

PROJECT REPORT SUMMARY

Project nr:	RT(2010)8
Subject:	Practical Training and Capacity Building Workshops on the Globally Harmonised System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals and Chemical Mixtures (GHS) currently being implemented in South Africa.
Sponsored by:	<p>The GHS training in South Africa was financially supported by the Responsible Packaging Management Association of Southern Africa (RPMASA). Moral support was received from the Departments of Labour and the KwaZulu Natal Agriculture, Environmental Affairs & Rural Developments of South Africa. In addition, AVCASA (the Agricultural & Veterinary Science Trade Association) and Dow Chemical provided modest sponsorship and participants from the private sector paid a modest registration fee.</p> <p>UNITAR covered the expenses of its representative and OHP covered the expenses of the 5 expert volunteers who developed the Workshops and gave the training.</p>
Start and end-dates:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10-11 March, Durban, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa • 14-15 March, Midrand, Gauteng, South Africa.
Experts involved:	<p><u>OHP Experts:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr Helmut Fleig, independent consultant, BASF retiree, and OHP, Germany • Dr Herman Koëter, OHP, Belgium; • Dr Paula Viapiana, University of the Republic of Uruguay, and OHP; • Dr Iona Pratt, Food Safety Authority of Ireland and OHP, Ireland; • Dr Steve Vaughan, InsideOutWorks, independent consultant and OHP, formerly the Ministry for the Environment, New Zealand; <p><u>UNITAR:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr Jonathan Krueger, UNITAR; <p><u>RPMASA:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms Liz Anderson, President RPMASA
Background and Objectives:	<p>The initiative for this series of 2 capacity building projects was born in Geneva at a meeting in July 2010 of the Programme Advisory Group (PAG) of the UN Sub-Committee of Experts on the GHS where Liz Anderson, Jonathan Krueger and Herman Koëter first discussed the possibility of organising a satellite training workshop on the GHS at the 2nd International Transport of Dangerous Goods and Environment Conference held in Durban from 7-9 March 2011.</p> <p>The objective of the training workshop was to raise awareness of the GHS in South Africa, in particular at the government level (the National and Provincial Departments of Agriculture, Environmental Affairs and Rural Development and the Department of Labour). South</p>

	<p>Africa is currently considering the implementation of the GHS but adequate knowledge of the system, its possibilities and limitations, is not widespread. In addition, both the public and private sector professionals lack adequate practical experience with the GHS.</p> <p>The existing Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between OHP and UNITAR, adopted on 1st May 2010, provided the basis for the practical cooperation</p> <p>Once the Workshop was announced in South Africa, the number of professionals interested in the training rose quickly and it was decided to give the training twice: in addition to the Workshop in Durban, a second, identical Workshop was organised in Midrand, halfway between Johannesburg and Pretoria (Gauteng Province).</p> <p>The technical training material for both Workshops was developed by OHP experts covering as much of the GHS as was practicable in two days, including its history of development. Extensive use was made of the UNITAR training manual and other materials. The target audience of this training course included technical experts responsible for classification and labelling, occupational health officers and officials responsible for hazard communication. The training course was intended for both the public and private sector.</p> <p>Unfortunately, the Workshops were each limited to 2 days which is in fact too short to address all aspects of the GHS in sufficient detail.</p>
<p>Meetings:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orientation meetings with UNITAR and RPMASA staff on 30 June - 1 July 2010 and on 8 December at the UN in Geneva, Switzerland; • Several teleconferences with experts involved; • Training and Capacity Building Workshops on the GHS, on 10-11 and on 14-15 March 2011 in Durban and Midrand, South Africa, respectively.
<p>Main Topics and observations:</p>	<p>Both Workshops were well attended with 68 attendants in Durban (77 had registered) and 72 in Midrand. The number of attendees from the public sector was substantially higher in Midrand (close to 70%) being close to the capital Pretoria than in Durban (approximately 50%).</p> <p>The training course comprised both plenary lectures (14) and 3 practical exercise sessions of break-out groups. Areas covered were: health hazards, environmental hazards, physical hazards, and hazard communication. However, due to time constraints, hazard communication and implementation issues were only marginally addressed. Participants were very interested and pro-active. Break-out sessions were generally more lively than plenary lectures but the limited time available did not allow to further extend these sessions.</p> <p>At the end of the training, participants were requested to complete an evaluation questionnaire. The overall impression score was 4.02 and 4.23, in Durban and Midrand respectively, on a scale from 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent). Negative comments were mostly on the limited time available.</p>

	<p>Introspective informal evaluation of the training by the trainers revealed that in future training:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• There should be more emphasis on the strength of the GHS as an integrated system that allows hazard classification for all chemical substances and mixtures, using the same approach, thus avoiding contradictory risk management decisions;• The practical exercises should be presented in a way to promote stepwise understanding and the written clarification could provide more detail;• When time is limited (2 days rather than 3 or 4), it seems preferable to skip certain elements of the GHS (e.g., the history and/or scientific background of the GHS and/or parts of hazard communication) and refer to follow-up training for these elements, rather than attempt to cover all aspects at too superficial a level;• The session on the scientific basis for the hazard assessment should address all hazard areas in balanced manner;• GHS implementation sessions should be shifted from cataloguing the relevant jurisdiction's legislation to providing information about possible implementation models (based on where implementation had been completed or was in progress and experiences gained). <p>The atmosphere was excellent throughout the training course.</p>
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