

For Official Use

ENV/JM/HA(2010)9

Organisation de Coopération et de Développement Économiques
Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

04-Jun-2010

English - Or. English

**ENVIRONMENT DIRECTORATE
JOINT MEETING OF THE CHEMICALS COMMITTEE AND THE WORKING PARTY ON
CHEMICALS, PESTICIDES AND BIOTECHNOLOGY**

Task Force on Hazard Assessment

DATA EXCHANGE ON GHS CLASSIFICATIONS

3rd Meeting of the Task Force on Hazard Assessment

**29-30 June 2010, OECD Conference Centre
2 rue André-Pascal, 75016 Paris**

Anne Gourmelon

Phone: +33 (0)1 45 24 98 49; Fax: +33 (0)1 44 30 61 80; Email: anne.gourmelon@oecd.org

JT03284853

Document complet disponible sur OLIS dans son format d'origine
Complete document available on OLIS in its original format



**ENV/JM/HA(2010)9
For Official Use**

English - Or. English

This document is a follow-up activity from discussions at the 45th Joint Meeting on the outcome of the analysis of the classification of selected chemicals listed in Annex III of the Rotterdam Convention [see ENV/JM/(2010)6 and ENV/JM/M(2010)1]. This document proposes options to promote information exchange among OECD stakeholders on classifications of chemicals according to the GHS. Three options are proposed for discussion.

ACTION REQUIRED: *The Task Force is invited to discuss the options proposed in the document and to indicate the preferred way to proceed for the exchange of information related to chemical classifications.*

BACKGROUND

1. The Programme on the OECD Cooperation on the Assessment of Chemicals after 2010 [see ENV/JM/HA(2010)22] includes a project aiming at:

- Improving access to information on national/regional GHS classifications, e.g. via eChemPortal.
- Providing a forum to identify commonalities and differences in implementation and actual classifications and to find out the reasons for the differences.

2. The first objective described above is already implemented through an action already presented at the last meeting of the Task Force [see also UN/SCEGHS/19/INF.6].

3. To address the second objective, it was agreed at the last meeting of the Task Force on Hazard Assessment in November 2009 to encourage public availability of the underlying dataset for any classification as well as transparent information about the data interpretation relative to the relevant classification criteria as far as that would be practicably possible [see ENV/JM/HA/M(2009)5].

4. In February 2010, the 45th Joint Meeting further considered the utility of a forum to discuss and build awareness and understanding of issues faced by experts in relation to classification and labelling. Options described below describe possible ways to enable exchange of information and discussion.

POSSIBLE OPTIONS TO FACILITATE EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION

Option 1: encourage countries developing classifications to publicly share datasets and rationale (country-driven activity)

5. Most OECD member countries have a regulatory programme in place requiring the use of criteria developed by the Globally Harmonised System (GHS) when classifying chemicals for the identified hazard(s). Previous experience demonstrated that although criteria for classification are harmonised, the outcome can vary depending on the data sets available at the time the classification is established, and also depending on the interpretation of the data. These were identified as two important sources of variation in classification outcomes [see ENV/JM/MONO(2010)7 on the analysis of GHS classification of selected PIC chemicals across OECD countries, No. 119 in the OECD Series on Testing and Assessment].

6. This experience should serve as an incentive for countries to systematically publish the data sets supporting the classification developed domestically. Countries, regions or industry may choose between publishing the datasets domestically, together with the classifications, or may submit a chemical assessment (SIDS endpoints or targeted assessment) to the OECD HPV Chemicals Programme if the chemical is of sufficient global interest. The advantage of submitting a chemical assessment to the OECD HPV Chemicals Programme is to have the justification for the classification in the assessment report, published together with the dataset, under a harmonised format agreed by countries.

7. The classification itself would not be discussed at the OECD and would remain a national product that could simply be referenced in eChemPortal. This option requires stakeholders to take all the initiative, with very little action/discussion at the OECD, except maybe if the chemical assessment is discussed at SIAM.

8. Stakeholders would have the responsibility to ensure visibility of both the classification and the underlying data on their domestic Internet site, and both should be easily accessible through eChemPortal, to allow statistics to be made. Under this option the OECD Secretariat would carry out regular reviews of the situation, and report to the Task Force on Hazard Assessment and to the Joint Meeting.

Option 2: countries publicly share datasets and are offered an informal forum with restricted access for discussion (OECD informal electronic forum)

9. Further to Option 1, stakeholders may want to ask questions or propose additional data on an existing classification. This could be done via a restricted-access electronic forum where exchange remains amongst experts working on chemical classification in OECD countries.

10. Such an e-forum would include contacts of national/regional experts working on chemical classification. BIAC would also have access. The e-forum would have a very light structure, maintained by the OECD Secretariat. However, the OECD would not be involved in discussions and no meetings or resource would be dedicated to consensus building. Countries establishing a classification would not necessarily have to address or respond to comments made; it would be up to each country to decide how they handle questions, comments and additional information.

11. However, in the case where additional data are offered on the e-forum and are subsequently taken into account for the (revised) classification, such data should be published as part of the underlying dataset. If the data is not taken into account for various reasons (e.g. data not valid, reliability cannot be established) for the derivation of a classification, then it is not important whether it is made public or if it remains on the e-forum only.

12. Similar to option 1, regular reviews of the implementation of option 2 would be made to the Task Force on Hazard Assessment and to the Joint Meeting.

Option 3: countries publicly share datasets and decide to occasionally discuss classification proposals at the OECD for selected chemicals (Occasional discussions on selected chemicals)

13. Occasionally, there may be a broad interest shared by several stakeholders to discuss a classification for selected chemicals of global interest. The chemical assessment would have to be discussed and conclusions agreed, as for a regular submission under the OECD HPV Chemicals Programme. Then, there could be time made available at a meeting (SIAM, Task Force on Hazard Assessment, or combined Task Force on Hazard Assessment and Task Force on Harmonisation of Classification and Labelling, or any other suitable venue) to discuss hazard conclusions and the resulting classification.

14. The outcome of such discussions could be used by countries as they wish.

- The country making the classification proposal may be satisfied with the discussion itself and decide on a classification without there being a consensus. Other countries may use the outcome of the discussion to decide on a classification for themselves. OECD would not publish any classification, only the hazard assessment.
- Countries may be very interested in reaching agreement on classification for some hazard endpoints for selected chemicals and the discussion may lead to such an agreement among countries.
- In case of consensus on a classification OECD would not necessarily publish the classification as OECD-wide agreed. Countries may decide for themselves if they want to apply this classification, and also if they want the agreement to be known beyond the OECD community.

15. It should be noted that initial discussions are taking place simultaneously at the UN Sub-Committee of Experts on the GHS on the possibility to develop international classification lists of chemicals [see UN/SCEGHS/19/INF.4 on Consolidated comments on the survey for existing international classification lists of chemicals].

16. Similar to options 1 and 2, regular reviews of implementation of option 3 would be made to the Task Force on Hazard Assessment and to the Joint Meeting.

COMMONALITIES BETWEEN OPTIONS PROPOSED

17. For all three options, underlying datasets and a justification should be published by parties proposing a chemical classification. This is the minimum step to take to start addressing issues raised in the analysis of classification of selected chemicals included in Annex III of the Rotterdam Convention [see ENV/JM/MONO(2010)7, No.119 in the OECD Series on Testing and Assessment]. This initial step could help reduce discrepancies in classification among countries.

18. In addition, for each of the proposed option, a regular review of the implementation of the option taken would be carried out by the OECD Secretariat. This should help countries monitor efficiency of consented efforts.