



Responsible Care[®] Zurich Breakout Group Discussions

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Steps to be considered by companies

- Prerequisite: REACH compliance & clear notion of boundaries of a company's responsibility
- Apply a PS management system incl. life cycle analysis approach
- Assess risks at each step of value chain incl. your own supply chain
- Seek to institutionalize your stakeholder dialogue; cooperate with stakeholders to weigh risks and benefits of a substance use against potential alternatives; face 'black lists'!
- Training & information of workers/all relevant members of supply chain
- Assure responsible handling of product by customer and refuse selling product where standards are not met
- Tailor communication channels to customer competency, size and position in value chain (good example: website like Electrolux)



Corporate PS policies

- Written PS policy is needed; SAICM is baseline objective – in developed countries: go beyond!
- Substitution only one element within broader framework
- Involve various corporate functions (product safety, R&D, marketing, communications, legal department)
- No ‘one fit for all’: difference between large companies with a broad portfolio and SMEs which sell only a few products
- Tools: self assessment questionnaire, customer audits, trade associations’ documents or position papers

Publicizing policies:

- Use annual report and website; marketing product safety policy = good for business & image
- Problems:
 - Can get in conflict with business interest (confidential business information!)
 - Possible perception as ‘green washing’



Influence by stakeholders

- Major influence by all stakeholders along the supply chain incl. media
- Key customers of special relevance
- NGOs: public & customers often follow their opinion – legislators follow public opinion
- Trade unions representing professions with specific exposure issues

Comments

- Trust helps to promote fact-based decisions by consumers
- Suppliers have to follow customer demand to avoid losing business
- Managing public perception and meeting stakeholder expectations difficult for SMEs



Effects on business

Positive

- Opens business opportunities
- Strengthens position for sustainable/long term success
- Being abreast with regulation and customer demand is competitive advantage
- Pays off in terms of recognition & image

Negative

- Major substitutions may imply change of core business
- Failure if no proper risk-benefit evaluation! Apply life cycle analysis approach to both, current product & its alternative
- Product safety incident in value chain could have drastic consequences

Steps to be considered by RC/associations



- Substitution is primarily not a RC issue!
- Development & sharing of best PS practices integrated in RC – Cefic can set up a general guidelines for national associations
- Promote & implement the Global Product Strategy (GPS) with your members (safety summaries on companies' websites)
- Possible role for RC to fill gap between REACH obligations (restricted to substances / preparations) and communications needs of manufacturers / retailers of consumer products
- RC companies can help SME customers in understanding risk assessments
- National associations to monitor and take up views of other trade organisations in the value chain
- Develop specific PS substance codes (like e.g. on chlorine) to prevent bans
- Promote scientific dialogue in layman's language to address perceptions



Stage of debate

- Getting started
- With REACH a systematic (and regulated) approach has started
- Cefic position paper



Special thanks to

Six discussion groups were led by the RC managers:

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- Sjoerd Looijs (The Netherlands)
- Caner Zanbak (Turkey)
- Alain Pierrat (France)
- John Roche (United Kingdom)
- Jesus Soriano (Spain)



Many Thanks for Your Attention! Questions?

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