

FEICA, the Association of the European Adhesive and Sealant Industry, has developed use maps to provide registrants with information on uses and conditions of use of adhesive and sealant products in a harmonised and structured way. By Divina Gómez.

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MAPPING OUT REACH

REACH requires the industry to take responsibility for the safe use of the chemicals they place on the market, thus companies have to manage the risks of their products. An essential part of this responsibility is the effective safe use communication' throughout the supply chain. Use maps can play a key role in this process.

The effective communication of chemical safety information along the supply chain is essential to ensure that supply chain partners, and, ultimately, end-users, can use the products safely. Substance manufacturers and importers (registrants) are required to make available relevant information concerning the safe use of their substances, and supply chain partners need to play their role in communicating this information. The challenge has been to provide this information for mixtures, in a structured format that is convenient to use by supply chain partners.

SAFE USE COMMUNICATION

REACH introduced the 'exposure scenarios' that describe the operational conditions (OCs) and the Risk Management Measures (RMMs) that allow the safe use of a chemical for a specific use/application. Their generation and implementation demands an effective communication along the supply chain:

- Registrants need to generate data on their substances in order to assess the hazards these can pose to human health and the environment, as well as to develop and recommend appropriate risk management measures.
- Downstream users (formulators) have to ensure the safe use of chemicals at their own sites, and communicate conditions of use upstream to their suppliers, plus safe use downstream to their customers. FEICA members are mainly downstream users (DUs) formulating adhesives and sealants. To assist in the previous REACH registrations and make the adhesives and sealants uses identified and covered in the registration dossiers, FEICA developed the use mappings table.

THE CHALLENGE

REACH does not prescribe a particular format for exchanging information on uses, and experience from previous registrations demonstrated a need to improve the "safe use communication". Consequently, the Chemical Safety Report/Exposure Scenario (CSR/ES) Roadmap was published as a joint effort between ECHA and several stakeholders, aiming to improve the content and use of exposure scenarios (ES). FEICA has been a committed participant in these activities, contributing to the development of tools and methods for consistent and harmonised communication of ES information throughout the supply chain.



BENEFITS OF THE USE MAPS

Benefits for registrants

- ➔ Effective communication: Realistic use descriptions that support the registrant's chemical safety assessments.
- ➔ Structured information in a common template, using the same terminology and consistency of safe information across sectors.
- ➔ Representative information: Use maps are developed by sector associations, hence the data provided is representative of the entire adhesive and sealant sector and can significantly reduce communication needs of registrants with formulators.
- ➔ IT compatibility: It is planned to provide the data for exposure assessment tools in an electronic format, eliminating the risk of errors caused by transferring data manually.

Benefits for the adhesive and sealant industry

Use maps have advantages for the entire industry. For FEICA members they are that:

- ➔ Members' uses will be covered by the registrants' registration dossiers, eliminating the need for individual action.
- ➔ Members will be able to check exposure scenarios in extended safety data sheets for compliance in a simple and structured manner. FEICA and other DU sectors have also developed safe use of mixtures information (SUMI) sheets corresponding to their use maps.

USE MAPS

One of the CSR/ES Roadmap's main tools to report on uses is the use map. By documenting the uses of chemicals in a harmonised and structured way, use maps assist in the dialogue between downstream users and registrants. If registrants can prepare 'realistic' and comprehensive chemical safety assessments for the registration process, the DUs will receive better information on their uses via the exposure scenarios received from the registrants.

The 'improved use map' is based on the UseR (Use Reporting) template developed back in 2009 by the Downstream Users of Chemicals Coordination Group (DUCC) for the preparation of previous registration dossiers, but further improves on the data provided.

The use map template comprises two main parts:

1. One for the use description, providing realistic and harmonised descriptions of the downstream sector's technologies.
2. Another referring to the exposure assessment input details, which are provided in separately standardised formats:
 - a. SpERC (Specific Environmental Release Category) for environmental risk assessment
 - b. SCED (Specific Consumer Exposure Determinant) for assessment of consumer exposure
 - c. SWED (Sector specific Exposure Description) for assessment of worker exposure

Therefore, FEICA's use map provides an overview of the most common uses of adhesives and sealants, organised by life cycle stage, and has links to the data inputs needed to carry out exposure assessments.

CONCLUSION

The sector-specific harmonised use maps benefit all actors in the REACH chain. They will provide meaningful and structured information to assist in the development of robust exposure assessments, and will minimise the need for one-to-one communication up and down the supply chain. As a result, they provide significant benefits not only to registrants and downstream users, but also to authorities. ◀



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