



**United Nations
Environment
Programme**

Distr.
GENERAL

UNEP/POPS/INC.7/INF/28
26 June 2003

ENGLISH ONLY

INTERGOVERNMENTAL NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE FOR AN
INTERNATIONAL LEGALLY BINDING INSTRUMENT
FOR IMPLEMENTING INTERNATIONAL ACTION ON
CERTAIN PERSISTENT ORGANIC POLLUTANTS

Seventh session

Geneva, 14-18 July 2003

Item 5 of the provisional agenda*

Preparations for the Conference of the Parties

**THE CHEMICAL INFORMATION EXCHANGE NETWORK (CIEN) PROJECT:
CAPACITY-BUILDING FOR THE SOUND MANAGEMENT OF CHEMICALS**

Note by the secretariat

Information on the Chemical Information Exchange Network (CIEN) Project is reproduced in annex to the present note. The information was provided by the secretariat of UNEP in cooperation with the United States Environmental Protection Agency and has not been formally edited.

* UNEP/POPS/INC.7/1.

K0362115 070703

Annex**The Chemical Information Exchange Network (CIEN) Project:
Capacity-Building for the Sound Management of Chemicals**

Access to the wealth of information on chemicals and pesticides on the Internet is critical to building capacity for the sound management of chemicals as called for in Chapter 19 of Agenda 21. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) have formed a partnership to provide training on Internet-based chemical information to chemical management officials and other stakeholders. CIEN catalyses the exchange of chemicals information nationally, regionally and globally. An important component of this partnership, critical to the sustainability of national access to information, is the involvement of other donor countries and institutions, and the commitment of national organizations in countries wishing to benefit from Internet access and chemicals management networking. The importance of the information access was stressed during the Bahia Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety. The Bahia Declaration and the Priorities for Action Beyond 2000 of the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety (IFCS) stress the importance of increased flow of and access to information as central to sound management of chemicals. The IFCS recommends that by 2005, at least five countries in each IFCS region, and by 2010, most countries, should have fully operational arrangements in place for the exchange of information on hazardous chemicals.

Information Exchange Needs under Multilateral Agreements

The Stockholm Convention contains provisions related to information exchange in article 9, on Information Exchange, and article 10, on public information awareness and education. Specific obligations are:

Each Party shall:

- Facilitate or undertake the exchange of information
- Within its capabilities, promote and facilitate awareness among its policy and decision makers with regard to persistent organic pollutants
- Within its capabilities, promote and facilitate provision to the public all available information on persistent organic pollutants

The Rotterdam convention establishes an information exchange procedure known as the Prior Informed Consent procedure on banned and severely restricted chemicals, and requires that parties assess information availability and needs and disseminate relevant information to stakeholders.

The Basel Convention on the Control of transboundary movements of hazardous wastes and their disposal also has information exchange implications. It requests parties to undertake information dissemination on the transboundary movements of wastes.

The CIEN Project objectives are to:

- Eliminate barriers to the exchange of information
- Facilitate access and sharing of technical information about chemicals on the Internet
- Create greater involvement and communication among stakeholders and the national and regional agencies responsible for the management of chemicals
- Strengthen national capacity for participation in activities and international agreements involving the sound management of chemicals
- Protect human health and the environment through promoting the sound management of chemicals

The CIEN Project results:

- Countries are benefiting greatly from effectively using the Internet as an important tool in chemical safety information exchange
- CIEN assists with implementation of international conventions such as Stockholm, Rotterdam and Basel Conventions
- CIEN provides access to the Internet, a cost-effective gateway to scientific, technical, economic, and legal information
- CIEN has provided a forum for stakeholder discussion and national and regional coordination on chemicals management
- CIEN strengthens the understanding of sound chemical management practices in the private sector
- CIEN assists national chemical managers and NGOs in the development of targeted public awareness programmes

CIEN PROJECT STEPS:

Identifying an in-country coordinating agency and/or regional coordinating organization: This is the first step of the CIEN project in a country or a region. These partners are responsible for project coordination and implementation and work closely with UNEP and USEPA. In Africa, the project is coordinated in each country by a designated agency.

Conducting stakeholder meetings in countries to assess chemicals information needs: The stakeholder meetings are an opportunity for stakeholders to evaluate all chemical management related activities ongoing and planned in a country. Based on these activities, participants develop a list of chemical information needs and sources of this information. Stakeholders from government, industry, academia and non-governmental organizations attend the stakeholder workshop and subsequently the computer-training workshop.

Providing computers and Internet access for each country: Based on the recommendations of the national stakeholders meeting, the project provides electronic equipment and the communication tools needed to gain access to the Internet to the appropriate government agency or organization in the participating country. Agencies and organizations receiving the equipment are generally requested to provide the telephone lines and cover telecommunication cost as in-kind contributions to the Project.

Holding computer-training workshops: Each participating country holds an Internet training workshop. One UNEP and one USEPA trainer usually facilitate the workshops. The training sessions are often co-sponsored by other agencies or organizations that have a local presence and a specific interest. In these workshops, participants learn the use of a computer to find chemicals information on the Internet.

Encouraging continued networking among chemicals management officials: The CIEN project aims to encourage better information access and exchange between institutions in a country. The Project encourages institutional partners to develop networking arrangements with their academic institutions, NGOs or private sector parties who are concerned with building capacity in chemicals management. A wide variety of information technology tools, such as electronic mail, a list serve or a web site can help with this communication. Often countries in a region face similar chemical management problems and would benefit from shared information and networking. The CIEN Project also encourages countries in a region to coordinate and create a regional network.

Relevance to chemical related MEAs including the Stockholm Convention: CIEN is an important tool in building capacity in developing countries and countries with economies in transition to meet their obligations under the Convention. For example, CIEN can provide:

- Access to any potential future Internet-based resources on POPs under the Stockholm Convention, such as a clearing-house mechanism (as referenced in POPS/INC.7/12)

- In-country coordination among stakeholders involved in the National Implementation Plan development
- A framework within which to exchange lessons learned and other information within countries and regions
- A tool to access, manage and distribute information related to the Conventions

The Future of the CIEN Project:

The CIEN Project has been successfully launched in a first phase in numerous countries in Africa and Central America and in Mexico. The first phase mainly focused on initial stakeholder discussions and computer training workshops. A second phase of the project is envisioned to enable follow-up in phase I countries to ensure ongoing networking and information exchange and also enable new countries to join into the project. To accomplish this work will require additional resources. Countries that have already participated in CIEN have the opportunity to sustain the increased flow of chemical information and continue to benefit from increased dialogue through ongoing training and networking as their own resources and any additional resources allow. Depending on the availability of funding, future activities of the project to support networking may include training of trainers and the development of country-specific CIEN web sites and networking groups.

Partnerships and Resources: CIEN builds partnerships to leverage resources provided by many donor countries and organizations. CIEN welcomes the development of further partnerships. Current major partners and donors are:

- Canadian International Development Agency
- Centro de Gestión Tecnológica e Informática Industrial (CEGESTI)
- Economic Community of West African States
- Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
- Southern African Development Community
- Swiss Confederation
- U.S. Agency for International Development
- U.S. Department of State

UNEP and USEPA are pleased to launch the project web site at the seventh International Negotiating Committee Meeting of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants. The web site address is www.epa.gov/cien. The web site will be updated periodically as the project progresses, and we welcome comments on the content and effectiveness of the site.

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