



# Challenges companies face regarding needs of information on chemicals

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ChemSec

***SAICM Side Event ICCM2  
Information on Chemicals in Products  
12 May 2009 Geneva, Switzerland***



# ChemSec

The International Chemical Secretariat

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- i) A coalition of environmental organisations**
- ii) serves as a forum for parties working for better chemical control**
- iii) monitors the development of Chemical policies in Europe and elsewhere**
- iv) seeks to strengthen support for progressive legislation, in particular among business actors**





# NGO Advisory Committee

	 European Unit	
		 European Policy Office



## ChemSec's Business group

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Established in 2003 with members such as:

- **Dell**
- **Boots the Chemist**
- **B&Q**
- **Sara Lee**
- **Skanska**
- **Sony Ericsson**
- **L'Oreal**
- **Eureau**



# ChemSec's Business group feedback: Why is this information on chemicals in products required?

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- **Regulation/compliance**
- **Brand-name/consumer demands**
- **Waste management**
- **Workers protection**
- **Investor interest**
  - The Investor Environmental Health Network, encouraging TUR policies, eg through shareholder resolutions: [www.iehn.org](http://www.iehn.org)
- **Damage control/avoidance!**

## Why we do it

- Experience is Sweden
  - many widely available building materials not fully “legal”
- We use “materials” not “chemicals”
  - “blends” not “molecules”
- We use “brands” not “chemicals”
  - serious cross-border issue
- Rising energy efficiency requirements leading to more air-tight buildings
  - indoor climate critical => must avoid toxics

# Therefore we have to proactively.....

## Protect our workforce

- Technically illiterate when it comes to chemicals  
=> Short-term exposure may create long-term harm

## Protect the public

- Buildings typically last many decades  
=> Long-term public exposure risk – encourage clients to “future-proof”

## Protect ecosystems

# Challenges in retrieving information from suppliers

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- **What info to request?**
  - *If you don't know what chemicals are in a material, how do you know what to even look for?*
- **Cooperation/Compliance**
  - *"Sometimes they don't want to tell" what their products contain*
- **Chemicals used in processes**
  - *Do you ask the relevant questions?*
- **What criteria used?**
  - Agreement on relevant criteria?
  - Does supplier understand criteria?



# Challenges in retrieving information from suppliers

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## Cooperation/Compliance

- *“Sometimes they don’t want to tell”* what their products contain
- Really don’t have the data
- Don’t understand what company is asking for
- It’s not their level of transparency
- It may be a trade secret, an issue of intellectual property
- Don’t think hazard data is complete/relevant

## **Solutions found/developed to increase the flow of information in the supply-chain.**

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### ***Introducing a system in a sketchy landscape - Each actor inventing their own wheel?***

- Lists, lists, lists!
  - Dependent on external sources for chemicals safety info
  - Constant monitoring by Safety, Environmental, & Regulatory Affairs Department (in-house experts)
- Informing/educating the supply chain about needs and criteria used, eg through workshops, asking the right questions etc.
- Aligning requirements, eg BASTA, AFIRM, REACH, SIN?
- Regulation?
- Require full disclosure as Sony Ericsson

[WWW.SINLIST.ORG](http://WWW.SINLIST.ORG)  
REACH  
**S.I.N.\***  
LIST  
\*SUBSTITUTE IT NOW!



# The Objective

To identify chemicals that meet the REACH criteria for Substances of Very High Concern, SVHC

- ...to assist REACH Implementation process
- ...to prioritize chemicals for phase-out
- ...to offer guidance to companies, consumers, regulators
- ...to promote safer alternatives

# Preparation of the REACH SIN List

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**NGO Advisory  
Group**

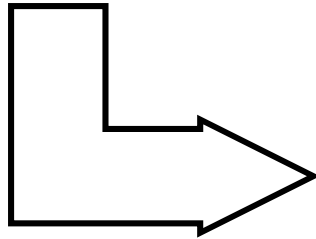
**Business  
Reference Group**

# Selection of substances subject to REACH

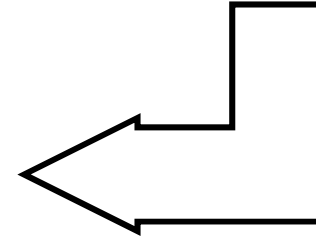
**220  
CMR  
substances**

**17  
PBT/vPvB  
substances**

**30  
Equivalent  
concern  
substances**



**SIN list  
267 subst.**





## How the SIN list is used today

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- Formal regulatory process
  - EU Member States Chemicals Agencies
- NGO Projects and campaigns
  - WECF: SIN chemicals in Toys
- Companies using SIN List, e.g. to guide/coordinate internal avoidance lists, communicate with suppliers, etc.



## **One Way forward: The BASTA System**

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**Skanska Sweden was involved in the creation of the BASTA system, along with others in the Swedish construction industry.**

**Objective: develop an industry standard for building products and a system to support phase-out of dangerous substances.**

**Serve as a model for other industries, e.g. textiles?**

**[www.bastaonline.se](http://www.bastaonline.se)**





## **One Way forward: The BASTA System**

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- **Based on intrinsic properties**
- **Register of products, not chemicals**
- **Suppliers registers products satisfying system requirements**

### **Result**

- **The supplier has full knowledge of the chemical content of its products**
- **The supplier has certified that the content of its products have none of the BASTA-specified dangerous properties**



## Needs to achieve increased flow of information in the supply-chain.

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- *Gradual understanding of “new responsibility for chemicals safety and the safety of consumers”.*
- *Needed mentality change within companies, industry maturation.*
- *Realization of “what chemicals management actually is and make it part of the way they do business”*
- Early information on alternative, sustainable products
- Harmonisation of requirements, criteria
- Regulation must foresee upstream compliance

# What we need from others

## **Suppliers**

- Clear and easy to understand information
- Proactive information on alternative "green" products

## **Producers**

- Acceleration of "green" product development/availability

## **Politicians**

- Harmonise information – address the "brand" issue
- Recognise that "materials" and "chemicals" are different
- Less dependancy on scientific measurement to set limits

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REACH  
**S.I.N\***  
LIST  
\*SUBSTITUTE IT NOW!

Thank you!

[www.chemsec.org](http://www.chemsec.org)