is regularly kept up to date (the lists of chemicals are external links).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How often does OECD update/revise the toolkits? Some toolkits include references to, for example, international conventions, like the Stockholm and the Rotterdam Conventions. Both conventions include lists of chemicals that are expanding nearly every time after COPs. Does OECD reflect these and other changes in the revisions of the toolkits? _ 	
IRAN (ACADEMIA)	IOMC Toolbox work is exclusively for developing countries
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have been following OECD for years, but the problem is that OECD is not for many developing countries. 	

Poll 6, (n=14): What are the biggest hurdles you face in your country/organisation in setting up or improving your Chemicals management?

- Compliance and enforcement, 21%, (n=10)
- Cooperation between the stakeholders, 19%, (n=9)
- Financing the management system, 19%, (n=9)
- Finding information on chemical hazards, 17%, (n=8)
- Public awareness, 15%, (n=7)
- Finding information on legislation, 9%, (n=4)
- Other (Please specify in the chat), 0%, (n=0)

Poll 7, n=10: What other topics would you like to see in the IOMC Toolbox?

Circular Economy

- Applying circular economy principles to chemicals' chain supply
- Sustainable Chemistry, Circularity/Circular Economy, Recycling, design for Recycling, LCA
- Implementing green chemistry

Regulation

- Exposure evaluation
- National management
- Stakeholder engagement

Pesticides and Chemicals

- Occupational Safety Standards on the use of chemicals in workplaces
- Pesticide regulations in developing countries.
- Alternatives to dangerous pesticides especially banned ones
- To address chemical issues

Responses from the chat:

BENIN (NGO)

- Alternatives to chemical products and pesticides

Helpful resources:

- OECD Website on the risk management of chemicals
<https://www.oecd.org/chemicalsafety/risk-management/>
- Tools website of the EU Life project
<https://www.fitreach.eu/content/tools>
- The IOMC Internet-based Toolbox for Decision Making in Chemicals Management (IOMC Toolbox) website
www.iomctoolbox.org

CiP CoP: The Secretariat of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) and the Environmental Health Division at the University of Cape Town (UCT) created this Community of Practice (CoP) to foster online discussions and address key issues on Chemicals in Products (CiP) among stakeholders from governments, international organizations, industry, academia and civil society.

This CoP is contributing to the SAICM/GEF project on Emerging Chemicals Policy Issues Knowledge Management Component. This activity is supported by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) project ID: 9771 on *Global Best Practices on Emerging Chemical Policy Issues of Concern under the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM)*.

If you have any questions or require clarification on this initiative, please contact the SAICM Secretariat at saicm.chemicals@un.org or UCT at uctcops@outlook.com.

Join the CiPs CoP at: <https://saicmknowledge.org/community>

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