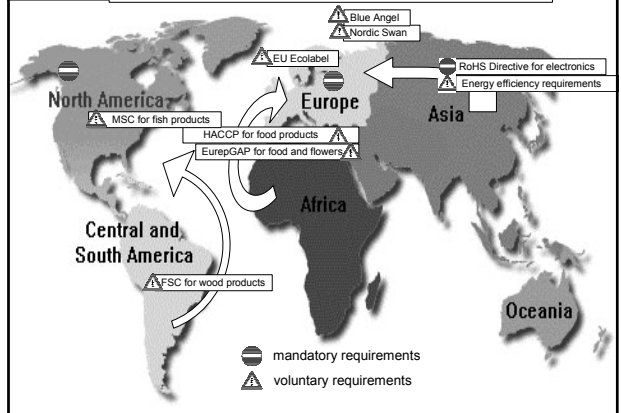


# A Clearinghouse for Environmental requirements and International Trade

Results of a Feasibility study  
Pre-UNCTAD XI workshop  
Rio de Janeiro 7, 8 June 2004



## The world of environmental requirements...



## Reason for the study

Question raised by UNCTAD Consultative Task Force:

*“Is it feasible to develop an international Clearinghouse mechanism for environmental market requirements, in particular voluntary requirements?”*



## Set-up of presentation

- Objective of the study
- Set-up of the study
- Main results of the study
- Conclusions and recommendations
- Questions, discussion



## Objective of the study

Contours of a new Clearinghouse:

- Provide a definition for a new Clearinghouse that is in line with the initial ideas of the CTF
- Possible to link existing information sources/databases to the new Clearinghouse?
- *Objective of this workshop: discuss draft study results*



## Set-up of the study

“What is already there?”

1. Analysis of existing information sources

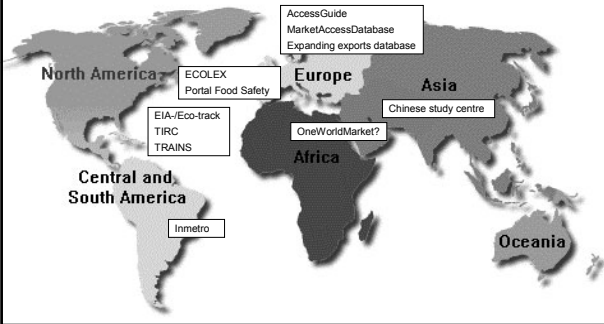
“What are the main challenges?”

2. Identification of opportunities and constraints

3. Conclusions and recommendations - Contours of a new Clearinghouse



## Existing information sources



## Existing information sources

1. AccessGuide (CBI The Netherlands)
2. TRAINS (UNCTAD)
3. Trade Information Reference Centre (ITC)
4. Market Access (EU)
5. Expanding Helpdesk (EU)
6. InMetro (Brazil government)
7. Internat. portal for food safety ... (FAO)
8. OneWorldMarket (STIC et al.)
9. Ecolex (FAO, UNEP, IUCN et al.)
10. EIA/ Eco-track (ESH-Connect)



## Existing information sources – conclusions

### Strengths:

- Information on legislative standards
- Many additional services offered: reg. alert, Q&A service, tools for interpretation
- Reliable data sources, good maintenance
- Accessibility of data: mostly free access



## Existing information sources – conclusions

### Weaknesses:

- Non-legislative standards limited
- Geographical area: no global coverage
- Different target groups, different focus areas
- Languages: few other than English
- Different types of information sources:
  1. Development of data contents by owner
  2. Owner provides access to other information sources
- > Consequences for expertise and efforts of the owner (maintenance, info gathering)



## Existing information sources - conclusions

### Conclusion 1:

There is currently no single central information point for voluntary environmental market access requirements that covers all countries and all product groups

### Conclusion 2:

There are a number of information sources existent, and there are new initiatives, but there is a risk that (1) double work will be done and that (2) 'white spots' still remain existent.



## Opportunities and Constraints

- Approach: interviews with experts on trade and environment
- Discuss perceived needs for a Clearinghouse:
  - What is the target group and how to reach it?
  - Information needs, voluntary/ all standards?
  - Focus on specific sectors, products?



## Opportunities and Constraints – Target group

- **Constraints:**
  - What is the main target group of a clearinghouse?
  - How can the target group be reached: Are physical information points for market requirements present and/or effective?
- **Opportunities:**
  - Most in need of information are companies that have no direct ties with buyers, in particular SME's
  - Disseminate information through all (inter)governmental information points and programmes; involve industry organisations in information dissemination



## Opportunities and Constraints – Information need

- **Constraints:**
  - What exactly is the information need of producers with regard to (environmental) market requirements?
  - Clear distinction between legislative and non-legislative standards? Provide pro-active or reactive information service?
- **Opportunities:**
  - Focus on the 'what' issue but also provide 'tools' to interpret the requirements
  - Provide info on both legislative and non-legislative standards
  - Ideal service would be mix of pro-active and reactive



## Opportunities and Constraints – Information need

- **Constraints:**
  - Information on industry (voluntary) standards may be company-sensitive information
  - There is little two-way communication between producers and buyers on the importance of (voluntary) environmental market requirements
- **Opportunities:**
  - Obtain information through industry organisations, which often have a direct link to companies
  - A clearinghouse may serve as a platform to communicate on (voluntary) market requirements



## Opportunities and Constraints - Focus sectors

- Constraint:**
- On which industry sectors is information most needed?

**Opportunity:**

    - Focus on sectors
      - where many environmental market requirements have been established and
      - where these requirements could act as barriers to trade (i.e. main export sectors)



## Set-up of the study

"What is already there?"

1. Analysis of existing information sources

"What are the main challenges?"

2. Identification of opportunities and constraints

3. Conclusions and recommendations - Contours of a new Clearinghouse



## Contours of a Clearinghouse – conclusions

- **Conclusion 1:**

There is a need for a central information point for environmental market requirements that (1) covers legislative and non-legislative standards and (2) covers all product groups and countries.
- **Conclusion 2:**

It is feasible to develop this information point, or 'clearinghouse mechanism', on basis of linkage of existing information sources and possibly future information sources. An analysis of 'white spots' is however necessary.



## Contours of a Clearinghouse – Conclusions

- Target group:
  - Companies that have no direct ties with buyers, in particular SME's
  - Reach target group through all (inter)governmental information points and programmes + industry organisations
- Scope of the information:
  - Information on existing environmental market requirements, in particular voluntary requirements
  - In addition: provide 'tools' to interpret the requirements



## Contours of a Clearinghouse – Conclusions

- Focus on sectors
  - Food products and other agro-processing products
  - Toys, electrical & electronic products
- Presentation of data:
  - Mix of pro-active (legislation)/ reactive (non-legislative standards)
- Set-up:
  - Info gathering: obtain information through industry organisations, networks
  - Additional functionalities: forum to communicate on (voluntary) market requirements, ...



## Contours of a new Clearinghouse - Recommendations

Final decisions: in consultation with representation of target group

- Languages
- Search functions
- Additional services
- White spot analysis
- Basis: existing information sources



## Contours of a new Clearinghouse - Recommendations

Follow-up activities:

- Establishment of a steering committee
- Detailed description of the Clearinghouse:
  - Definition and criteria of 'legislative' and 'non-legislative' standards
  - Description of objectives, target group and scope
  - Physical/ technical characteristics
  - Development strategy for development of the Clearinghouse
  - Marketing and promotion strategy of the Clearinghouse



## Contours of a new Clearinghouse

- Questions?
- Discussion

