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Type of Paper: Information

HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMISSION
ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON TOXIC SUBSTANCES
Secretary's Report (following 10 July 2003 meeting)

Ref	What	Action by	Progress
2	Reconstitution of ACTS, an update		
2.3	Prepare minute to Kate Timms for final stage of reconstitution.	Secretariat (NS)	Minute sent to Kate Timms on 21 August 2003. ACTS reconstituted on 5 September 2003.
2.3	Register of Members' Interests: Prepare "open" (and if necessary "closed") version once members have returned personal entries (deadline for reply: 25 July 2003).	Secretariat (NS)	Still waiting for a response from three members. Two new TUC members will be asked to submit a Register of Members' Interests once they have returned their declaration of acceptance forms.
2.3	Plan induction of two new TUC members ahead of October 2003 meeting.	Secretariat (PH)	Induction session organised for 2 October 2003.
2.3	Letters of appointment sent to ACTS members	Secretariat (PH)	Letters sent on 11 September 2003.
2.4	Redraft Terms of Reference to take account of CBI member's comments.	Secretariat (NS)	Terms of Reference redrafted to take account of CBI member's comments.
4	Progressing the work plan. Liaison with other advisory committees		
4.2	Sandra Caldwell said that ACTS Secretariat could put volunteers in touch with the Secretary of the committee they had agreed to visit so that members could obtain the necessary background information.	Secretariat (PH)	For all visits Secretariat is providing volunteers with the contact details for the Secretary or Chair of the committee they have agreed to visit. Secretariat is also contacting the Secretary or Chair of relevant committees to advise that an ACTS member will be in touch.

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4.3	An Independent member asked how ACTS could maintain links with other committees following visits. Sandra Caldwell said that before future ACTS meetings, ACTS Secretariat would liaise with corresponding Secretariats to check the progress of initiatives prompted by ACTS volunteer visits and report back to ACTS.	Secretariat (PH)	ACTS Secretariat has developed a feedback form to help evaluate this ACTS initiative. It is completed by contributions from ACTS Secretariat; the Secretary of the Committee an ACTS member has visited; the ACTS member; and the Minute Secretary of the Committee an ACTS member has visited. The form includes questions on initiatives (if any) identified as a result of the ACTS members' visit, what ACTS can do to help the committee, what can the committee do to help ACTS.
4.4	An Independent member offered to visit the technical subcommittee of the Advisory Committee on Genetic Modification. ACTS Secretariat will contact the corresponding Secretariat to discuss setting up a visit.	Secretariat (PH)	A new Genetically Modified Organisms (Contained Use) Technical Committee is to be set up in January 2004. As yet, there are no meeting dates arranged, but ACTS Secretariat will keep in touch with its counterpart in the new committee to identify an opportunity for an ACTS volunteer to visit the committee when meeting dates are arranged.
4.5	A TUC member asked why we were targeting subcommittees e.g. the Health in Agriculture (HiAG) subcommittee rather than the main Agricultural IAC. Sandra Caldwell said that ACTS Secretariat would contact Linda Williams (Chief Inspector of Agriculture) to ensure the ACTS member visits the most appropriate committee.	Secretariat (CS)	Linda Williams explained that she is happy to take the presentation at Agriculture Industry Advisory Committee (AIAC) as the committee intends to be more strategic in the future. However, it is now deep in the reconstitution and it is unlikely the new committee will be in strategic mode until its June 2004 meeting. AIAC's Health in Agriculture Working Group (HIAG) will be in a good position to spot opportunities to support aspects of the strategy, say on asthma, and will give their advice to the new AIAC. Linda considered that it would consequently be worthwhile to visit HIAG in the first instance.
4.7	Sandra Caldwell suggested that it would be helpful if members who have carried out visits between now and the next meeting could provide ACTS Secretariat with feedback on their presentations.	Secretariat (PH)	"Progressing the work plan – feedback from liaison with other committees" is an agenda item at the closed (afternoon) session of the 17 October ACTS meeting. This will provide members who have visited other committees with the opportunity to say a few words about their visits. Secretariat will also distribute copies of the feedback forms referred to in ref 4.3 above.
5	Progressing the work plan development of the ACTS website		
5.4	ACTS Secretariat will provide members with a password and user name to enable them to access the website (http://www.hse.gov.uk/testbed/) as soon as it is ready to be tested.	Secretariat (NS)	ACTS Secretariat proposes to take forward this matter via ACTS' Communication Working Group (CoWG), which is due to meet early in 2004.
5.5	An Independent representative questioned why members' names were withheld from papers on the ACTS website. John Thompson	Members	None of the twelve members that have so far returned their Register of Members' Interests (ref 2.3 above refers) indicated that

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	<p>explained that the formal position was that members' names should be disclosed on the website and that ACTS' position was an exception. Some members had previously objected to the disclosure of their names in public versions of documents because of concerns for their personal health and safety. He said that members should write to him to let him know if they were content for their names to be disclosed in public versions of documents. The member considered that withholding names was not conducive to transparency.</p>		<p>they wished their names to be withheld from public version of this document.</p>
6	Review of ACTS' sub-groups – update from members' review group		
6.1.4	<p>John Thompson explained that there was one significant issue that the Working Group still needed to resolve. This concerned the European Union (EU) limit setting process, and the nature of ACTS, WATCH and the Working Group on European Exposure Limits (WEELS) involvement in this process: who does what and when?; what are the opportunities for stakeholders to have an input? HSE will further consider these issues and put the results of the work to the next meeting of the Working Group on ACTS sub-groups</p>	<p>Working Group on ACTS sub-groups</p>	<p>Progress in relation to this action will be handled in the agenda item "Review of ACTS' subgroups – update from members' review group".</p>
6.2	<p>A TUC member stated that the paper presented to the Working Group on 8 July 2003, and which was due to be placed on ACTS' website, needed to fully reflect the views of the Working Group members on the issue of the EU limit setting system.</p>	<p>Julia Soave</p>	<p>The paper was amended.</p>
6.2	<p>The member considered that WATCH's involvement with limit setting should not be confined to scientific support on domestic limit setting, but should be extended to include limit setting wherever it originated.</p>	<p>Working Group on ACTS sub-groups</p>	<p>Progress in relation to this action will be handled in the agenda item "Review of ACTS' subgroups – update from members' review group".</p>
6.8	<p>Membership of the new WATCH.</p>	<p>Paul Oldershaw and the Working Group on ACTS sub-groups</p>	<p>Progress in relation to this action will be handled in the agenda item "Review of ACTS' subgroups – update from members' review group".</p>
6.9	<p>The Environment representative asked how ACTS was kept informed on the work of its subcommittees. Additionally, how could the members obtain the minutes of subcommittee meetings. John Thompson said that in the past ACTS had been kept informed of subcommittee work as appropriate and that ACTS and subcommittee Secretariats had determined between themselves what needed to be reported to ACTS. He proposed that there should be better</p>	<p>Members, Secretariat and sub-committee Secretariats</p>	<p>The minutes of sub-committee meetings are available on ACTS website. ACTS Secretariat is liaising with its counterparts in the sub-committee Secretariats to ensure that each sub-committee contributes an annual report for a below-the-line paper that Secretariat will submit annually to ACTS.</p>

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	communication between ACTS and its subcommittees and that, as a minimum, subcommittees should submit an annual report to ACTS.		
6.9	In relation to the minutes of subcommittee meetings, Sandra Caldwell tasked ACTS Secretariat to liaise with individual Secretariats and Kenny Macdonald of HSE's Directorate of Information and Advisory Services to see if a better IT support mechanism could be developed for members.	ACTS Secretariat, Subcommittee Secretariats; and Kenny Macdonald.	ACTS Secretariat proposes to take forward this matter via ACTS' Communication Working Group (CoWG), which is due to meet early in 2004.
9	The EU chemicals strategy - update		
9.2	The Environment representative asked how the UK's position on REACH was developed. John Thompson explained that HSE had been working with other government departments on the analysis of the proposals, looking particularly at occupational health and safety. Bob Warner additionally explained that a tripartite Rapid Reaction Force had been set up by HSE in the early stages of REACH to provide key soundings from stakeholders in relation to REACH proposals. In order to review the draft proposals this group held a special meeting on 3 June to which ACTS members had been invited. Bob Warner offered to invite ACTS members to any future meetings.	Bob Warner	No major further developments on REACH. As successive milestones emerge, ACTS members will be invited to any future meetings that are organised to consider emerging proposals.
9.3	A TUC representative asked the Chair if she could explain exactly what the HSC's decision had been in relation to approval and registration. Sandra Caldwell promised to send members the minutes of the relevant HSC meeting.	Secretariat (PH)	Secretariat e-mailed members the minutes of the relevant meeting on 5 August 2003.
	At the beginning of the afternoon session, Sandra Caldwell reviewed the remaining agenda. Since the meeting had already significantly overrun, she proposed that the 'Introduction to the cancer and skin disease strategy' presentation should be carried forward to the October meeting. The presentation on Phase 2 of e-COSHH Essentials would be circulated to members.		Secretariat e-mailed members the Phase 2 e-CE material on 22 September 2003.
7	ACTS Open Meeting finalisation of arrangements		
7.3	A TUC representative suggested that IACs being visited by ACTS volunteers should be formally invited to the open meeting, in order to ensure adequate worker/trade union representation at the meeting.	Secretariat and member	Secretariat e-mailed an invitation to the open meeting to all TUC Industry Advisory Committee members.
7.4	It was agreed that members would liaise with ACTS Secretariat on who would present which items, as well as seating plans etc	Secretariat and members	Secretariat has liaised with the members involved in organising the open meeting.
8	Proposal to introduce a new OEL framework draft consultative document		

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8.2	<p>An Independent representative referred members to Table 2b [Annex 7, pages 69 - 71]. The member considered that HSE was taking forward suspect MELs into the new system, quoting buta-1, 3-diene as an example, which would appear in the new framework with an exposure limit (10 ppm) far in excess of that in other countries. The member felt it would not look good listing limits such as this in a table in what would be a new OEL framework document. Maureen Meldrum responded that since many of these substances were carcinogens, the legal requirement would be to control exposure to as low as is reasonably practicable (ALARP). Consequently, the actual numerical value of these substances was not very important. A TUC representative suggested that, in relation to these substances, text could be added explaining that there is a requirement to control the flagged carcinogens ALARP. It was agreed.</p>	CFPD5	<p>CFPD5 inserted text explaining that there is a requirement to control the flagged carcinogens ALARP, into Annex 7 of the Consultative Document.</p>
8.2	<p>Sandra Caldwell asked members if they were content for the paper to go to the Commission. It was agreed.</p>	CFPD5	<p>The Consultative Document was presented to the Commission on 5 August 2003.</p>