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Task Force on Hazard Assessment

MAKING ECHEMPORTAL MORE USER-FRIENDLY AND TRANSPARENT

3rd Meeting of the Task Force on Hazard Assessment

29-30 June 2010, OECD Conference Centre
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This document is a report from the Steering Group for the Development of the Global Portal on how to make eChemPortal more user-friendly and transparent in the context of the expanding scope of different products disseminated by eChemPortal.

ACTION REQUIRED: ***The Task Force is invited to discuss the report.***

Background

1. At the time of the launch in June 2007, eChemPortal contained links to information on existing chemicals focusing on hazard information made available by governmental authorities.

2. Since then, the scope of the information contained in eChemPortal has been expanded to:

- New industrial chemicals, pesticides and biocides.
- National classification results according to the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS).
- Risk assessments.
- Data sets (Phase 2 of eChemPortal).
- Property data made available by governmental authorities but not reviewed, e.g. submitted by Industry to REACH-IT.

3. At its last meeting on 18-20 November 2010, the OECD Task Force on Hazard Assessment discussed the possibility of expanding the scope of the information disseminated by eChemPortal to:

- Schedules of assessments, testing proposals and testing plans in countries/regions.

  A survey is being performed in order to analyze exactly what information exists and is available on the Internet. The Task Force requested that the eChemPortal Steering Group be consulted in the future to find cost-effective solutions to disseminate the lists and schedules.

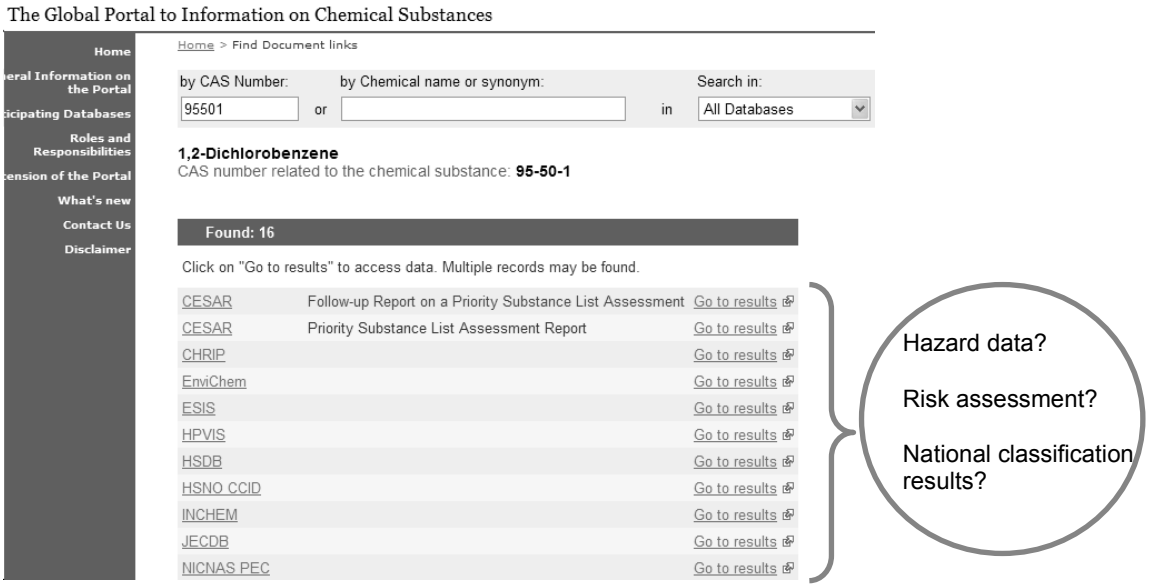
- Hazard and use data made available by non-governmental entities, e.g. Industry.

  The Task Force expressed concern at expanding the scope of eChemPortal to information made available by entities other than governmental authorities, but acknowledged that the OECD member countries do not endorse the content of the information disseminated by eChemPortal.

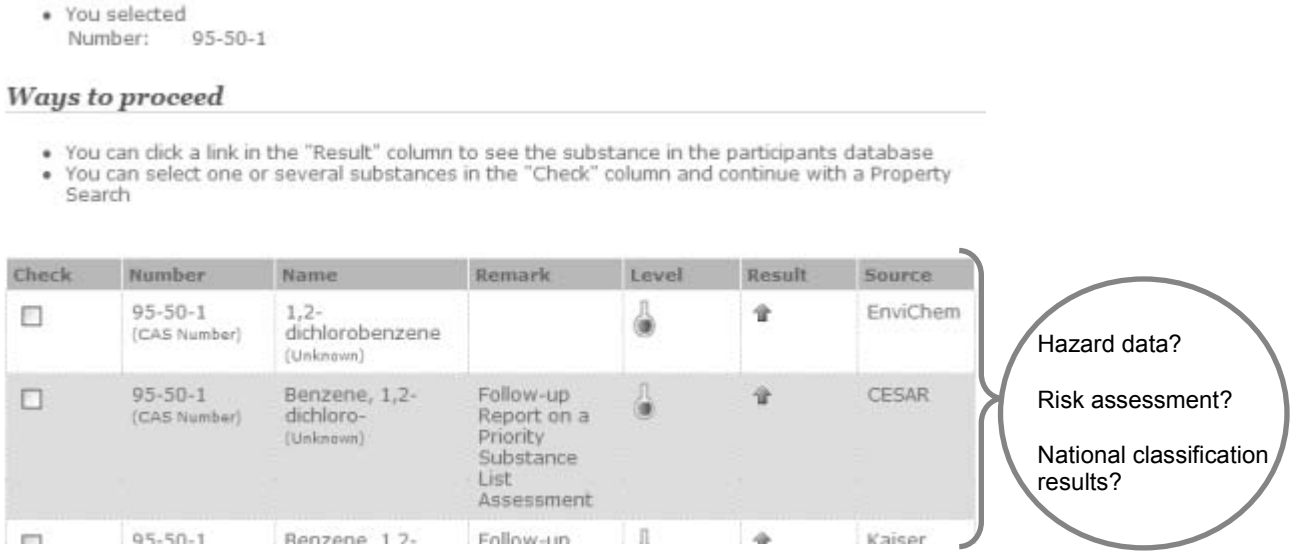
4. The Task Force recommended that the issue of expanding the scope of eChemPortal should be re-discussed as part of a more general issue on how to guide the user of eChemPortal to information of interest and how to increase transparency regarding the information that is accessible via eChemPortal.

5. Currently a description of the type of information contained in participating data sources is available in the eChemPortal web pages which describe each participating data source. On the eChemPortal search page and search results pages there is no way to differentiate between data sources containing different types of information.

Phase 1 search results page (current eChemPortal site)



Phase 2 beta-version search results page (Launch planned for 4th quarter 2010)



6. The Task Force invited the Steering Group for the Development of the Global Portal to submit a report to the Task Force on Hazard Assessment on how to make eChemPortal more user-friendly and transparent in the context of the expanding scope of different products disseminated by eChemPortal.

Points for consideration

7. Several points should be considered regarding how to make eChemPortal more user-friendly and transparent.

8. The type of information contained in each participating source should be clearly indicated, e.g. hazard assessment, national GHS classification.

9. One of the current added values of eChemPortal in comparison with numerous other portals of information on chemicals is that eChemPortal focuses on information received from regulatory authorities. Care should be taken not to loose this added value. If the scope of eChemPortal is expanded to contain information from different sources, eChemPortal should clearly indicate the type of source of information, for example "regulatory authority (reviewed)", "regulatory authority (un-reviewed)" or "Industry".

10. The effort needed on the part of data sources to participate in eChemPortal should be kept to a minimum. Any additional requirements from participants have to be taken into consideration.

11. No solution should be implemented that requires changes to the eChemPortal Phase 2 Catalogue, XML notification formats and data provider agents, thus requiring resources to update both eChemPortal and participating data sources. Providing a user with information on the "type" of information for each record of a participating data source rather than for the data source as a whole would require such changes. Though this would be the most user-friendly way to indicate "type" (because one database can contain more than one type), it is unsustainable. A list of possible "types" would have to be established and implemented in the eChemPortal Catalogue, notification tickets, and a new field would have to be added to data provider agents and participating databases. Every time the scope of information that is disseminated by eChemPortal is expanded, the Catalogue, notification tickets, data provider agents, and participating databases would have to be updated.

12. Resources have to be found to implement any solution requiring development to eChemPortal.

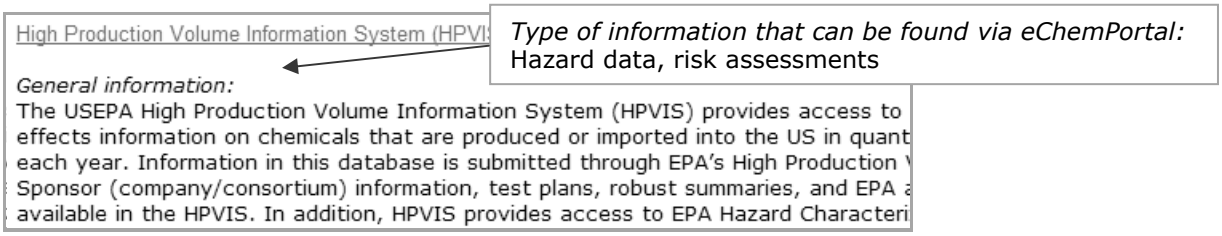
Possible solutions

Solution 1 – Highlight information on type and source on participating data source descriptions

13. The type(s) of information that can be found via eChemPortal and type of source of information are clearly listed in eChemPortal under a new heading, "Type of information that can be found via eChemPortal", on the web pages in eChemPortal which describe each participating data source.

14. Currently this information is contained under the headings "General information", "Hazard information", "Maintenance", and "Peer review" including any other information that can be found in the local data source but cannot be found via eChemPortal.

15. This solution can also help establish a "type" list needed for Solution 2 or 3 if one of them is implemented in the future.



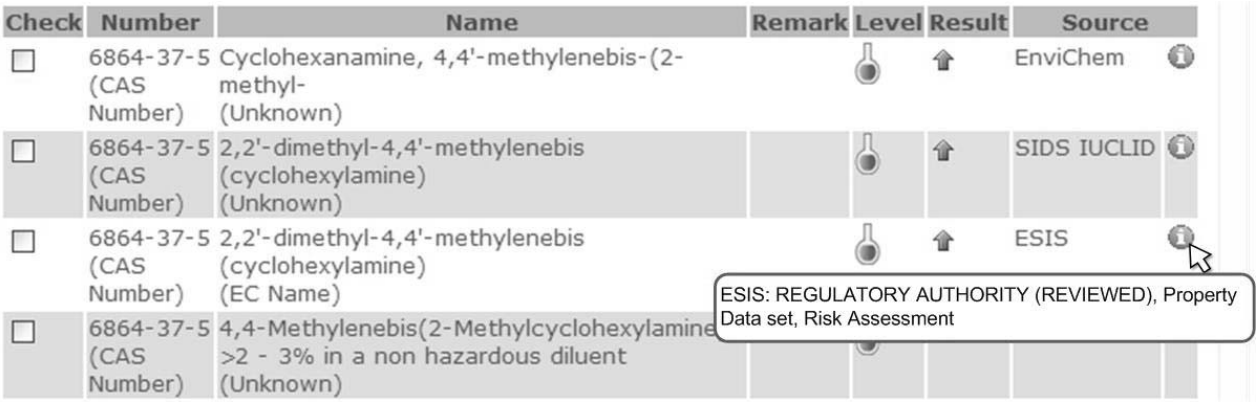
16. The advantages of Solution 1 are that it is the easiest solution to implement and is cost-free.

17. The disadvantage is that the type of information is not indicated on the search results page, however a link to a description of the participating data source is available on the search results page.

Solution 2 – Add new information elements to the results table

18. In order to improve transparency, additional information elements contained in hover-over text can be used when the cursor passes over the participating data source acronym, or an icon created for this purpose, on the results table. These elements describe the type of information (and type of source, if the scope of eChemPortal is expanded) of the participating data source.

19. Containing the information in hover-over text avoids crowding the search result screen with repetitive information. Having the hover-over text appear when hovering over an item in the "Source" column would illustrate that the information is related to the participating data source and not necessarily to a specific record of that participating data source. This is important as each data source can contain more than one type of information.



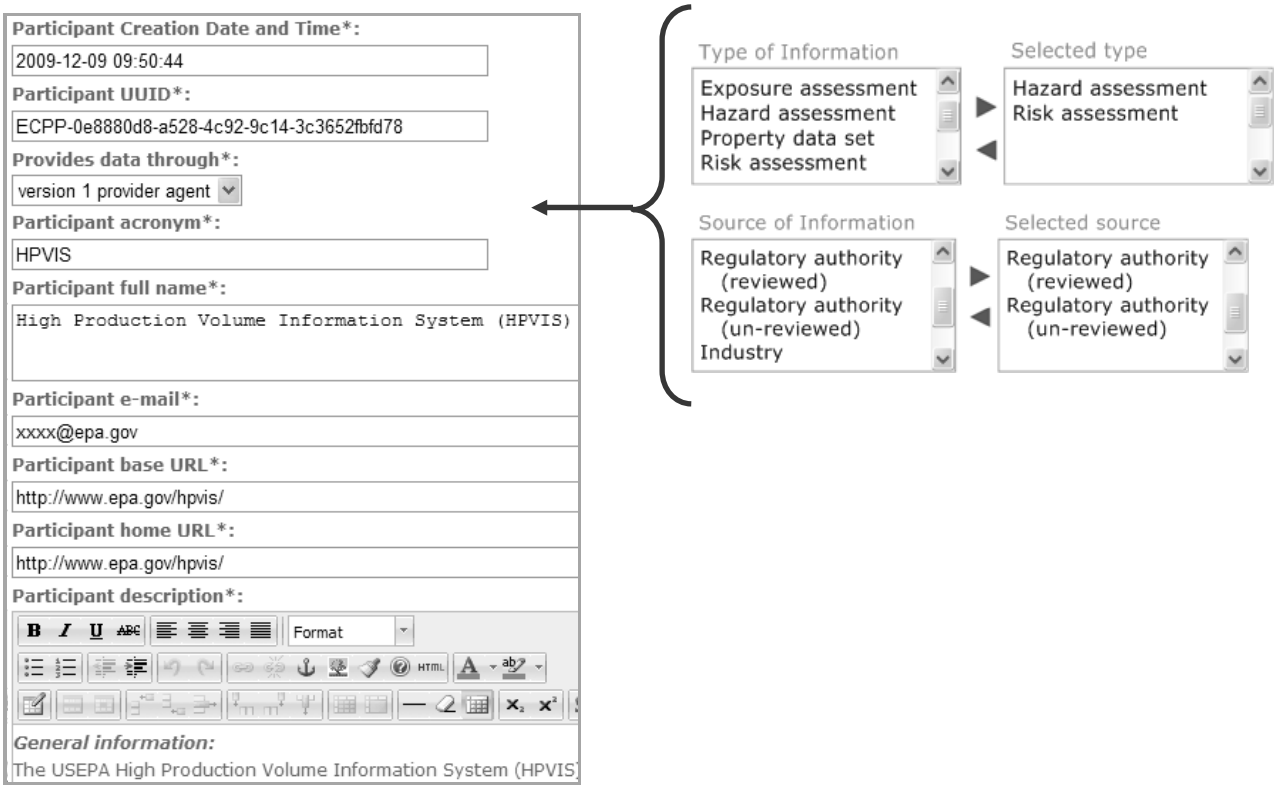
20. In order to display the information on "type", a "type of information" flag/s is added to the participating data source profile in eChemPortal. This is done by the eChemPortal administrator with a function allowing the administrator to choose one or more "types" for each data source.

21. A list of "types" of information is pre-defined. The eChemPortal administrator has the ability to add new items to the list as the scope of eChemPortal expands. The following are examples of possible types:

- Property data set
- Hazard assessment
- Risk assessment
- Exposure assessment
- Industry safety assessment
- National GHS classification
- Use pattern
- Schedule of assessment
- Testing proposal and plan
- Etc.

22. If the scope of eChemPortal is expanded to different sources, then a list of "sources" of information is pre-defined and this information is flagged. The following are examples of sources of information:

- Regulatory authority (reviewed)
- Regulatory authority (un-reviewed)
- Industry

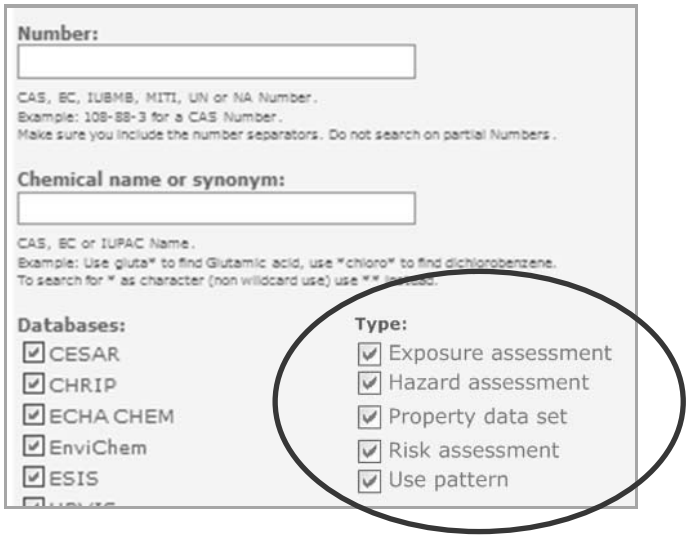


23. The advantage of this solution is that users can more easily see the information from the results page.

24. The disadvantage is that the solution requires development to eChemPortal. However it does not require development on the part of the participating data sources; they just have to indicate to the eChemPortal administrator the type(s) of information that their data sources contain.

Solution 3 - Implement a search by "type"

25. In order to improve usability as well as transparency, instead of displaying additional elements in the search result, a search function is added that allows users to search by all, some, or one of specific "types" of information. Results are only returned for records of data sources containing the type of information selected. The same administrative functions as those for Solution 2 are developed as well as the new search function.



26. The disadvantage of this solution is that if one data source submits more than one type of information, it is not possible to ascribe "type" at a record level. For example, if a data source is defined as containing both hazard data and risk assessments, all records of the data source will be searched even if the user only selects a search on hazard data. Finding results on risk assessments when hazard data was selected could confuse the user.

Proposal

27. The Steering Group proposes the following.

28. Solution 1, "Highlight information on type and source on participating data source descriptions", should be implemented to increase transparency of the current information in eChemPortal.

29. Solution 2, "Add new information elements to the results table", should be implemented in the future, if resources are found. Only the "type of information" element should be added and displayed. If the scope of eChemPortal is expanded to other types of sources of information, then a "type of source" element should be added and displayed as well. Solution 2 would require roughly 8 days of development work and 2 days of project management and testing.

30. Solution 3, implement a search by "type", is not needed at the current time. This function can be considered in the future, resources allowing, if the scope of eChemPortal is expanded to very different types of information and sources. At that time the following questions should be answered in order to decide whether the development is warranted:

- How many different types of information are contained in the participating data sources as a whole?

- How many participating data sources contain more than one type of information? If too many databases contain too many different types of information then the solution is not feasible.

- Is a search by "Type of source" warranted, even if a search by "Type of information" is not? (Solution 2 could be considered as well to display "Type of information").

- How could additional search items be implemented without crowding the search screen?

Annex 1 contains a list of current Phase 1 and additional planned Phase 2 participants and the type of information they contain and the type of source.

31. Solution 3 would require roughly 13 days of work to implement search by type, 17 days to implement search by type and source (pure development time).

32. Depending on the outcome of the survey on what information on schedules of assessments, testing proposals and testing plans exists and is available on the Internet, different solutions can be considered. If not enough information exists in a format to be included as a regular participant to eChemPortal, links to schedules, etc. can be made from an eChemPortal web page on "other information of interest".

ANNEX 1
LIST OF CURRENT AND ADDITIONAL PLANNED PHASE 2 PARTICIPANTS

Below is a table containing the current Phase 1 and additional planned Phase 2 participants and what type of information they contain and the source.

Acronym	Database	Type	Source
Current participants			
CESAR	Canada's Existing Substances Assessment Repository	Risk assessment	Regulatory authority (reviewed)
CHRIP	Information on Biodegradation and Bioconcentration of the Existing Chemical Substances in the Chemical Risk information platform (CHRIP)	Property data set	Regulatory authority (reviewed)
EnviChem	Data Bank of Environmental Properties of Chemicals	Property data set	Regulatory authority (un-reviewed)
ESIS	European chemical substances information system (ESIS)	Property data set Risk assessment	Regulatory authority (reviewed)
GHS-J	The Result of the GHS Classification by the Japanese Government	National GHS classification	Regulatory authority (reviewed)
HPVIS	High Production Volume Information System (HPVIS)	Property data set Hazard assessment	Regulatory authority (reviewed) Regulatory authority (un-reviewed)
HSDB	Hazardous Substance Data Bank	Hazard assessment	Peer-reviewed (by the Scientific Review Panel [SRP])
HSNO CCID	New Zealand Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Chemical Classification Information Database	National GHS classification	Regulatory authority (reviewed)
INCHEM	Chemical Safety Information from Intergovernmental Organizations - INCHEM	Hazard assessment, risk assessment Pesticides, National GHS classification	Regulatory authority (reviewed)
JECDB	Japan Existing Chemical Data Base	Hazard assessment	Regulatory authority (reviewed)
NICNAS PEC	Australian National Industrial Chemicals Notification and Assessment Scheme (NICNAS) Priority Existing Chemical Assessment Reports	Risk assessment	Regulatory authority (reviewed)
OECD HPV	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) High Production Volume (HPV) Database	Property data set Hazard assessment Schedule of assessment	Regulatory authority (reviewed)
SIDS UNEP	OECD Initial Assessment Reports for HPV Chemicals including Screening Information Data Sets (SIDS) as maintained by United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Chemicals	Hazard assessment	Regulatory authority (reviewed)
US EPA IRIS	United States Environmental Protection Agency Integrated Risk Information System	Risk assessment	Regulatory authority (reviewed)
US EPA SRS	United States Environmental Protection Agency Substance Registry Services	Portal	Regulatory authority (reviewed)
UK CCRMP Outputs	UK Coordinated Chemicals Risk Management Programme Publications	Risk assessment, Hazard assessment	Regulatory authority (reviewed)
Planned Phase 2 participants			
	ECHA Dissemination	Property data set	Regulatory authority (reviewed) Regulatory authority (un-reviewed)
	High Production Volume Information System (HPVIS)	Property data set	Regulatory authority (reviewed) Regulatory authority (un-reviewed)
	Japan CHEmicals collaborative Knowledge database (J-CHECK)	Property data set	Regulatory authority (reviewed)
	OECD SIDS Database	Property data set	Regulatory authority (reviewed)