

Advisory Committee on Toxic Substances Paper		ACTS/25/2004	
Meeting date:	8 th July 2004	Open Govt. Status:	Fully open
Type of paper:	Below the line	Paper File Ref:	
Exemptions:			

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON TOXIC SUBSTANCES

Reconstitution of the joint ACDS/ACTS Chemical Essentials subgroup

A Paper by Chris Williams

Cleared by Michael Topping on 14th June 2004

Issue

1. The reconstitution of the Chemical Essentials subgroup – set up to provide expert advice on the development of integrated on-line guidance for small firms on controlling health, safety and environmental risks from chemicals.

Timing

2. Routine

Recommendation

3. That ACTS recommend the reconstitution of the subgroup for Phase 2 of the Chemical Essentials project and approve the terms of reference.

Background

4. Members will be aware that the joint ACDS/ACTS Chemical Essentials subgroup have been providing technical stakeholder input into Phase 1 of the Chemical Essentials project - a cross government project (with the Environment Agency and Scottish Environment Protection Agency - SEPA) to develop an internet based system that provides integrated guidance for small firms on how to manage the health, safety and environmental risks from chemicals. Given the nature of the project – providing integrated health, safety and environmental advice - the subgroup was set up jointly under Advisory Committee on Dangerous Substances (ACDS) and Advisory Committee Toxic Substances (ACTS) with HSE submitting reports to both committees to keep them informed of progress with the project – it was agreed that there would be no logic in each Advisory Committee setting up a separate subgroup. The subgroup's remit also encompassed the environment element of the project and therefore has environmental representation nominated by the Environment Agency as well as Agency representation.

5. Annex 1 is the terms of reference for the subgroup for Phase 1 of the project. This phase of the project was funded by money from the Treasury's Invest to Save Budget, and involved the development of the technical rules which the final system will use to generate the advice. Phase 1 of the project culminated in a conference on 27th Feb and the production of a demonstration CD-Rom – which was circulated to ACTS members in March 2004.

6. The subgroup was set up in Summer 2002 and has met a total of 5 times:

July 02; Nov 02; July 03; Sept 03; and Jan 04

It has also held 3 specialist workshops: a safety workshop; an environment workshop and a technical peer review workshop. There has also been a small working group to discuss a strategy for peer reviewing the technical work.

Argument

7. The next step is to peer review the technical rules to ensure the system gives appropriate advice. Once the rules are proven to be robust we can move to the next phase of the project, which is to convert the technical rules into an internet based system (this will require additional funding). The ACDS/ACTS subgroup has been very active and provided extremely valuable to the project to date. Similar technical stakeholder input will be needed for the next stages of the project in particular, to assist with the peer review process including validation of the guidance produced. Input will also be needed on usability issues and publicising the final system. We would anticipate that the subgroup would need to meet approximately 4 times from this point up until the live system. A programme of work will be agreed for this once funding for phase 2 of the project has been secured.

8. Existing members have been asked whether they are willing to continue – all have agreed. However, an additional TUC representative is required due to an earlier resignation.

9. ACDS will be consulted on the reconstitution of the subgroup in parallel to ACTS.

Link to HSC Strategy

10. Chemical Essentials will provide a tool that provides accessible advice and support for firms handling chemicals in the workplace. As such the project is in keeping with HSC's new strategy for the health and safety system in Great Britain, which recognises the need for the development of effective intervention strategies that will result in a reduction in occupational exposure to chemicals, and a consequent improvement in occupational health. Chemical Essentials is a joint HSE, Environment Agency and SEPA project and is therefore also consistent with the HSC's strategy to develop closer strategic partnerships.

Communication Plan

11. We are developing Chemical Essentials web pages to communicate information on the project. These will contain:

- Pages providing an overview of the project and recent developments.
- Access to a number of documents, some containing technical flow charts

- A web tour illustrating the system concept
- Facility to feedback views on the project and webtour

Evaluation Plan

12. The role and involvement of the subgroup into the first phase of the project has been evaluated and found to be extremely valuable and important to continue through to the next phase.

Consultation

13. Consultation will be through normal channels.

Relevant control systems

14. N/A 

Costs and Benefits

15. A full business case is being prepared for the next phase, this will set out the costs and benefits. It is anticipated that conversion of the paper-based rules into a live system will require additional funding (approx £1m).

Financial/Resource Implications for HSE

16. See above. There will also be resource implications for departments involved.

Environmental implications

17. The project will help protect the environment by providing guidance on how to handle chemicals properly with respect to their environmental risks.

European implications

18. No immediate or direct European implications. As REACH develops we will examine the potential for links.

Other implications

19. Chemical Essentials is a cross government initiative. Implementation of the environment element is therefore dependent upon maintaining involvement of The Environment Agency and SEPA.

Action

20. ACTS are invited to endorse the proposal to:
- o reconstitute the ACDS/ACTS Chemical Essentials subgroup; and
 - o approve the terms of reference and membership attached at Annex 2.

Contact

Chris Williams
CFPD 5 7NW Rose Court
020 77176273
chris.pg.Williams@hse.gsi.gov.uk

CHEMICAL ESSENTIALS:

**HSE & ENVIRONMENT AGENCY PROJECT TO DEVELOP INTEGRATED HEALTH
SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENTAL ADVICE ON THE CONTROL OF CHEMICALS IN
THE WORKPLACE**

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON DANGEROUS SUBSTANCES (ACDS)
ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON TOXIC SUBSTANCES (ACTS)**

ACDS/ACTS CHEMICAL ESSENTIALS SUBGROUP

Terms of Reference and Membership for Phase 1 of the Project

The terms of reference for the Subgroup are:

- (i) To provide input into the development of the of the Chemical Essentials system and contribute to the peer review process;
- (ii) To assess the outputs of the system;
- (iii) To make recommendations on (i) and (ii) to the Project Board;
- (iv) To provide reports to ACDS and ACTS on the progress of the project;
- (v) To provide a vehicle for wider dissemination and promotion of the project and its concept.

Membership

CBI nominees Martin Newall, Bayer Crop Science
Chris Beaton, Acordis
Nigel Dibben, Escond

TUC nominees Liz Jenkins, Prospect
Alastair Hay, Leeds University
Alun Owen UK Transco

Environment Expert Richard Burns Vivendi UK

LA Barbara Mawer, Local Government Association

Independents Tony Cox, Safety Craft Risk Management
Gordon Walker, Staffordshire University
Richard Jones, IOSH

BOHS Steve Bailey, GSK

Chair	John Thompson, Health Directorate B&C
Secretary	Chris Williams, Health Directorate C
Minutes Secretary	Shona Picken
HSE attendees	Martin Davies, Safety Policy Division Keith Wilson, TD5 (Gas & Chemical Process Safety) Paul Evans, TD3 (Chemical Agents and Hygiene) Michael Topping, Health Directorate C
EA attendees	Jo Kennedy Chemicals Policy David Brodie Chemicals Policy

CHEMICAL ESSENTIALS:

**HSE & ENVIRONMENT AGENCY PROJECT TO DEVELOP INTEGRATED HEALTH
SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENTAL ADVICE ON THE CONTROL OF CHEMICALS IN
THE WORKPLACE**

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON DANGEROUS SUBSTANCES
ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON TOXIC SUBSTANCES**

ACDS/ACTS CHEMICAL ESSENTIALS SUBGROUP

Proposed Terms of Reference and Membership for Phase 2

The terms of reference for the Subgroup are:

- (vi) To provide input into the development of the of the Chemical Essentials system and contribute to the peer review process;
- (vii) To assess the outputs of the system;
- (viii) To make recommendations on (i) and (ii) to the Project Board;
- (ix) To provide reports to ACDS and ACTS on the progress of the project;
- (x) To provide a vehicle for wider dissemination and promotion of the project and its concept.

Membership

CBI nominees Martin Newall, Bayer Crop Science
Chris Beaton, Acordis
Nigel Dibben, Escond

TUC nominees Alastair Hay, Leeds University
Alun Owen UK Transco
TBA

Environment Expert Richard Burns Vivendi UK

LA Barbara Mawer, Local Government Association

Independents Tony Cox, Safety Craft Risk Management
Gordon Walker, Staffordshire University
Richard Jones, IOSH

BOHS Steve Bailey, GSK

Chair Michael Topping Chemicals and Flammables Policy Division

Secretary	Chris Williams, Chemicals and Flammables Policy Division
HSE attendees	Martin Davies, Chemicals and Flammables Policy Division Keith Wilson, HIDCD5 (Process material and safety systems) Paul Evans, CSD3A (Chemical Risk Assessment Control)
EA attendees	John Batty Chemicals Policy