

**General Issues Committee (GIC) for Canadian Implementation
of the Globally Harmonized System (GHS)
Meeting Summary
June 8, 2004**

In attendance:

Alan Cotterill	Stephen Rathlou	Shannon Coombs
Peter MacLeod	David Bennett	David Leong
Louis Laferriere	Jill Courtemanche	Otto Peter
Larry Stoffman	Sylvain Malo for Yves Brissette	Lisa Wardell
Abbey Klugerman	Lynn Ovenden	Brenda Linke
Kim Headrick	Brenda Everson	

Observers:

Jeff Bennie	Suranika Dias	Ken Loewen
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Regrets:

Bob Whiting	Greg Lawson / Jacques Savard	Brian Kohler
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Purpose of the meeting:

- 1 To introduce membership
- 2 To provide Canadian implementation overview and update on current activities (Canada and international)
- 3 To discuss the draft Terms of Reference
- 4 To provide input on the draft work plan

1 Membership

- Membership on the General Issues Committee is drawn from members of the Sectoral Working Groups. Jeff Bennie's membership on the WHMIS Current Issues Committee will be confirmed.
- Comment were made on the lack of members from not-for-profit organizations on Sectoral Working Groups.
- *Action: Submit any membership nominations to Alan Cotterill and Brenda Everson.*

2 Update on implementation and current activities (Kim Headrick)

- Brief history was given on the GHS and general principles of GHS implementation.
 - All types of chemicals will be covered; protections will not be reduced; all systems will have to be changed.
 - GHS is a non-binding agreement.
 - Countries and sectors within countries will decide how to implement.
 - GHS is a collection of building blocks.

- Canadian consultation process revolves around the multi-stakeholder sectoral working groups (pest control products, workplace chemicals, consumer products, transport of dangerous goods). Sectoral Working Groups were formed, based on delineation of regulatory authority.

- Sectoral Working Group Updates (Sector Chairs)
 - Work place chemicals--- (Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS)) (Abbey Klugerman)
 - The Current Issues Committee (CIC) is the forum for consultation on matters concerning the interpretation or modification of WHMIS; its role is to make recommendations to departments and agencies responsible for WHMIS legislation, including recommendations for modifications to WHMIS or changes in its scope.
 - The CIC met in November 2003. The participants unanimously agreed that the establishment of a multi-stakeholder umbrella group was a prerequisite to discussion on certain GHS issues.
 - WHMIS Classification Working Group has been established and will have first teleconference 17 June. WHMIS Hazard Communications Working Group will soon be established.
 - Initial contact with Occupational Safety and Health Agency (OSHA) has been made. Further contacts to share implementation work plans will continue.

 - Consumer Chemicals (Lisa Wardell)
 - Group addresses the GHS impact on consumer chemical products regulated under the *Consumer Chemicals and Containers Regulations (CCCR, 2001)*.
 - Two teleconferences have been held. Flammable Hazard Classes will be discussed on 15 June.
 - Contact with US Consumer Product Safety Commission has been made at the technical level. Further contacts will be made.
 - Membership can be expanded. Would appreciate names of consumer organizations who may have an interest in the Consumer Chemicals Sector Working Group.

 - Pest Control Products (Lynn Ovenden)
 - *Action: Lynn Ovenden to directly address David Bennett's questions on labour representation on the Pesticides Sectoral Working Group and status of the new regulations for pest control products .*

- There is a project under the NAFTA Technical Working Group (on Pesticides) to share information regarding GHS implementation issues, mechanisms and timing between Pest Management Regulatory Agency, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Mexico. The goal is to implement GHS as it relates to pesticides in a coordinated manner.
- The EPA is attending the Pesticides Sectoral Working Group teleconferences as observer.
- Teleconferences on skin/eye irritation and skin sensitization and physical hazards will be held end of June.

- Transportation of Dangerous Goods (update was given by Kim Headrick, in absence of Transport Canada)
 - The timing of Transport Canada's work will depend on the work plan of the UN Sub-Committee of Experts for the Transport of Dangerous Goods.
 - Transport Canada is involved with GHS discussions to meet objectives of Canadian implementation.

- United States and International Updates
 - International updates will be a standing agenda item at the GIC meetings.

 - European Union:
 - The EU has begun detailed consideration of GHS implementation.
 - Time table: Classification articles (July 2004); workshop and impact assessment (September 2004); regulatory instruments (October 2004); implementation (2008).
 - Implementation time frame is same as Canadian time frame.

 - US:
 - GHS is being used for NAFTA harmonization of hazard communication for work place chemicals and pest control products.
 - US is in the process of determining overall US coordination of GHS implementation, including how to facilitate implementation and developing the mechanism for stakeholder input.
 - OSHA has the situational analysis for workplace chemicals on their web site.

3 Review of Terms of Reference

Clarifications and discussions focussed on sections of the draft Terms of Reference--- Guiding Principles; Purpose of the General Issues Committee and General Membership

Guiding Principles

Wording should be added to the Guiding Principles, so as not to omit other signatories of the GHS.

- *Action: Health Canada to revise. If members have suggested wording, submit to Alan Cotterill and Brenda Everson.*

Purpose of the General Issues Committee

- The challenge of the GIC will be meeting the objectives of harmonization to the greatest extent between sectors, NAFTA countries and other signatories.
- This committee's recommendations can help frame Canada's input into NAFTA recommendations and discussions.
- The GIC is not a decision making or steering body, but provides oversight to ensure objectives are met consistently across sectors.
- The Sectoral Working Groups will be responsible for the final recommendations to the regulatory authority.
- *Action: Health Canada to revise. Members to submit any specific comments or wording suggestions to Alan Cotterill and Brenda Everson.*

General Membership

Decision was to keep the group at a manageable level. Decision to re-draft wording so that members are "selected" members from Sectoral Working Groups.

4 Review of Draft Work Plans (overview and detailed)

- There was some concern that the schedule timing may not match those of other countries and that some recommendations may need to be re-visited with additional other options once the positions of other countries are known.
- The current schedule was based on timing for 2008 implementation. Changes may need to be made as implementation progress is made internationally.

5 Next steps

- The next meeting is proposed for late October. The format (teleconference vs. face to face) will be determined at a later date.

last update: 6 July 2004