

SIEFs: the importance of communication

ReachCentrum shares its SIEF experience in Chemical Watch

With the first deadline behind us Cornelia Tietz of ReachCentrum shares some of her perceptions of how well SIEFs functioned in the first registration round, including the main lessons to be considered when preparing for the next deadline of 2013.

According to **paragraph 54** of the REACH Regulation's preamble:

“a system should be established in order to provide for the establishment of Substance Information Exchange Fora (SIEF) to help exchange of information on the substances that have been registered.”

Articles 29 and 30 elaborate a little on providing and sharing of data, but no more light is shed on the subject by the legislation. [...] This situation left plenty of space for different interpretations. When it came to who should do what and when, and especially how, it was left to industry to set up SIEFs themselves and to get organised.

Raising Awareness

In the beginning of the REACH era, the importance of communication within the SIEF or pre-SIEF was neglected. If companies agreed to work together, they did so mostly in consortia. [...] SIEF communication was not the pre-eminent priority when the main players contacted each other. Instead they concentrated first on the legal aspects of their consortium agreements and then on the technical and organisational aspects of dossier preparation.

However, **the legislation stipulated the set up of SIEFs, and therefore industry had to act**. In ReachCentrum, SIEF support was initiated as a new service at the beginning of 2009, offering to help companies manage their communications: some efforts were indeed needed to convince our customers of their duty to communicate. [...]

The SIEF support was offered not only to the existing consortia; individual Lead Registrants also approached ReachCentrum for tailor-made assistance.

Information sharing

[...] What is of the highest importance is that **clear and precise messages** are key in order for communication to be time efficient and constructive.

[...] If surveys need to be sent and documents to be shared, the most obvious solution is to have a **central place which each SIEF member can easily access**. This platform should preferably be widely accepted amongst industry.

To serve the needs of its own customers and beyond, ReachCentrum has invested in a new tool determined to meet the needs of a successful SIEF communication. Taking advantage of the lessons from past experiences, this **new platform, called LINKinSIEF**, is meant to **facilitate the smooth exchange of information among SIEF members**. It is part of ReachCentrum's SIEF support service, but can also be managed by Lead Registrants (or their service providers) on their own.

Key for acceptance of a platform amongst SIEF members is, of course, the population of the relevant site - the **information stored must be up to date, sufficient, useful and relevant**.

The entire piece is available on the Dec/Jan issue of Chemical Watch European Business Briefing at <http://chemicalwatch.com/6160> via on line subscription, from 14 December onwards.

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