

## **INFOCAP Evaluation and Future Direction**

### **Recommendations to the IFCS Forum Standing Committee**

*The INFOCAP Steering Group, following its discussion on INFOCAP evaluation and future direction at its meeting on 19-21 April 2005, requests the IFCS Forum Standing Committee (FSC) to:*

- 1. Consider the recommendations of this report*
- 2. Take a decision on the future direction of INFOCAP*
- 3. Prepare a paper for SAICM PrepCom3, recommending that INFOCAP is accommodated in the final arrangements for SAICM implementation.*

## INFOCAP Evaluation and Future Direction

### Recommendations to the IFCS Forum Standing Committee

#### Background

The INFOCAP Steering Group met in Geneva, Switzerland, 19-21 April 2005, to discuss the outcomes from the INFOCAP Monitoring Progress and Effectiveness Working Group review. A summary presentation of the results of this review, "Compilation of Results from INFOCAP Review Survey", prepared by the INFOCAP Steering Group Chair, provided the background and basis for discussion at this meeting. This compilation is attached.

In brief, the main conclusions from the review and Steering Group meeting discussion are:

- There is strong support for a fully functioning INFOCAP. All stakeholders indicated that INFOCAP has the potential to provide an effective means for exchanging information.
- A fully functioning INFOCAP network is particularly important for developing countries and NGOs.
- There are several reasons why INFOCAP is currently not functioning to its full potential:
  - Some IGOs state that they have no mandate or policy to contribute to INFOCAP.
  - In some instances, relevant data already exists in other databases.
  - The reason or benefit in entering information into INFOCAP is not seen by some stakeholders.
  - Some countries and organizations indicated that they lack the resources to enter and maintain their data on INFOCAP.
- Experience demonstrates that INFOCAP cannot operate on a voluntary basis, i.e. with countries and organizations submitting their own data.
- A clear political and financial commitment is needed to maintain and further develop INFOCAP. This includes identification of a permanent host for INFOCAP with respective political commitment and sustainable financial resources.

Based on the results of the Monitoring Progress and Effectiveness Working Group review, and the experience of the Steering Group to date, the Steering Group requests that the FSC consider the following recommendations and take a decision on the future direction of INFOCAP.

#### 1.0 General Recommendations

Operational Structure:

The Steering Group agreed that there must be a substantial change in the operational structure of INFOCAP. The Steering Group proposes:

- The development of a "portal" structure, with an advanced, targeted search mechanism.
- The continuation of the current web-based platform (repository/database for information), in particular, to support NGOs and developing countries who do not have their own web sites/information exchange mechanisms. The Oracle database and INFOCAP server facility provided by ECB remains available for the further development of INFOCAP.

Management structure:

The Steering Group agreed that there must be a substantial change in the management structure of INFOCAP. The Steering Group proposes:

- The establishment of a well-resourced permanent secretariat. The precise role of this secretariat, i.e. whether it will serve a pro-active role assisting with the input and maintenance of data, or a facilitating role, will need to be determined in conjunction with the identification of the permanent host and available resources.
- The current verification/authorization process by Lead Sponsors and Points of Contacts should be reviewed and amended, as necessary.
- The current responsibilities of the lead sponsors for verification of contributions could be assumed by the permanent secretariat (note: the volume of work to be substantially decreased by portal structure).

Other:

In further developing INFOCAP, there should be no duplication of efforts, including at the level of data entry. A decision on broadening of services/scope of INFOCAP, for example to add an interactive service or clearinghouse mechanism, should be deferred until a permanent host is identified. In the interim, further elaboration of these proposals by their proponents (Switzerland and Thailand), including costing, is needed. Costing of current system is also needed for reference.

## 2.0 Details of proposed new portal/platform structure and rationale:

A new portal/platform structure would require the following general and service specific efforts:

### General

- Amendment of the current INFOCAP Terms of Reference, including a review of the roles and responsibilities of Points of Contact
- Establishment of a host to provide a strong central coordinating node
- Investigation of technical options and costs for new search capabilities, i.e. pros and cons of establishing a simple link vs. ability to perform a more complex search of links
- Examination of verification of data and security issues

Service Specific

Note: the full details on the following will need to be elaborated in conjunction with the permanent host, including details on how links will be identified and maintained.

## Service 1 (Profiles, Priorities, Action Plans):

- link to UNITAR/ECB Profiles page, Stockholm National Implementation Plans, and other related web sites; maintain Priorities and Action Plan service function

## Service 2 (Sources of Potential Support):

- link to bi-lateral donor databases
- link to foundations
- link to development banks
- link to reference documents on fundraising
- the following issues will need to be considered:
  - commercial databases and costs
  - importance of providing information on target area for donor work and for contact information from each donor organization

## Service 3 (Past, On-going, and Planned Projects):

- portal to link to major project databases, e.g. development assistance agencies, the World Bank, IOMC, chemical conventions
- platform open to all related types of projects and activities, defined broadly

## Service 4 (guidance and training documents):

- portal to link websites of existing and new: IGOs, OECD member countries, other countries or regional organizations, MEAs, and NGOs, etc.
- platform open to all types of guidance and training documents

## Service 5 (Points of Contact):

- reference page linking to IFCS directory of chemicals focal points
- maintain current listing of Points of Contact

**3.0 Criteria for a host:**

The Steering Group recommends that a permanent host must meet the following criteria. The host must:

- be both global and international
- involve global participation
- have an established mechanism for securing funds -- in particular, funds to run a well-resourced secretariat
- have an ability to change Terms of Reference and/or mandate to include INFOCAP responsibilities
- have the ability to sign MOUs (or other) with organizations

- focus on environment (ideally chemicals)
- have an ability to engage multi-sector and multi-stakeholder participation (to ensure "buy-in" from all relevant constituencies), i.e. government, IGOs, NGOs (public interest, industry, science, and labour)

#### 4.0 Options for a permanent host (in order of priority):

Any host must ensure that their current mandate and/or Terms of Reference covers the role and responsibility for operating INFOCAP, or must be prepared to accommodate any necessary changes in their Terms of Reference.

1. FSC to forward to PrepCom3 recommendation that INFOCAP is accommodated in the final arrangements for SAICM implementation

Rationale: anticipated broad, multi-sector scope of SAICM, broad political consensus, involvement of all stakeholders

Note: the need for such a network has been specified in SAICM development process.

2. FSC to request IOMC/IOCC to host INFOCAP, understanding that this will be a joint undertaking

Rationale: collective funding and responsibility of 7 (soon to be 9) organizations with strong roles in chemical safety, multi-sectoral

Note: would need to actively engage all relevant NGOs

#### Other options to consider (do not necessarily meet all criteria, in order of priority):

3. FSC to request UNEP to host INFOCAP

Rationale: experience with CIEN project and ESTIS software program; role of implementing agency for GEF; mandate under Bali Strategic Plan for capacity building and technical assistance

Note: concern with ability to engage NGOs and sectors outside environment

4. FSC to request PIC COP that PIC Secretariat host INFOCAP

Rationale: Secretariat is established and funded, with mandate from conventions concerning information exchange and capacity building

Note: concern with limited scope and membership of PIC and ability to fulfill multi-sector, multi-stakeholder criteria

IFCS/INFOCAP/SG34

# Compilation of Results from INFOCAP Review Survey

Matthias Kern, INFOCAP Steering Group Chair

18 April 2005

## I. Status of Database and Resources

**INFOCAP web site was launched in July 2003**

### **Data Entries as of March 2005**

Service 1 National Profiles, Priorities:	4	
Service 2 Sources of Potential Support:	28	
Service 3 Past, O-going and Planned Projects:	418	
Service 4 Training and Guidance Documents:	50	
Service 5 Points of Contacts:	89	(62 Governments) (11 IGOs) (16 NGOs)
Total:	589	

## **Dissemination Activities:**

- INFOCAP presented at approx. 50 events (incl. Countries where UNITAR has presented INFOCAP)
- Information kits distributed: 665 English, 315 French, 235 Spanish
- Brochures distributed: over 2500

## **Training Programmes:**

- In 2004: Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador
- Planned in 2005: Chad, Benin, Mali, Nigeria, Tanzania, Philippines

# Information Exchange Network for the Sound Management of Chemicals

	<b>Start-up investment</b>		<b>Planned expenses 2005</b>
<i>In-kind contributions from Lead sponsors and SG members</i>	Design of Network		TBD
	Organization of and attendance at SG meetings and promotional events		TBD
	ECB - Oracle database & Network server		ECB - Oracle database & Network server
Financial contribution from IFCS	Lead Sponsor & SG teleconferences & meetings:	19,873 US\$	Maintenance contract 22 500 USD per year
	IT Development Contract - (special negotiated rate actual cost approx 140K US\$)	69,350 US\$	
	Data transfer contract - OECD project database to INFOCAP Database:	1875 US\$	
	Promotional	37,153 US\$	
	- Material:		
	- presentation local arrangements:	2,795 US\$	
	<u>Total:</u>	131,046 US\$	
<i>In-kind staff resources contributed to implementation of INFOCAP</i>  (July 2003 – January 2005)	CCN:	Stober: 5-10% Ocana Correa: 15-20 % Bjorkquist: 50 % Perenzin: 10-20 %	To be determined
	UNITAR:	Ocana Correa: 5-10 % Boljkovac TBD (5-10 %?)	
	ECB:	Berggren/others: 1 %	
	<u>Total:</u>	91 – 121%	

## II. Responses from Telephone Interviews and Steering Group Questionnaire\*

<b>IGOs:</b> (9)	FAO (SG) UNEP UNDP	ILO WHO EC (SG)	OECD (SG) UNITAR (SG) SBC
<b>NGOs:</b> (4)	Univ. Brasilia (SG) CEFIC (SG) Shrishti-Toxic Links (SG)	CropLife Int.	
<b>Governments:</b> (22)	Australia Netherlands Switzerland (SG)**  Egypt Senegal Zambia  Philippines Argentina (SG)  Latvia	Czech Republic Slovenia USA (SG)  Ghana South Africa Zimbabwe  Thailand  Chila	Germany (SG) Tanzania   Nigeria (SG) Tanzania      Costa Rica

Organizations/institutions having entered information: 17

Organizations/institutions not having entered information: 18

\* Summary comments together with individual comments to highlight certain aspects

\*\* detailed written input

## Responses from Telephone Interviews\*

### Reasons for not having entered information into INFOCAP:

IGOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enter information into their own website</li> <li>Some IGOs state that they have no mandate or policy to contribute to other databases</li> <li>Resources/cost implications were considered</li> <li>Reasons/benefit to do so is not seen</li> </ul>
NGOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of awareness</li> <li>Is not an immediate priority</li> <li>Reasons/benefit to do so is not seen</li> </ul>
Gov. (OECD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Final or updated NPs will be entered when available</li> <li>Limited human resources for posting information</li> <li>Immediate benefit is not seen</li> </ul>
Gov. (non OECD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Final or updated NPs will be entered when available</li> <li>Limited human resources for posting information</li> <li>No infrastructure yet, software problems</li> <li>Documents available only in local (non UN-) language</li> </ul>

\* Summary comments together with individual comments to certain aspects

## Relevant own data already appear in other databases:

IGOs	Yes
NGOs	No (science) Yes (public interest) Yes (industry)
Gov. (OECD)	Yes
Gov. (non OECD)	Yes (9 countries) No (1 country)

## Do you have problems when accessing INFOCAP?

IGOs	No
NGOs	No
Gov. (OECD)	No
Gov. (non OECD)	No

## Obstacles having experienced in using INFOCAP:

IGOs	<p>No obstacles (2 IGOs)</p> <p>Straight forward tool, software is good (1 IGO)</p> <p>Lack of human and financial resources (6 IGOs)</p>
NGOs	<p>Lack of human and financial resources</p> <p>System is not self-explanatory enough, when understanding the system, it is possible to find information</p>
Gov. (OECD)	<p>No obstacles (3 countries)</p> <p>Lack of human resources (3 countries)</p>
Gov. (non OECD)	<p>No obstacles (4 countries)</p> <p>Lack of human resources (1 country)</p> <p>Internet connection problems (2 countries)</p>

## Value and importance of the INFOCAP Services:

SERVICE	Governments			NGOs			IGOs		
	High	Medium	Low	High	Medium	Low	High	Medium	Low
1. National Profiles, Priorities/Related Needs, Action Plans	8	4	3	2			6		1
2. Sources of Potential Support	6	8	2	1	1		3		4
3. Past, On-going and planned projects	8	6	1	1	1		3	2	1
4. Training/ Guidance Documents	9	5	1	2			4	2	1
5. Network Points of Contact	8	4	3	1	1		3	2	3

## What audience would benefit from additional information and targeted promotional activities?

IGOs	<p>Employees and worker organizations</p> <p>National level counterparts</p> <p>Regional centres</p> <p>Very different clients, it is difficult or even impossible to reach all</p>
NGOs	<p>Students, governments</p>
Gov. (OECD)	<p>Industry, IGOs, public interest NGOs, various governmental Institutions</p> <p>Developing countries would gain most from additional information and promotion of INFOCAP</p> <p>IOMC organizations, especially UNITAR and UNEP Chemicals to ensure that their needs are being met.</p>
Gov. (non OECD)	<p>NGOs, consumers, workers unions, industry, research institutions, general public</p> <p>Broad audience, all sectors</p>

## How important is it to have INFOCAP fully functioning for your work?

IGOs	Not at all. All IGOs have their own websites.
NGOs	Important, but not in its present form
Gov. (OECD)	INFOCAP is, among many others, an important information resource So far not very important
Gov. (non OECD)	Important/very important

## Can INFOCAP provide an effective means for exchanging relevant information

IGOs	INFOCAP has the potential, if fully functional and complete information, but not in its present form
NGOs	INFOCAP has the potential, but not in its present form Could be important as an education tool
Gov. (OECD)	INFOCAP has the potential, if coordinated with the request for information from other international bodies, but not in its present form INFOCAP has the potential to be extremely useful in that it will help reduce duplication of efforts both domestically and internationally
Gov. (non OECD)	Yes, INFOCAP can provide an effective means for exchanging relevant information (9 countries) INFOCAP has the potential, but not in its present form (2 countries)

## Is the information currently posted on INFOCAP useful?

IGOs	<p>No, information not useful for daily work (2 IGOs)</p> <p>No, because does not have much useful information in it yet (1 IGO)</p> <p>Yes, although it is not comprehensive at this time (3 IGOs)</p>
Gov. (OECD)	<p>Yes (2 countries)</p> <p>Partially, because it is not comprehensive at this time (1 country)</p>
Gov. (non OECD)	<p>Very useful (3 countries)</p>

## Do you find INFOCAP easy to navigate?

IGOs

Easy to navigate (3 IGOs)

Not easy to navigate (3 IGOs)

Website is more complex than expected based on our original version. Search machine is too complicated.

Too much training needed.

Keywords do not allow to search for substances or specific subjects, e.g. obsolete pesticides

Gov. (OECD)

Easy to navigate (3 countries)

Gov.

Not easy to navigate (2 countries)

(non OECD)

Easy to navigate (1 country)

## Suggestions for increasing contributions and use of INFOCAP

### Functioning of website

- IGOs Have INFOCAP as a portal.  
Challenge is that the information management relies on non-structured information. A more dynamic, Google-like search machine is needed which could search among multiple websites.  
Include search possibility for groups of countries, e.g. UN, PIC regions, ASEAN, MERCOSUR.  
Do not duplicate entries if available on other databases/websites, e.g. from OECD, UNITAR.  
Establish links to countries and international databases where data are entered and updated, e.g. OECD, GHS, SBC.  
Process of entering information is rather burdensome and time consuming.  
Entry of data was straightforward when it was done by computer-literate people, it might be more difficult for someone with less experience.  
The approval process by lead sponsors is overly burdensome. It would be better to put the burden on those entering the data to check the information.  
Translate sites into French and Spanish.

*...continued*

## **Suggestions for increasing contributions and use of INFOCAP**

### **Functioning of website**

- |                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| NGOs            | Make more links from websites of institutions to INFOCAP.   |
| Gov. (OECD)     | <p>Include information about REACH to make the website more attractive.</p> <p>Selection of key words is not sufficient.</p> <p>Need to have a good search engine.</p> <p>A Gateway model containing direct links to information on chemical safety would be an effective way for INFOCAP to provide information to stakeholders on a single place.</p> <p>Technical support for the system should be strengthened.</p> |
| Gov. (non OECD) | <p>Process of entering data should be simplified.</p> <p>Translate sites into other languages.</p>  |

## Suggestions for increasing contributions and use of INFOCAP

### Promotional Activities

IGOs	<p>Repeat awareness raising cycle in 2006 after SAICM.</p> <p>Provide monthly updates and special features, e.g. highlighting conventions or meetings.</p> <p>More effective and targeted promotional activities needed.</p> <p>Promotional activities should not be targeted to POCs, clients are people being involved in chemicals management in the countries.</p>
NGOs	<p>Better involvement of the private sector.</p> <p>More awareness raising for INFOCAP is needed.</p>
Gov. (OECD)	<p>Regular exchange of e-mails/information between CCN and Points of Contact.</p> <p>Promotion is key factor.</p> <p>Cultivate governmental and NGO champions for INFOCAP in donor and recipient countries.</p>
Gov. (non OECD)	<p>Training of Points of Contact.</p> <p>Awareness raising.</p>

## Additional comments and suggestions

### Financial Aspects

- IGOs
- The financial implications to do the job must be clear.  
UNITAR wishes to change the name of “lead sponsor” to “lead” not to give the impression that UNITAR and other organizations are putting substantial resources into INFOCAP.
- Gov. (OECD)
- Costs and financial plan have to be assessed in comparison with other databases.  
With respect to financial sustainability, selected foundations, NGOs and private companies should be addressed (Gates Foundation, Ford Foundation, World Business Council, GTZ, Dutch or Swiss Cooperation, IUCN, IFCS, ICCA, CorpLife Int.).  
A resource mobilization strategy would clarify the financial situation.  
No respondents were able to give a firm commitment to providing resources for INFOCAP, but several (SDC, US, GTZ) indicated that resource contributions might be considered under certain circumstances.\*

\* From results of INFOCAP Start-up Phase Questionnaire, September 2004

## Additional comments and suggestions

### Policy Aspects

- IGOs      Need to work at political level.  
Use SAICM to raise awareness of political people.
- Gov.  
(OECD)    Integrate INFOCAP information requirements with those required for PIC and POPs Conventions, this will ensure that countries are not entering similar information into more than one forum.
- After decision about the future of INFOCAP and the host, seek additional mandates from Convention COPs, SAICM, Governing Councils based on clear Memorandum of understanding.
- INFOCAP has the potential to be a service to the POPs COP, might become part of the Capacity Assistance Network.
- IFCS should take the lead in raising this issue in political fora.
- A clearing house option should be envisaged.
- About potential host for INFOCAP:*
- A central coordination with more resources seems to be optimal.
- The central coordination function should be open to an interested non-governmental organization or association, if adequate funding is provided.
- IGOs are on service for the countries. The logical place for INFOCAP would be IOMC.
- IFCS, UNITAR and GTZ were noted as possible options.\*

\* From results of INFOCAP Start-up Phase Questionnaire, September 2004

*...continued*

## **Additional comments and suggestions**

### **Policy Aspects**

Gov. (non OECD)

Strengthen linkage with other IGOs.

INFOCAP should be institutionalised.

Include the possibility for an interactive information exchange like a clearing house mechanism; web-based exchange chat-room.

INFOCAP should be discussed in other meetings, e.g. SAICM.

## Additional comments and suggestions

### Experiences with other databases

- IGOs      An IGO faced similar problem with too little contribution on voluntary basis and use of a specialized database. It was decided to close the database.
- NGOs      An industry association face the same problem that people know the institution but do not use the respective website for in-depth information gathering.