



Business and Industry Advisory Committee to the **OECD**

Comité Consultatif Economique et Industriel Auprès de l' **OCDE**

Why BIAC's contribution to OECD chemicals work matters

The OECD

The Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is a unique forum where the governments of 30 market democracies work together to address the economic, social and governance challenges of the globalising world economy as well as to exploit its opportunities. For over four decades, the Organisation has been one of the world's largest and most reliable sources of comparable statistics, economic and social data. The OECD is at the forefront of efforts to understand and to help governments to respond to new developments and concerns. The Organisation provides a setting where governments can compare policy experiences, seek answers to common problems, identify good practice and work to co-ordinate domestic and international policies. The OECD represented by its EHS Division is also a member of the Inter-Organisational Committee for the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC) and contributes to UN discussions on chemicals management.

BIAC

The Business and Industry Advisory Committee to the OECD (BIAC) was created in March 1962 as an independent organisation officially recognised by the OECD as being representative of the OECD business community. BIAC's members are the major industrial and employers' organisations in the 30 OECD member countries. Via its 34 standing committees and policy groups, BIAC mirrors all economic policy issues the OECD covers, and their impacts on both member and an increasing number of non-member countries. BIAC's main objectives are to contribute to OECD policies and programmes to reflect business priorities and provide members with information on OECD policies and their implications for business.

The chemicals industry in OECD

The chemicals industry is a very diverse sector producing tens of thousands of substances. It is important to note that chemicals produced by the chemicals industry are present in numerous products. The global chemicals industry is an important part of the world economy, accounting for approximately 7% of global income and 9% of international trade. The industry is a major employer with over 10 million people employed worldwide, with heavy reliance on research and development and constant need for innovation.¹ It is expected that industry will continue to expand over the next decades.

The OECD EHS Programme

The purpose of the OECD Environment, Health and Safety (EHS) Programme is to help governments reduce barriers to trade, optimise the use of resources, and save time and money for industry through co-operative working on the testing of chemicals, pesticides, and the products of biotechnology. The goal of harmonising national regulatory requirements is to eliminate

¹ OECD Environmental Outlook for the Chemicals Industry, 2001

“redundant” testing and assessment and enable countries and industry to join forces and divide up the work of chemicals evaluation as well as to achieve more consistency and coherence in chemicals management.

The system of Mutual Acceptance of Data (MAD), established through several Council Decisions, helps avoid conflicting data requirements, provides a common basis for co-operation, and avoids the creation of non-tariff barriers to trade. According to this system, OECD countries agreed that, when the various safety tests required for registration or notification purposes are carried out in one OECD country in accordance with the OECD Test Guidelines and Principles of Good Laboratory Practice (GLP), the other OECD countries will accept the data for assessment purposes. **The OECD work on mutual acceptance of data is estimated to save OECD governments and the chemicals industry more than US\$ 50 million a year.**²

The BIAC Chemicals Committee

BIAC set up a chemicals committee shortly after the creation of the OECD EHS Division in 1978 to provide adequate input into the programme. The Committee is currently chaired by Steve Russell from ACC (US), who is assisted by two vice chairs: Hugo Waeterschoot from Eurométaux (Belgium) and Masatoshi Ogura from JCIA (Japan). The committee has over 125 members representing both the organic and inorganic chemicals sector as well as downstream users from most OECD countries.

Committee members directly participate in the meetings of the OECD Joint Meeting of the OECD Chemicals Committee and the Working Party on Chemicals, Pesticides and Biotechnology, which sets the overall priorities of the OECD EHS programme, as well as in most subsidiary bodies. Through direct participation in OECD committee and task force meetings and through regular contacts with the OECD Secretariat, the BIAC Chemicals Committee has a first-hand opportunity to contribute to both the technical OECD work and overall policy directions.

Importance of BIAC involvement

BIAC is involved in the wide-range of OECD EHS activities, which consists of developing policies and programmes for chemical testing and assessment, providing a framework for “sharing the burden” of product evaluation as well as services to exchange experience and information. In addition to the high-quality technical work OECD does in the area of, for example, high-production volume (HPV) chemicals, new chemicals and the development of test guidelines, the Organisation has also become more involved recently in product policy related issues, which need to be carefully monitored to ensure that negative effects for industry are avoided. The following is a short list of activities, BIAC is involved in:

- [Existing Chemicals](#)
- [New Chemicals](#)
- [Test Guidelines](#)
- [Environmental Exposure Assessment](#)
- [Risk Management and Chemical Product Policies](#)
- [Sustainable Chemistry](#)
- [PRTR](#)
- [Chemical Accidents](#)
- [\(Q\)SAR Project](#)
- [Electronic tools / templates](#)
- [Pesticides / biocides](#)
- [Harmonisation of Classification and Labelling](#)

² OECD Annual report 2004

- Nanotechnology

To adequately cover this wide list of issues, the BIAC Chemicals Committee has set up a system of “issues champions”, who take the lead in monitoring specific projects in close co-operation with the Committee leadership. To ensure that the wide range of activities, including those related to products made from chemicals, can be covered, we rely on contributions from our wider membership, burden sharing within the committee and improved networking with the broader BIAC membership.

The Chemicals Committee’s overall priorities

The BIAC Chemicals Committee’s priorities, which are laid out hereafter, are divided into short term priorities (which focus on delivering expertise on ongoing issues), medium term priorities (to ensure that industry’s concerns are being considered in the overall direction of OECD projects) and long term priorities (to influence overall targets and the strategic vision of OECD)

Short-term: Help OECD focus on activities which create value and lead to savings for industry due to mutual acceptance of data. Support the OECD’s technical work in particular on harmonisation of programmes and tools as basis for its contribution to capacity building in chemicals management. BIAC brings considerable expertise to the table and works cooperatively with OECD as illustrated, for example, by work on mutual acceptance of notification of new chemicals, or the ICCA HPV initiative, which was designed to speed up the OECD Existing Chemicals Programme and to enhance the contribution to the Programme Area A of the Agenda 21, Chapter 19.

Medium-term: Ensure that product-related issues are in compliance with the overall EHS strategy. BIAC needs to ensure that concerns related to product policy issues are duly addressed and needs to carefully monitor related OECD initiatives to ensure that the overall direction of the project takes into account the concerns of industry as a whole. Downstream users need to be actively involved in any related products discussions.

Long-term: Determine the role and contribution of OECD in implementing the “Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management” (SAICM), which was initiated by the UNEP Governing Council in 2002 and contribute to the achievement of the overarching goal of the Johannesburg Summit regarding chemical safety globally. OECD, as the only “economic” organisation involved in the process potentially has an important role to ensure that the economic perspective is duly represented. We also recommend enhancing the political role and weight of the OECD within the IOMC and encourage the OECD to deal with emerging issues, such as the development of a global data portal to ensure public access on data.

To get involved

The BIAC Chemicals Committee usually meets twice a year, back-to-back with the OECD Joint Meeting and sometimes in an additional extraordinary session. Committee meetings are announced several months in advance. In addition, members are kept informed of developments by email and have the opportunity to contribute comments as appropriate.

To join the Chemicals Committee, experts need to be nominated by one of BIAC’s member organisations. If you do not know who our contact for your country is or if you have any further question, please contact the BIAC Secretariat:

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