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Clearinghouse on Environmental and Health Requirements and International Trade

Results of a preliminary feasibility study – DRAFT

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1 Introduction

1.1 __ Objective of the study and initial ideas

Objective of the study

The objective of the preliminary study for the Clearinghouse is twofold:

1. To provide a clear definition of the UNCTAD Clearinghouse that the CTF aims to develop. The definition should be in line with the initial ideas of the CTF on this topic and which are related to the objective, scope and target group of the clearinghouse. These initial ideas have been described in the section below.
2. To map the possibilities of linking existing databases to the new UNCTAD Clearinghouse.

The study will be considered a feasibility analysis that reviews the conceptual, practical and user-related aspects of an information clearinghouse. In this respect, one of the pertinent questions is whether UNCTAD should aim at creating one aggregate database versus a decentralized approach of national databases in some key countries that are accessible at regional or sub-regional basis (offers in this regard exist from Brazil and China). The latter might not only be considered for practical reasons, but also for funding reasons.

Initial ideas on the Clearinghouse

Objective of the Clearinghouse

In order to protect the environment, western organisations have established both mandatory and voluntary trade requirements. These include for example:

- Product legislation, e.g. on restriction of substances, performance requirements, labelling requirements (e.g. EU legislation, national legislation),
- Standards developed by business (e.g. Codes of Conduct, quality standards, buyers' requirements)
- Environmental criteria for products developed by non-governmental and governmental organisations (e.g. eco-labels)
- Environmental management systems developed by private organisations (e.g. ISO 14000, EMAS)

Exporters in particular in developing countries, are increasingly confronted with these kinds of 'green trade standards'. Providing timely and accurate information is the first important step to overcome compliance problems. The objective of the UNCTAD Clearinghouse is to meet this need and provide (access to) information on environmental standards related to trade.

Scope of the Clearinghouse

The UNCTAD Clearinghouse will focus on voluntary standards. However, given the close relationship between mandatory and voluntary requirements, it might be required to include both regulation and voluntary standards.

Other research questions in this respect are:

- There might have to be a sub-division between direct environmental requirements and related environmental requirements (e.g. product safety standards such as CE marking). The latter might be listed, without providing any in-depth analysis and info.
- Definition of voluntary standards: Voluntary standards may include for example:
 - Eco-labels, general such as EU eco-labels, Blue Angel, Nordic Swan and sector specific such as FSC (timber)
 - Sectoral green standards developed by trade associations (e.g. developed by CECED agreements for small domestic appliances).
 - Management systems
 - If possible: codes for suppliers developed by multinational organisations. However, these codes are subject to change, have specific interest and may not always be publicly available. The preliminary study will have to point out to what extent they can be included (e.g. how to obtain information and to update).
- Product standards will be the entry point of the Clearinghouse. Process-related standards may be included as required, for example within the context of industry standards or NGO schemes.
- Sometimes it is difficult to make a clear distinction between environmental standards and health & safety standards. However, the focus of the Clearinghouse will be on standards that have some connection to the environment. For example the use of pesticides/ residues is a food safety issue for consumers, but a health and environment issue for producers.

Target group of the Clearinghouse

The Clearinghouse is intended for use by producers in developing countries that are faced with environmental requirements in export markets.

Other research questions in this respect are:

- The Clearinghouse is intended for use in all developing countries. However, for practical purposes initially some regions might be prioritised¹, i.e. Brazil, India, East Asia. Offers for co-operation exist and could be explored. It should be noticed that one of the problems of this approach is the current absence of partners in African countries.
- The Clearinghouse is also meant for use by (semi-) governmental organisations and non-governmental organisations (including Business Support Organisations)?
- Although the Clearinghouse is eventually to cover all business sectors, initial focus will be on environmental standards for the principal export products of developing countries, e.g. food products, flowers, textiles, electronics, toys. If expansion is needed, this could be carried out at a later stage. Full use will be

¹ In addition, CADEXCO (the Costa Rican Chamber of Commerce) and FECAESCA (association for promotion of export in Central America) have had plans for the development of a database for non-tariff trade barriers, serving producers in various countries in Central America. The initiative failed due to shortage of funding.

made on recent analyses conducted by UNCTAD on leather and footwear, electrical and electronic products and horticultural goods.

1.2 __ Set-up of this report and research method

This study presents the research results in three chapters:

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 2: Existing information sources for market requirements

Chapter 3: Opportunities and constraints for development of a clearinghouse mechanism

Chapter 4: Conclusions and recommendations

Chapter 2 describes the main characteristics of existing information sources and concludes with a strength/ weakness analysis and the relevance of these information sources to establishment of an international clearinghouse mechanism. Chapter 3 looks at 'the wider picture' of establishment of a clearinghouse mechanism, identifying the main constraints that need to be addressed and opportunities how to address them.

Chapter 4 presents the main conclusions that can be drawn from the previous chapters and recommendations for the establishment of a clearinghouse mechanism.

The following research methods for this report are:

- (1) Desk research (Internet)
- (2) Interviews with the following experts in the field of environmental trade standards and/or database providers:

- Tom Rotherham, International Institute for Sustainable Development
- Edward Clarence-Smith, UNIDO
- Gordon Shepherd, WWF
- Ariane van Beuzekom, Centre for the Promotion of Exports from Developing Countries
- Samir Ghandi, World Trade Organisation
- Pierre Hauselmann, PIEC Consulting

The Fact Sheets (included in the Annexes) have been reviewed and completed by the relevant organisations. The information in the tables, in particular Table 2.6 on strengths and weaknesses, is however entirely attributable to the author of this document.

2

Existing information sources for market requirements

2.1 __ Introduction

A clearinghouse mechanism for environmental market requirements will have to relate as much as possible to existing information sources on (environmental) market requirements. This chapter presents the results of an inventory of existing sources of market access information. Ten information sources that are accessible through Internet and seek to assist traders in collecting the information they need to enter a foreign market have been compared on basis of a set of criteria.

The following information sources on market access / trade information have been included in the inventory:

1. AccessGuide (CBI The Netherlands)
2. TRAINS (UNCTAD)
3. Trade Information Reference system (ITC)
4. Market Access (EU)
5. Expanding Helpdesk (EU)
6. InMetro (Brazil government)
7. International portal for food safety, plant and animal health (IPFSAPH) (FAO)
8. One World Market / Texbase (One World Market, STIC)
9. Ecolex (FAO, UNEP, IUCN, standards agencies)
10. EIA-track (electronics) Eco-track (textiles) (ESH-Connect)

These information sources have been selected on basis of the following criteria:

- Type of service: all information sources aim to act as a **central point** for the information offered and are accessible through the **Internet**
- Objective and scope: all selected information sources seek to assist traders with information to **facilitate access to foreign markets, in particular environmental market access requirements**.
- Information sources with another/ wider scope have also been included if they seemed relevant on basis of other characteristics (e.g. set-up, trade-related information).

The information sources have been identified on basis of:

- internet search (e.g. using reference sites to information sources)
- documentation (e.g. from CBI)
- views of experts
- knowledge and work experience of CREM staff

The next section, Paragraph 2.2, provides brief descriptions of the information sources included in the inventory. Paragraphs 2.3 to 2.7 present a summary of the characteristics of the information sources; paragraph 2.8 presents the main conclusions.

2.2 __ Brief description of existing information sources

This section provides a brief description of the information sources included in the inventory.

1. AccessGuide (CBI)

The AccessGuide database (English) provides information on mandatory legislation and voluntary market requirements on environmental, social and consumer health and safety issues for the markets of the European Union, Germany, the UK and the Netherlands. Developed by the Centre for the Promotion of Imports from Developing Countries, this database is targeted especially at producers in developing countries.

2. TRAINS (UNCTAD)

The Trade Analysis Information System (TRAINS) is a comprehensive computerized information system on trade control measures (tariff, para-tariff and non-tariff measures) and import flows, based on HS codes, for more than 140 countries.

3. Trade Information Reference system (ITC)

The Trade Information Reference (TIR) system developed by the International Trade Centre (ITC, a joint initiative of UNCTAD and WTO) is an Index to Internet trade information sources providing references and direct links to a selection of websites, covering various aspects of international trade such as: country profiles, market access conditions, contact information, market news, etc.

4. Market Access (EU)

The Market Access Database has been developed for European exporters of goods and services and provides information about market access conditions in non-EU countries, as a means of ensuring that EU trading partners effectively comply with international commitments. The Market Access Database lists a substantial number of specific barriers reported by European business, including environmental / health-related barriers, however, the information provided on these barriers is very limited.

5. Expanding Exports Helpdesk (EU)

The Expanding Exports Helpdesk is an online resource, provided by the European Commission, to facilitate access for developing countries to markets within the European Union. The Expanding Exports Helpdesk provides relevant information required by developing country exporters interested in supplying the EU market. The database currently provides information on tariffs, customs documents and rules of origin, but will be expanded with information on non-tariff trade information in future.

6. InMetro (Government of Brazil)

INMETRO developed by the Brazil Ministerio do Desenvolvimento, Industria e Comercio Exterior (CONMETRO) is an 'Exporter Alert' early warning system for WTO notifications.

7. International Portal on Food Safety, Animal and Plant Health

The FAO has recently launched a prototype international portal on food safety, animal and plant health. The FAO information paper to the SPS Committee (G/SPS/GEN/483) gives a clear idea of the contents of the portal when fully operational.

8. OneWorldMarket (OneWorldMarket consortium)

Internet platform, currently a demo version, but the functionality and contents are planned for expansion in the next months and will cover trade information, news, legislation, quality requirements and certificates for producers in developing countries, organised per sector. The database will include information about market access conditions in non-EU countries, including barriers related to environment and health issues. OneWorldMarket is an initiative of several organisations, e.g. the Sustainable Trade Information Centre (STIC), the Royal Tropical Institute (KIT), the Business and Society Foundation (SMO) and OneWorld Nederland, in cooperation with partners in the South.

9. Ecolex (FAO, UNEP, IUCN)

ECOLEX is a database providing a comprehensive, global source of information on environmental law, operated jointly by FAO, IUCN and UNEP. The aim of ECOLEX is to provide global access to these data in an efficient and cost-effective manner, and present them in a user-friendly format, facilitating searches for references and full texts through the development of multilingual retrieval possibilities (English, French, Spanish).

10. EIA-track for electronics, ECO-track for textiles (ESH-Connect)

Commercial databases on mandatory environmental / health & safety market requirements for consumer electronics and textile articles, covering almost every country in the world. Includes information on packaging, labelling, acoustic requirements.

Review characteristics

In the next paragraphs, the information sources described above are compared and reviewed on five main characteristics:

1. Objective and target group
2. Scope and contents (standards, product groups covered)
3. Data presented, e.g.:
 - Completeness / depth of the information
 - Maintenance / updating of the information
 - Additional features
 - Methods for information gathering
4. Set-up of database (structure, accessibility)
5. Monitoring and evaluation:
 - Monitoring data on e.g. number of users, user experiences
 - Plans for future development/ expansion.

Finally, it has been assessed whether there are options for co-operation: is the owner interested in connecting his information source with other information sources, on what conditions? The results on this issue are described in the conclusions & recommendations chapter of this report.

The data on the characteristics listed above are described in detail in separate Fact Sheets for each information source, which can be found in the Annexes of this report. The data in the Fact Sheets have been reviewed and completed if necessary by the owners of the information source.

Paragraphs 2.3 to 2.7 present a summary of the characteristics of the information sources included in this inventory, which has been based on the data in the Fact Sheets. The summary is followed by overall conclusions. The chapter is concluded with an analysis of strengths and weaknesses of the information sources (paragraph 2.8).

2.3 __ Existing sources of information: Objectives and target groups

When looking at the organisations to which the information services included in this study are targeted (Table 2.1), the following target groups can be identified:

(1) The private sector:

- Producers, exporters and Business Support Organisations in developing countries, in particular those interested in supplying the EU market
- Brazilian exporters, particularly SMEs
- European exporters of goods and services
- International trading partners that need to deal with issues related to food safety, plant and animal health
- Small and medium-sized enterprises in the agro-industrial sector in the South and in Western Europe
- SMEs in the textile sector, in particular in Asia

(2) Governmental organisations

- Policy makers and Governmental trade institutions, in particular those in developing countries / countries with transition economies

(3) The non-governmental sector

- NGOs and civil society organisations engaged in development cooperation / environmental / social issues related to trade
- Academia

The following conclusions can be drawn with regards to the scope of the information sources covered in this report:

- Most existing information sources are –directly or indirectly- targeted at the private sector.
- Specific attention is paid to the information needs of companies in developing countries;
- There are several information sources, which aim to increase transparency on environmental market requirements in order to facilitate market access.

Conclusion Objectives and target groups

There are several information sources (IPFSAPH, AccessGuide) and sources in development (Expanding Exports Helpdesk, OneWorldMarket) that aim to facilitate market access for producers, of which some are specifically targeted at developing countries.

2.4 __ Existing sources of information: Scope

The scope of the information sources included in the survey has been summarised on basis of four main characteristics:

- Type of standards covered (legislative, voluntary)
- Topics covered (environmental, health and safety, social, other standards)
- Sectors covered
- Geographical area covered

Table 2.2 presents how the information sources cover these characteristics. With regards to this Table, it should be noted that the distinction between 'mandatory' and 'voluntary' standards may be somewhat artificial. In reality, standards, which are not official part of legislation can still have a mandatory character when it comes to market access.

The following conclusions can be drawn with regards to the scope of the information sources covered in this report:

- Legislative or mandatory regulations are covered by several information sources (e.g. Inmetro, Ecolex)
- AccessGuide is currently the only information source that includes voluntary environmental market access requirements aimed at developing countries
- There are several information sources aimed at specific sectors (IPFSAPH, E-Textile), regions (Inmetro) and there are several information sources under construction (Expanding Exports Helpdesk, OneWorldMarket)
- However, there seems to be no single central information point for voluntary environmental market access requirements.

Conclusion Scope

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

2.5 __ Existing sources of information: Data presented

The information sources included in this survey have been assessed on several aspects, to the extent that this information was (made) available:

- Completeness, depth and update frequency of the information presented
- Additional services and features (e.g. support by helpdesk, Question & Answer service, tools for interpretation of information, links to other websites etc.)
- Methods for information gathering, in particular in relation to voluntary standards

A summary of these issues for each information source can be found in Tables 2.3 and 2.4 (for a full description, please refer to the Fact Sheets). The conclusions with regards to these issues have been described below.

Completeness of data

- Information sources that provide data on legislation can –more or less- aim for being ‘complete’ within their scope (Inmetro, Ecolex)
- For information sources that offer data on non-legislative standards, it is more difficult to be ‘complete’ because this would be a highly subjective target. AccessGuide, for example, aims for coverage of ‘the most relevant’ non-legislative standards, including those standards that have been adopted by ‘large players in industry’.
- For both types of data (legislative and non-legislative), the interpretation can be a problem. Some information sources provide interpretative documents (AccessGuide) or a consultancy service. Other information sources give the users ‘tools’ for interpretation by providing access to relevant literature, documentation etc.

For example, Ecolex provides access to the summary, index and full text of each piece of legislation is provided. The database also provides tools for interpretation (literature, judicial decisions etc) of the information provided.

Update frequency

- The update of information involves the same problem with regards to ‘completeness’ as described above. For example, AccessGuide seeks for continuous update of the information presented, but only with legislative and voluntary requirements that have been adopted by governments or large players in industry.
- Information sources that present data provided by others do not have an updating task.

Additional services and features

There are several options to equip an information source for trade standards with additional services, e.g.:

Custom user assistance

- A Question & Answer service for users; the answers can be provided by the same party/parties that provide input to the database (AccessGuide).
- Upon request, assistance in the identification of trade information sources and preparation of selective bibliographies (TIRC).

Increase awareness of (new) standards among users

An alert system that reports new developments in trade standards to members. For example:

- In case of legislative standards, a ‘proactive’ alert functionality that sends out e-mails to users when new legislation is in preparation or has been adopted (Inmetro, EIA/Eco-track)
- An alert system to selected groups of users on new acquisitions, new sources, and information files on specific subjects, etc. that have been added to the information source (TIRC)
- A current awareness service through the International Trade Documentation Bulletin (ITD)

Facilitate capacity building on trade standards

- A library of links to other relevant information services (TIRC, AccessGuide, Expanding Exports Helpdesk).
- Production of specialized bibliographies or directories (TIRC)
- Offer a publication facility for any country that has no website but wishes to post information with regards to the themes of the information source (IPFSAPH).

Facilitate commercial transactions between users

- A matchmaking forum for trading partners (OneWorldMarket).

Conclusion Additional functionalities

There are several options to equip an information source for trade standards with additional functionalities in order to increase the service to users.

Methods for information gathering

There are several methods to maintain the information in databases on trade standards, keep it up-to-date. The methods being used by the information sources analysed in this study are:

Through a network of information providers

The organisation may have developed a wide network of (reliable) information providers specialized in the field of international trade and related issues, and thus have constituted a large collection of selected information materials. In this way, the organisation has gradually developed into the central point for the issues covered by the information service (e.g. TIRC, Ecolex, IPFSAPH).

Through the knowledge of the organisation's staff

Staff members of the organisation(s) may have developed large knowledge, they may have direct contacts with industry, be involved in field research, visit companies, trade associations, seminars etc. Therefore, they know "what's going on" in the field of trade and market access requirements and can signal important topics for the database, and are also likely to know what kind of problems companies have with compliance etc (e.g. IPFSAPH, AccessGuide, OneWorldMarket, EIA/Eco-track).

Using (inter)governmental sources and contacts

This does not have to be limited to legislative departments, but may also cover contacts at embassies, EC Delegations abroad, websites of intergovernmental organisations etc (TRAINS, Inmetro, OneWorldMarket, AccessGuide).

Through the organisation of events

Seminars, workshops, promotional events etc. organised for (a part of) the target group can be a valuable source of information on actual issues related to a specific sector / product group. These events may be organised with the primary objective to inform participants how to use the information source (IPFSAPH, AccessGuide).

Information delivered by external parties

External parties may deliver the content of the database. These can be custom-made documents delivered by (hired) consultants with expertise in the relevant field, but can also be existing documentation delivered by professional organisations (e.g. statistics agencies, juridical reports, country studies from governmental agencies, reports from standardisation agencies etc.) (Ecolex, IPFSAPH, ITC, TRAINS, AccessGuide).

Linkage to existing information sources

Another method of gathering information that is delivered by external parties, is linkage to other existing information sources. By linking one's own information source to other existing information sources, the organisation does not have a maintenance responsibility. In this case, the owner's responsibilities are, for example, selecting information sources that are reliable, encouraging the owners of these information sources to make their data available, providing an adequate portal service etc. (IPFSAPH).

Conclusion Methods for information gathering

There are several methods to keep the information on trade standards up-to-date. Each method creates different tasks, efforts and responsibilities for the information source owner.

2.6 __ Existing information sources: Set-up

The information sources included in this study have all been set up in a different way, presenting the information in a specific structure that serves the objectives of the information source. Table 2.5 summarises the set-up of the information sources, e.g. describing the structure, links, accessibility etc. (for a more detailed description, please refer to the Fact Sheets). This section presents the main conclusions with regards to the set-up of the information sources.

Physical characteristics

- A collection of files that can be viewed and/or downloaded directly (AccessGuide, MarketAccessDatabase)
- A summary page with information and linkages to the original source (Ecolex)
- A database with an e-mail service (Inmetro, EIA/Eco-track)
- A portal that provides direct access to other existing information sources (IPFSAPH)
- A library of links (bibliography) to other existing information sources (Expanding Exports Helpdesk, TIRC)
- A CD-Rom containing the most recent information and summaries (TIRC)

Structure

Besides the pages that display the information offered, the information sources included in this study contain the following pages:

- Homepage (explanation on set-up of the information source, main functionalities and services, link to the search machine etc.)
- 'About' page (background information on the organisation and its objectives)
- Contact page (contact form or contact details)
- Page for User guidance / FAQ page / Help page
- Search page / search machine, supporting different types of search options:
 - keyword search
 - simple search by selection of parameters (theme-based parameters: environment, social, consumer health & safety, quality)
 - advanced search by a number of parameters (e.g. product group / industrial sector, country, theme, legislative / voluntary measure etc)

Some information sources also offer:

- A Question & Answer service, where users can address their questions (or suggestions, comments) to the organisation. These may be questions on the use of the database but also on the contents. The user will receive a personal reply (AccessGuide).
- Information and search options in different languages (Ecolex).

Other issues with regards to set-up of the information source:

- Accessibility of the information, for example:
 - free access, no subscription
 - free access but subscription required (AccessGuide)
 - free access for members of the target group, fee for non-members
 - membership fee for all users (TRAINS)
 - restricted access to some parts of the information offered (MarketAccessDatabase)

Conclusion Set-up

There are several 'standard' pages that should be part of an effective information source.

However, there are also a number of choices to be made with regards to physical characteristics, accessibility and possible other features of the information source.

2.7 __ Existing information sources: Monitoring and evaluation

The research for this study included investigation whether data on monitoring and evaluation of the information sources are available:

- Monitoring data, e.g. on the number of users, user experiences
- Plans for future development, expansion

These data were not (made) available from all information sources covered by this study. Only where data were available, they have been described in Table 2.6. This section presents the main conclusions with regards to the monitoring and evaluation of the information sources.

There are several methods to monitor use of the information source and user experiences:

- monitoring the number of users and user profile (origin, type of organisation etc) through user subscription / registration (Inmetro, TRAINS, AccessGuide)
- monitoring the use of information offered through analysis of web statistics, e.g.
 - user search paths (IPFSAPH)
 - documents downloaded (type of measures, product group, country)
 - other indicators
- enabling users to provide feedback, comments etc. e.g. through a Feedback page on the website, user survey etc.
- monitoring use of the system by potential information providers (IPFSAPH)
- organisation of special events, e.g. pilot projects, demonstration and promotion activities (IPFSAPH, AccessGuide).

Plans for future development

Most information sources are not 'static' but in a continuing process of expansion and improvement, e.g.

- Expansion or improvement of the functionalities offered (notification service, search options, Q & A service, languages)
- Expansion of the scope of the information offered (themes covered, geographical area, industrial sector etc.)
- Expansion of access to supporting materials, links etc.

Expansion may also result in change of accessibility, levy of a membership fee.

Finally, promotion and marketing of the information source can be an important part of expansion activities; an information source that no-one has heard of can never be a valuable source of information.

Conclusion Monitoring and Evaluation

There are several methods available for monitoring the use of the information source, e.g. web statistics (the most common and easy option) and user surveys (requiring more time and efforts).

An information source is usually in constant development. It can be improved and expanded in various stages by functionality, theme, geographical area etc.

2.8 __ Strength / weakness analysis of existing information sources

On basis of the characteristics described in the tables of the previous sections, an analysis can be made of the strengths and weaknesses of each information source. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 2.7.

Please note that issues, which are less objective or measurable, e.g. user-friendliness of the presentation of data, familiarity with the existence of the database with the target group etc., have not been involved in the strength/weakness analysis. Though of great importance, these issues will be included in the next chapters of this report (Chapter 3 Opportunities and constraints, Chapter 4 Conclusions and recommendations).

On basis of Table 2.7, the following conclusions can be drawn with regard to the strengths and weaknesses of current information systems:

- *Geographical area*: Most information source cover only a limited geographical area; there is no information source with global coverage of environmental market requirements.
- *Type of standards*: There is currently only one database for environmental market requirements, which covers both legislative and non-legislative standards and is targeted at developing countries, that is operational (AccessGuide). However, there are several other initiatives that have the intention to focus on this topic as well (Expanding Exports Helpdesk, OneWorldMarket).
- *Type of information source*: There are generally two types of information sources:
 1. Information sources that develop and provide the data contents themselves (EIA/ Eco-track, AccessGuide)
 2. Information sources that provide access to other information sources (Inmetro, TIRC, IPFSAPH).

Each type requires different expertise and efforts from the owner, but also creates different risks and responsibilities. For example, for type (1) the emphasis will be on maintenance activities, for type (2) the emphasis will be more on mobilisation of other organisations to make their data available.

- *Languages*: Most information sources provide data in English only; there is one in Portuguese (Inmetro) and one in several languages (ECOLEX).
- *Additional services*: Additional services can have a surplus value and be of great significance. For example: a regulatory alert function could be supplementary to more informative data on legislation and compliance. A Question & Answer service is valuable with respect to the interpretation of data, etc.
- *Reliability and accessibility of data*: Most information sources for legislative standards use reliable methods and sources for information gathering. However, information gathering for non-legislative standards is rather dependent on networking and contacts with industry and therefore less verifiable. Most information sources offer free access.

Overall conclusion Chapter 2

There are currently a number of information sources existent, and there are a few recent initiatives for the establishment of new information sources. However, there is a risk that (1) double work will be done and that (2) 'white spots' still remain existent.

Analysis of opportunities and constraints

The previous chapter provided an analysis of existing information sources for (environmental) market requirements, in order to identify their main characteristics. The analysis was made in order to assess the relevance and meaning of these information sources with respect to a possible new clearinghouse mechanism for environmental market requirements. It has been concluded that the existing information sources are limited on several aspects, but also present opportunities.

However, when assessing opportunities and constraints for a possible clearinghouse mechanism for environmental market requirements, one should also look at 'the wider picture'. For example, is there a (perceived) need for such a mechanism, with whom and what current channels for information are being used?

This chapter provides a (comprehensive) description of this 'wider picture'. It presents the main constraints and opportunities for the development of an international clearinghouse mechanism. These have been identified on basis of interviews with 'experts' in the field of trade and environmental requirements (please refer to the introduction for a list of names).

3.1 __ Current sources for information on environmental market requirements

Producers, especially those in developing countries, may use several sources of information on (new) environmental market requirements:

- National Enquiry Points: national information channels run by governments, as established by the WTO TBT Agreement. According to the Code of good practice, central governments have the task to disseminate information according to the notification procedures for mandatory technical regulations and for voluntary standards.
- Through chambers of commerce: in some countries these are quite active, but this is different per country and even per sector.
- Through trade associations: again, in some countries and some sectors, these are well-organised, in others they are not. In general, countries that have a longer history of a free market have better organised trade associations.
- Through subcontracting chains: buyers may inform their suppliers on the particular environmental requirements they need to comply with.
- From each other: in developing countries, there is only a small number of entrepreneurs, they may cluster geographically.

As such, there are many (physical) points where producers can get information on environmental market requirements. However, the problems with these information sources is that:

- (1) They do not have enough information
- (2) They are not coordinated or it is unknown whether they are effective
- (3) Their existence is not known well enough; for example with regard to voluntary standards: many private schemes have their system to provide information, but producers do not know where to look for the information.

One strategy to address this issue may be to disseminate information as much as possible and through all of the information channels available, so producers will get the information they need in one way or another.

For example, environmental market requirements are (just) one item on the list of market access requirements. Central government institutions or trade organisations should provide a mechanism for information on the other issues on the list, for example quality requirements, packaging requirements etc. Environmental requirements may follow the same mechanism.

In addition, information dissemination on environmental market requirements may also be integrated into existing programmes of intergovernmental organisations (e.g. UNIDO) targeted at industry in developing countries.

Constraint:

It is unknown to which extent current channels for dissemination of information on environmental requirements are well-known and/or present, well-organised and effective. Therefore, it may be difficult to reach producers in developing countries.

Opportunities:

Disseminate information as much as possible and through all of the information channels available, so producers will get the information they need in one way or another. For example:

- Information on environmental requirements follow the same mechanism as information on other market requirements.
- Information on environmental market requirements is integrated into existing programmes of e.g. intergovernmental organisations.

3.2 __ Perceived needs for information on environmental requirements

Experts confirm that there is a clear need for information on environmental market requirements, especially with producers in developing countries.

However, information on environmental market requirements is only one item on the list of about 20 items on market access requirements that a producer should know about. It is therefore difficult to pinpoint exactly what the problem is.

In addition, one issue is that producers need to know *what* requirements they need to meet. Another issue is that producers also need to know *how* they can comply with them. These are not just tools to interpret legislation, but rather information on which process changes producers need to make etc. This is a whole other level and any way of linking the two would be very useful but also very difficult.

Furthermore, there is a difference between a *proactive* approach and a *reactive* approach to information needs. For example, the Brazilian government institute Inmetro clearly takes a more proactive approach by visiting trade promotion organisations etc. On the contrary, the South African government has established a system where companies can report information gaps they have signalled. This system gives insight in information needs only after a certain period of time.

<p>Constraints:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- It is difficult to define exactly what the information need is of producers with regard to environmental market requirements.- It is also difficult to assess whether a clearinghouse should take a 'proactive' or rather a 'reactive' approach to environmental market requirements. <p>Opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- The clearinghouse mechanism should focus on the 'what' issue first: what are the environmental market requirements that producers need to meet? However, at the same time the clearinghouse can provide users with 'tools' to interpret the requirements. These can be references to surveys that consumers acknowledge (for example the Eurobarometer from EUROSTAT). This would enable producers to judge themselves how to comply with market access requirements. The next step would then be to address the 'how' issue.- A 'proactive' and a 'reactive' approach may be complementary. With regard to legislative standards, the clearinghouse may operate in a proactive way, whereas for non-legislative standards, the clearinghouse may wait for adoption by large stakeholders.
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In addition, it may be considered to provide information not only on market access, but also on market 'uptake':

- market access information: information on the legal obligations that should be complied with to enter a market, the 'rights' to access, but also on
- market 'uptake' information: information on which environmental requirements are expected by consumers (i.e. what will appeal to them). Consumers in this sense may not be the end-consumer, but retailers or organisations that have large influence on the public opinion (e.g. consumer organisations, environmental NGOs).

Many efforts are directed towards ensuring market access of producers. However, it may be forgotten that a product should also be 'appealing', that it should be 'wanted' for successful sale. In this respect, information on 'market uptake' is important in order not to lose green market opportunities. For example in the forest sector, what certification system do retailers expect; choosing the wrong one may not "open the shelves".

A clearinghouse mechanism should also encourage a two-way exchange of information between producers (in developing countries) and buyers. In this respect, it is as important for Northern consumers to understand that conditions are different as it is for producers to realise that the fulfilment of environmental and/or social requirements must appeal to the target market.

Constraints:

- In general, more attention is being paid towards information needed for market access than towards information on 'market uptake'.
- There is little two-way exchange of information between producers in developing countries and buyers on the importance of environmental (or social) requirements with regard to target market appeal.

Opportunities:

- A clearinghouse mechanism may not just provide information on market access, but also on 'market uptake'; information in this respect lies more in the area of voluntary requirements (e.g. Forest Stewardship Council)
- A clearinghouse mechanism may act as a platform to exchange information between producers (in developing countries) and buyers.

3.3 __ Target group of a clearinghouse mechanism

Who are most in need of information, small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), business support organisations and governmental institutions?

Intergovernmental organisations predominantly focus on and co-operate with governmental institutions. Needs assessments with regard to e.g. capacity building and technical assistance focus on the country as a whole. There is no attention for specific sectors, unless a certain sector becomes an issue' (for example fisheries), or for a specific type of company.

According to experts, SMEs are most in need of information and they have the largest difficulties to cope with (costs for) compliance. However, in principle any company could need information on environmental market requirements, it is difficult to segment. One way to address this issue could be to focus on what buyers want. In this case, it is relevant to distinguish between:

- (1) Companies that have a relationship with buyers (in countries where environmental market requirements have been established)
- (2) Companies that do not have such a relationship and try to break into a new market.

The South African government has developed an export promotion section, which informs all newcomers to the market (exporting companies) about the market requirements. However, not every country will be capable to develop such an approach. In these countries, industry organisations (and not only government institutions) that have direct links with industry can take an active role and make local business aware of market requirements and where to find information.

Constraint:

Most in need of information are companies that have no direct ties with buyers and/or SMEs. They would be the main target group of a clearinghouse mechanism. Usually, governmental and/or intergovernmental programmes may not focus specifically on these groups.

Opportunity:

Involve industry organisations to take an active role in information dissemination, making companies aware of the existence of market requirements and information sources e.g. an international clearinghouse mechanism.

3.4 __ Type of standards covered by a clearinghouse mechanism

What type of standards should be covered by a clearinghouse, legislative and non-legislative standards? Should it include both product and process standards?

With regards to the technical regulations (TBT, SPS), information channels and mandatory notification procedures have been established. For these requirements, the infrastructure is existent.

However, information on industry standards, procurement requirements of buyers (companies, multinationals, but also consumers), is missing. Environmental requirements are usually set by multinational enterprises individually. Therefore, the focus of a clearinghouse mechanism should be on 'what buyers want'. Since, when it comes to market access, there is no difference in importance between these requirements or industry (e.g. eco-label) requirements.

Environmental requirements that companies have developed for their suppliers may be commercially sensitive information and companies may not be very open about it. Again, in this respect, industry organisations (and not only government institutions) can take an important role for dissemination of information, as they often have a direct link to companies.

With regard to product and process standards, it is important to provide a clear explanation of the relevant scope of each. A process standard, such as ISO 14001, cannot be used to demonstrate environmental preference of goods. It may however be important in a business-to-business type of communication. Producers need to define what their objectives are and be able to identify the best tools to fulfil these.

Finally, there is not always a hard line between mandatory / legislative market requirements and voluntary market requirements. Some schemes may be voluntary, but have such great significance for market access that they become a 'de facto' mandatory condition to be able to sell products in a country or trading with a specific retailer. Voluntary schemes may also be introduced within certain national legislations, thus becoming in a sense mandatory standards. Thus, there is a continuum from voluntary, to de facto mandatory to mandatory.

Constraint:

An infrastructure has already been put in place for legislative standards; it is in particular information on industry (voluntary) standards that is missing. This may be company-sensitive information.

Opportunity:

Focus on 'what buyers want'; legislative and industry standards are equally important. One option may be to funnel information through industry organisations (and not only government institutions), which often have a direct link to companies.

3.5 __ Focus sectors of a clearinghouse mechanism

If a clearinghouse mechanism aims to cover (legislative and non-legislative) environmental market requirements, this is quite a large scope. Should the clearinghouse focus on specific sectors (initially) and if so, which sectors should these be?

In order to address this question, it is important to identify the sectors where there are the most environmental market requirements. For example, many requirements have been established in agro-processing sectors: food, textiles, leather (wood).

In addition, it is important to know in which sectors environmental market requirements could act as potential barriers to trade. In other words: what are the main export sectors of the target group countries? These could include both commodities and processed goods. A tentative list of focus sectors of a clearinghouse mechanism would then include:

- Food products
- Other agro-processing products: Textile and leather products, Wood products, flowers and horticultural products
- Toys
- Electrical and electronic products

Constraint:

The scope of 'environmental market requirements' may be too large, creating the need to focus (initially) on specific industry sectors. Which sectors should these be?

Opportunity:

The focus should be on

- Sectors where many environmental market requirements have been established
- Sectors where these requirements could act as barriers to trade, i.e. the main export sectors of the target group countries.

4

Contours of a new Clearinghouse: conclusions and recommendations

4.1 __ Conclusions

In chapter 2, it has been concluded that there is currently no single central information point for voluntary environmental market access requirements / industry standards that covers all countries and all product groups. Experts have acknowledged the need for such a central information point. In addition, they have indicated that because of the continuum between legislative and non-legislative standards, it is recommended to provide information on all kinds of environmental market requirements (chapter 3).

Conclusion I: There is a need for a central information point for legislative and non-legislative environmental market requirements

It has also been concluded that there are several information sources that cover part of the information on environmental market requirements. The owner organisations of these information sources have expressed their interest in linkage to an international clearinghouse mechanism for environmental market requirements (Inmetro, AccessGuide, IPFSAPH)². Therefore, these information sources could provide a useful basis for an international clearinghouse mechanism. Development of an entire new information source would not only require high human and capital investments but also mean 'double work'.

Conclusion II: An international clearinghouse mechanism can be developed on basis of existing information sources

Conclusion

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.

It is feasible to develop this information point, or 'clearinghouse mechanism', on basis of linkage of existing information sources and possibly future information sources.

² Please note that this is not a conclusion that is based on the previous chapters, but information provided to the author of this document by the relevant organisations.

4.2 __ Recommendations

The following recommendations can be made with regard to the contours of a clearinghouse and the organisation by which it will be managed:

- The clearinghouse can be largely developed on basis of existing information sources and will operate as a portal / reference centre, providing access to other information sources.
- The following organisations have expressed interest in linkage to an international Clearinghouse mechanism and may be contacted to this end: the national inquiry point for the WTO TBT Agreement in Brazil (Inmetro), the Centre for Promotion of Exports in The Netherlands (AccessGuide), the Food and Agricultural Organisation (IPFSAPH). These organisations may co-operate in the establishment of a clearinghouse mechanism, e.g. formalised through 'partnership agreements'.
- It is important to develop a system with a user-friendly and uniform format. Therefore, the system may be developed in close co-operation with a steering committee, which is composed of representations of the target group, partner organisations (see above) and technical experts (database developers and organisations with expertise on environmental standards).
- The clearinghouse will have to be managed by an organisation that has strong capacities in the following areas: networking, ability to mobilise other parties and agencies, (optional) ability to mobilise funds / sponsors, have access to media channels and have staff and resources for promotional and demonstration events. With regard to the clearinghouse mechanism, this organisation may undertake the following activities:
 - Coordinating and harmonising current initiatives in this field in order to prevent that double work is done and 'white spots' remain existent (see below)
 - Conducting a research study for the identification of 'white spots': geographical areas, standard types, industry sectors etc. which are not covered by existing information sources or the new initiatives in this field, including the languages in which the information should be offered. Such a study should focus on current information services available on environmental market requirements for Asia (notably China, India) and North America (USA, Canada). The new clearinghouse mechanism may then seek to address the largest 'white spots' first.
 - Mobilising funds, e.g. approaching the private sector to sponsor the establishment of a clearinghouse mechanism (e.g. in return for advertising space).

4.3 — Contours of an international Clearinghouse for environmental market requirements

It is recommended that one of the first steps for the establishment of a clearinghouse mechanism will be the development of a protocol. The protocol will describe the objectives and characteristics of the clearinghouse, as well as methods for development and promotion. The protocol may include the following chapters:

- (1) Definition and criteria of 'legislative' and 'non-legislative' standards that will be used for the clearinghouse mechanism
- (2) Description of the clearinghouse mechanism objectives, target group and scope:
 - Target group: Focus on the private sector, including trade-related organisations as well, e.g. business support organisations, trade associations etc.
 - Focus on specific industry sectors first, then gradually expand the scope of the information; Sectors to start with should include:
 - agro-business / food / plant / animal products
 - other commodities: including textiles, leather
 - manufactured products: electronics, toys
 - Scope: limited to environmental requirements only, or also inclusion of other non-tariff trade barriers?
- (3) Physical/ technical characteristics, set-up of the clearinghouse and additional functions
These may be determined in consultation with the steering committee and have to be based on the scope and target groups of the clearinghouse.
- (4) Development strategy for development of the Clearinghouse, addressing e.g:
 - which parties will be approached first?
 - how will partnership be formally established?
 - technical requirements?
- (5) Marketing strategy of the Clearinghouse, including for example:
 - promotional activities,
 - sponsoring activities: involve (European) business as funding partners
 - capacity-building activities with target groups

Annex I: Fact Sheets of information sources

Index:

1. AccessGuide (CBI The Netherlands)
2. TRAINS (UNCTAD)
3. Trade Information Reference system (ITC)
4. Market Access (EU)
5. Expanding Helpdesk (EU)
6. InMetro (Brazil government)
7. International portal for food safety, plant and animal health (IPFSAPH) (FAO)
8. One World Market / Texbase (One World Market, STIC)
9. Ecolex (FAO, UNEP, IUCN, standards agencies)
10. EIATRACK & ECOTRACK (ESHconnect in cooperation with different other parties)

1. AccessGuide

Database address: <http://www.cbi.nl/accessguide/>
Centre for the Promotion of Imports from developing countries (CBI)
P.O. Box 30009
3001 DA Rotterdam
The Netherlands
phone: +31(0)10 201 34 34 / fax: +31(0)10 411 40 81
e-mail: cbi@cbi.nl or accessguide@cbi.nl

The AccessGuide, CBI's "database on European non-tariff trade barriers", has been developed by the Centre for the Promotion of Imports from developing countries (CBI) in the Netherlands. The following sections describe the AccessGuide database with regards to its:

- Objective and target group
- Scope and contents (standards, product groups covered)
- Set-up of database (structure, links, accessibility, helpdesk/add services)
- Data: completeness, depth, additional information (e.g. on interpretation), reliability, in which way(s) are they gathered (sources, frequency) in particular in relation to voluntary standards
- Monitoring and evaluation (monitoring data on e.g. number of users, user experiences, plans for future development/ expansion)

Objective and target group

The aim of the AccessGuide database is to present easy-to-read explanations on complex matters, such as legislation, codes and labels, in order to facilitate market access of producers of developing countries to the European market. The information is targeted at producers and business support organisations in developing countries (according to OECD criteria).

The information is kept up-to-date continuously, but there may be a delay for inclusion of information on new legislation. The objective of the database is not to serve as a regulatory alert service (or legislation proposals), but rather to serve as a reliable reference source for legislation that has been adopted and implemented.

Scope

The database presents legislative and voluntary requirements on three main themes: environmental issues, social issues and consumer health & safety issues. To a limited extent, attention is also paid to quality issues. Furthermore, the database presents 'best practices', which describe cases of specific products or themes. The countries covered are the European Union, Germany, the Netherlands and the UK, with recent expansions to all EU Member countries for a selection of 16 principal product groups (although variable to changes). The table below provides an overview of the product groups covered.

Table: Product groups covered by the AccessGuide database

Castings and Forgings	Handicrafts and jewellery
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Chemicals	Machinery
Cosmetics and pharmaceuticals	Mobile equipment parts
Domestic furniture	Personal protective equipment (PPE)
Electronic components	Stationery
Fish and fishery products	Textiles and garments
Flowers and plants	Timber products
Food (including Organic food)	Toys and games

Information on data presented

The AccessGuide database provides a complete overview (or is aiming to do so) of legislative and non-legislative environmental, health and safety and social requirements for the product groups and the countries covered. With regards to

- Legislative requirements: the information in AccessGuide is complete; AccessGuide documents on legislation aim to be informative and interpretative;
- Non-legislative standards: a selection is made of the most relevant ones on the EU market; information on voluntary schemes is not always in-depth (a link to the original source is provided)

CBI coordinates continuous update of the information presented in the AccessGuide database, but only with legislative and voluntary requirements that have been adopted by governments or large players in industry. Please note that AccessGuide has no alert function, or only to a limited extent. The objective of the database is not to be on top of newly developed legislation (or legislation proposals) but rather to serve as a reliable reference for legislation that has been established. Legislative proposals are included in the database, and in some cases target groups are encouraged to participate in stakeholder consultation rounds, e.g. the lead prohibition on electronic equipment. In other cases, CBI (the database owner) participates on behalf of stakeholders.

Ways of information gathering

CBI has several methods to know what information should be included in the database and to gather this information:

- CBI consultants (one for each product group) have a (commercial) background in the industry sector they represent. They travel frequently to target countries, have contacts with industry and also visit seminars etc. Therefore, they know what's going on in the sector they represent and signal important topics for the AccessGuide.
- In addition, CBI organises marketing promotion seminars per product group for large companies, trade promotion organisations etc., which are a source of information on actual issues related to the product group and the sector.
- The content is delivered by external consultancy agencies hired by CBI that have expertise on environmental and social requirements. They have access to several information services on the topics covered, legislative texts etc, as well as a network of contacts at government institutions e.g. to check on the interpretation of laws. They are able to provide additional information and answer to specific questions from the database users (the database supports a Question&Answer service).
- CBI is part of the network of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, including its embassies, which is also an important source of information.

Set-up of database

The database is composed of a collection of word-documents, which relate to one specific sector and one of the countries covered. All documents have been categorized in one of the three themes (environment/ social/ consumer health & safety quality). At the search page, the user can select his criteria, which results in a list of hits. Clicking on one of the hits provides a summary page with a description of the contents of the document, a link to the complete document (this requires input of user login name and password), links to related documents available in the database and useful external links (e.g. to original information sources).

The database supports three types of search methods: (1) a quick keyword search function provided at every page and a search page with (2) a quick search option and (3) an advanced search option. In addition, from the homepage users have direct access to sector documents (the so-called "Information-scans"), which provide an overview of all documents available per product sector. There is also a Help page for new users, a Frequently Asked Questions page with (example) questions from producers and a Contact page, where users can address their questions (or suggestions, comments) to CBI. These may be questions on the use of the database but also on the contents, and the user will receive a personal reply. The database thus also provides a consultancy service.

Subscription is free of charge for companies and organisations in developing countries. New users need to fill in the registration form, choose a user name and a password, which provides unlimited access to all information in the AccessGuide database.

Monitoring and evaluation

User registrations for the AccessGuide database are by name only; therefore CBI can monitor which organisations have registered to the database (registration is free but obligatory in order to download documents). CBI also monitors the number and type of documents that have been downloaded.

In March 2004, AccessGuide had 3.553 registered users; the number of users is expanding every month with an average growth rate of around 150.

Table 1: AccessGuide Monitoring data

Top five downloads, by product group	Top five users, by country
Food (330)	India
Flowers (323)	Egypt
Textiles (226)	Mexico
Gifts and decorative articles (140)	Chile
Pharmaceuticals (86)	Brazil

Plans for future development

CBI has several plans to improve the AccessGuide database in future, among which:

- Expansion of the database with a notification and advice service for market access requirements / non-tariff trade barriers (NTBs). Every user can report an (new) environmental requirement to CBI. The objective of this service is to enhance transparency on NTBs and solve them if possible. CBI has taken the initiative for this service to address the lack of overview of NTBs and information sources on these.
- Increase promotional activities for the AccessGuide database. CBI is of the opinion that the database is not sufficiently known by its target groups, and wants to put more emphasis on marketing of the database.
- Revision of the database structure, which will facilitate more search options (e.g. keyword search by product or HS code instead of product group only).
- Expansion of the database content with information for every EU Member State separately.
- Levying of a membership fee for users not directly belonging to the target groups.

CBI is interested in co-operation with other agencies / information services on environmental (and social / health & safety) requirements.

2. Inmetro

Database address: <http://www.inmetro.gov.br/barreirastecnicas/pontofocal/index.asp>

Inmetro

Rua Santa Alexandrina, 416- 5º andar

Rio Comprido - Rio de Janeiro - RJ

CEP: 20261-232

Tel: 0300 789-1818 Fax: (21) 2563-2970

E-mail: barreirastecnicas@inmetro.gov.br

Webmaster: homepage@inmetro.gov.br

Inmetro acts as the national inquiry point for the WTO TBT Agreement in Brazil and has developed an early warning system, "*Alerta Exportador*" on new draft technical regulations and conformity assessment procedures issued by WTO Member Countries. Inmetro has been active in the area of technical regulations and conformity assessment procedures and has gained international reputation.

1. Objective and target group

Objective: inform exporters, particularly SMEs, of proposed technical regulation and conformity assessment procedures notified to WTO's Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade.

2. Scope

- The system covers notified proposals of mandatory technical regulation and conformity assessment procedures.
- Topics covered include those under the scope of the TBT Agreement, i.e., technical requirements concerning the protection of human health or safety, animal or plant life or health, or the environment, as well as labelling and packaging requirements.
- All products, including industrial and agricultural products.

3. Information on data presented

- Whenever a draft technical regulation or conformity assessment procedure notified to the WTO TBT Committee is published, the system sends, to previously enrolled users, an e-mail with the contents of the material notified, together with a summary in Portuguese. The system matches the contents of the notified proposal with the profile previously informed by the users, i.e, the products/sectors and target countries.
- The information is obtained through daily searches at the WTO webpage, more precisely to what is notified to the TBT Committee. The database does not yet include information on voluntary requirements, as they are not covered by the transparency obligations of TBT Enquiry Points.

Ways of information gathering

The database is maintained through several methods of information gathering:

- Periodical searching through the WTO webpage, of notified draft technical regulations and conformity assessment procedures relative to the TBT Agreement.

4. Set-up of database

- After the above-mentioned search and inclusion of the notified documents in the database, the system automatically sends e-mails with a link to the information described under item 3.
- The information on the users' profiles are filed in the system, so that, whenever necessary, the user can change his/her profile by simply entering his/her logon and password.

5. Monitoring and evaluation

- There is full access to information concerning number of users and their profiles.
- Regarding future plans, it is hoped to adapt the system in order to enable it to disseminate information on voluntary requirements, particularly those concerning health and environmental issues, under the work currently being carried out in co-operation with UNCTAD's Consultative Task Force on Environmental Requirements and Market Access for Developing Countries.

3. Market Access Database

Database address: <http://mkaccdb.eu.int>
Directorate General Trade, European Commission
Unit Trade A.3. Information
European Commission
200, Rue de la Loi (CHAR 7/116)
B-1049 Brussels, Belgium
Tel: +322 295 2888 / Fax: +322 296 9854

The Market Access Strategy is an operational tool of the European Commission's Trade Policy and aims to reduce trade barriers faced by European exporters of goods and services. The Market Access Database supports a continuous three-way exchange of information between: the EU institutions, Member States and European business. The following sections describe the Market Access Database with regard to:

1. Objective and target group
2. Scope
3. Information on data presented
4. Set-up of database
5. Monitoring and evaluation

1. Objective and target group

The Market Access Database has been developed for European exporters of goods and services and provides information about market access conditions in non-EU countries, as a means of ensuring that EU trading partners effectively comply with international commitments. The Market Access Database lists a substantial number of specific barriers reported by European business, including (to a limited extent) barriers related to environment and health issues.

The Market Access Database provides the following services:

- Providing basic information to businesses on conditions for exporting to and investing in key third country markets.
- Following up complaints received from businesses about barriers to trade in third countries, whether in the WTO or in bilateral consultations with the countries concerned. The Market Access Database currently lists a substantial number of specific barriers reported by European business.
- Ensuring that EU trading partners effectively comply with their international commitments.
- Contributing to the creation of a suitable framework for international trade especially in the context of new negotiations such as the Doha Development Agenda or bilateral free trade agreements between the EU and preferential trade partners.

The target group of the database is EU exporters of goods and services.

2. Scope and contents

The Market Access Database presents information on Trade Barriers in non-EU countries. It is targeted at exporting producers in the EU (including the accession and candidate countries), but also at members of the European Commission through its interactive reporting functionality for Trade Barriers. The Market Access Database presents information on:

- Sectoral and Trade Barriers: Information on export and investment conditions in non-EU countries, including all major EU trading partners. In addition, the database includes trade barriers affecting a producer's area of activity in the individual countries. The information can be retrieved by country (all major EU trading partners covered), by sector (all major business sectors covered) or by measure.
- Statistics on trade flows between the EU and non-EU countries.
- Studies concerning market access related studies referring to geographical areas, selected business sectors or relevant horizontal issues (e.g. labelling).
- Information on tariffs, duties and taxes applicable to producers.
- All information a producer needs to know about import procedures and documents required for import of a particular product.
- GATS: A guide to the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) permitting the analysis of all the services related commitments in countries.
- WTO Bound Tariffs: information on maximum import duties permitted for a particular country under WTO rules.

The information on non-tariff trade barriers is limited. The information on environmental measures is included in the section Standards, Sanitary and Other Technical Requirements.

3. Information on data presented

Access to the Sectoral, the Trade Barriers Database, the Statistics and to the Studies section is free. Information under the Exporters Guide and Applied Tariffs is restricted to users in the Member States of the European Union, including the Accession Countries and the Candidate Countries for EU accession (these parts of the database are inaccessible by computers connected to the Internet via an Internet Service Provider outside the EU).

The update of the information depends on the data sources, which are different for the individual sections of the MADB:

- Sectoral and Trade barriers: DG Trade staff updates the country reports and trade barrier fiches on a regular basis (country reports: once yearly; barrier fiches when changes occur)
- Applied tariffs: A contractor supplies data including updates when changes occur in the framework of a three years service contract.
- Exporters' guide: Various contractors supply data including regular updates (twice yearly) and occasional updates when changes occur in the framework of a three years service contract.
- Trade statistics: Data are obtained from EUROSTAT and updated on a yearly basis.
- Studies: Final reports concerning market access related studies conducted by contractors are published in the studies section.

Ways of information gathering

The database is maintained through several methods of information gathering:

- Sectoral and Trade barriers: DG Trade staff receives information among others from industry, EC Delegations abroad, Member States, WTO and processes it into the database.
- Applied tariffs: An external contractor supplies data obtained from official sources in the countries concerned.
- Exporters' guide: Various external contractors supply data obtained from official sources in the countries concerned.
- Trade statistics: Data are obtained from EUROSTAT (COMEXT).
- Studies: Market access related studies are conducted by external contractors.

4. Set-up of database

The Market Access Database provides the following services to both producers and the European Commission:

- Information about Market Access conditions in non-EU countries.
- Systematic way for the European Commission to follow up complaints from businesses about barriers to trade in non-EU countries.
- Means of ensuring that EU trading partners are abiding by their international commitments.
- Input for defining the EU's trade policy objectives on further trade liberalisation in the framework of the World Trade Organisation (e.g. Doha Development Agenda) and new free trade agreements between the EU and preferential partners (e.g. EU - MERCOSUR).

The information offered in the Market Access Database is structured in the following sections, of which some parts are only accessible to users in EU Member States:

- Sectoral and Trade Barriers (free)
- Statistical Database (free)
- Studies (free)
- Applied Tariffs (EU only)
- Exporters' Guide to Import Facilities (EU only)
- GATS
- WTO Bound Tariffs

5. Monitoring and evaluation

Plans to improve the Market Access Database in the future focus on increasing user friendliness and navigation and modernisation of the website design.

4. TRAINS

Database address: <http://r0.unctad.org/trains>
UNCTAD
Palais des Nations
1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland
TRAINS System Manager
Fax: +41 22 917 0247
info@unctad-trains.org (TRAINS Webmaster)

The Trade Analysis Information System (TRAINS) is a comprehensive computerized information system on trade control measures (tariff, para-tariff and non-tariff measures) and import flows, based on HS codes, for more than 150 countries. The following sections describe the TRAINS database with regards to:

1. Objective and target group
2. Scope
3. Information on data presented
4. Set-up of database
5. Monitoring and evaluation

1. Objective and target group

TRAINS is an information system intended to increase transparency in international trading conditions. It is intended more specifically to provide a comprehensive information system for use by policy makers and economic operators engaged in exporting. It is also a powerful tool that can be used in trade negotiations (e.g. to monitor an integration process) and for general research on international trade. One component of the system relates to the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) in that it includes information on tariffs, preferential margins, rules of origin and other regulations affecting the export interests of developing countries vis-à-vis the preference-giving countries.

2. Scope

Type of standards covered (legislative, voluntary)

Tariff data are drawn from official publications by governments (tariff schedules published each fiscal year). Trade data come from official submissions to the UN COMTRADE database.

The TRAINS database provides information on 'international trade' in general. More specifically, the data in the TRAINS database provide information with regards to:

- Trade Control Measures (Tariff, para-tariff and Non-Tariff Measures) information at tariff line level for over 150 countries.
- Imports by suppliers at 6-digit level of the International Convention on the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System (HS) for all countries covered in TRAINS database.
- Imports by suppliers at national tariff line level for selected countries
- Quick Query to view or export raw data

- Custom Query to construct customized queries including aggregation of trade and averaging of tariff rates at product aggregates defined in terms of most internationally recognized product classification systems (e.g. SITC, ISIC, etc)
- Simulation of tariff changes, such as those proposed in the WTO negotiations or in regional trade agreements
- Country Notes: summarizing reports on the trade control measures adopted by some selected developing countries, which affect volume, structure and direction of their trade flows. The information contained in the country notes are based exclusively on information collected and received by TRAINS development team in its effort to develop and maintain the UNCTAD Database on Trade Control Measures. The country notes are presented according to the UNCTAD Coding System of Trade Control Measures, which is also used in the Database. Country reports have been published for a range of countries in Central America, Middle East and North Africa, Asia and Ocean-Pacific region and Sub-Saharan Africa.

3. Information on data presented

The data on tariffs are updated each year for most of countries. The data on non-tariff barriers are updated each year for a few countries.

Government sources provide the information available through TRAINS.

4. Set-up of database

The TRAINS database is available on Internet (after registration) and on CD-ROM. The Internet version provides access to current and historical data and is updated frequently with new software and data.

The CD-ROM version provides access to the tariff data for most recent year for each country, and summary data (MFN average and imports from world) at HS 6-digit level for the last five years for all available countries in an independent dataset

5. Monitoring and evaluation

More than 2000 users are currently registered for the Internet version. Most users give 'positive' feedback according to the TRAINS database owner.

Plans for future development include:

- Increase the country coverage
- Increase data coverage to include all existing bilateral agreements for preferential tariffs
- Improve the non-tariff barriers data (coverage and quality).

5. Expanding Exports helpdesk

Database address: <http://export-help.cec.eu.int/>
Directorate General Trade, European Commission
Unit Trade A.3. Information
European Commission
200, Rue de la Loi (CHAR 7/116)
B-1049 Brussels, Belgium
Tel: +322 295 2888 / Fax: +322 296 9854
EXPORT-HELP@cec.eu.int (Ms Sarah Sijses)

The Expanding Exports Helpdesk is an online resource, provided by the European Commission, to facilitate access for developing countries to markets within the European Union.

1. Objective and target group

The Expanding Exports Helpdesk provides relevant information required by developing country exporters interested in supplying the EU market (the objective and target group of the Expanding Exports Helpdesk are similar to those of the AccessGuide database developed by CBI)

2. Scope

The database currently provides information on tariffs, customs documents and rules of origin. The contents will be expanded with information on non-tariff trade information in future. All countries and all product groups according to HS codes are covered.

3. Information on data presented

The information presented has a broad scope and links are provided to additional information sources on the website of DG Trade. There are no interpretative documents written by the Helpdesk.

4. Set-up of database

The Helpdesk provides information in the following main areas:

- (1) Import tariffs: assistance to developing country exporters on EU preferential trade regimes available for developing countries.
- (2) Customs documents: information concerning the documents to be produced by the exporter in order to qualify for preferential duty treatment.
- (3) Rules of origin: information on preferential origin rules, which lay down the specific conditions that need to be met if goods are to qualify for advantageous tariff treatment, otherwise the full duties are applicable.
- (4) Trade statistics: information on trade statistics to identify EU market potentials.

In order to retrieve information on import tariffs, trade statistics and rules of origin, a search field has to be filled in first, entering the following data:

- product HS code or a description of the product description
- selection of a country of origin
- selection of a simulation month and year

The pages on customs documents are standard for all products and provide information and links on Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) and documentary requirements under GSP.

Other facilities are a Trade Forum (a forum for finding trading partners and contacts within the EU) and Links (an overview of trade helpdesk links).

5. Monitoring and evaluation

Plans to develop the Expanding Exports database in future are:

- Establishment of a helpdesk
- Section on non-tariff trade barriers, in particular with regard to the environment, health & safety.

6. Trade Information Reference (TIR)

Database address: <http://www.intracen.org>
 Trade Information Reference Centre
 Trade Information Section
 Division of Product and Market Development
 International Trade Centre UNCTAD/WTO
 Palais des Nations
 1211 Geneva 10
 Switzerland
 Tel: + 41/22 730 0231 Fax: +41/22 730 0802
tirc@intracen.org

The Trade Information Reference (TIR) system, developed by the International Trade Centre (ITC, a joint initiative of UNCTAD and WTO), is an Index to Internet trade information sources providing references and direct links to a selection of websites covering various aspects of international trade such as: country profiles, market access conditions, contact information, market news, etc.

1. Objective and target group

The ITC Trade Information Reference Centre’s main objective is to support ITC’s priority programmes and activities and to assist partner institutions in developing and transition economies in their research and selection of relevant trade information sources.

2. Scope

The ITC Trade Information Reference system (TIR) provides access to bibliographical databases that cover over 15,000 information sources, both printed and online, focusing on international trade and related matters, as summarised in the table below:

Products/Services:	Market surveys, specialized trade journals, handbooks, sector-specific or general directories and statistical yearbooks.
Countries:	Country reports and journals giving information on economic development and foreign trade patterns and trends. Worldwide coverage per country/region.
Statistics:	Collection of trade statistics, national, regional and international or by sector of activity.
Functions:	All aspects of international trade management, facilitation and support services, such as legal and financial aspects, export promotion and marketing, international purchasing and supply management, quality control etc.

Information on trade and environmental requirements can be found via Webindex. Webindex is an index to Internet Trade Information Sources, providing references and direct links to a selection of over 700 websites covering various aspects of international trade such as: country profiles, market access conditions, contact information, market news, etc.. Webindex includes references to information on trade and environmental requirements. The search function enables to search on several keywords e.g. ‘non-tariff barriers’, ‘environment’, ‘environmental legislation’ and

'environmental management'. Among the search results are e.g. the EU Expanding Exports Helpdesk and the AccessGuide from CBI.

3. Information on data presented

The Trade Information Reference Centre has a wide scope: it aims for *global* coverage of *all* relevant trade information (tariff and non-tariff) on *all* possible product groups. The main function of TIRS is to operate as a *reference* to (sources of) information, not necessarily offering the information itself.

Ways of information gathering

TIRC has developed a wide network of reliable information providers specialized in the field of international trade and related issues and has constituted a substantial collection of selected information materials. In this way, ITC has become a major source of information on international trade and related issues.

4. Set-up of database

Structure

The TIRC homepage offers access to (apart from background info on the database):

- Online access to bibliographical databases
- Webindex
- Publications
- Online Trade Journals
- Useful links

Access to TIRC is partly free, partly paid.

Additional services offered by TIRC:

TIRC offers a range of services to partner organizations in developing and transition economies:

- A current awareness service through the International Trade Documentation Bulletin (ITD)
- Production of specialized bibliographies (e.g: Published Market Research) or directories (e.g: Worldwide Directory of Importers' Associations).
- Upon request, assistance in the identification of trade information sources and preparation of selective bibliographies.
- An alert system to selected groups of users on new acquisitions, new sources, and information files on specific subjects, etc.
- Useful links to other relevant information services.

5. Monitoring and evaluation

(no data available)

7. The International Portal for Food Safety, Plant and Animal Health

The International Portal for Food Safety, Plant and Animal Health (IPFSAPH)

Mike Robson: IPFSAPH Project Manager at Mike.Robson@fao.org

Niek van der Graaff: Chairman FAO Biosecurity Inter-Departmental Working Group at: Niek.VanDerGraaff@fao.org

Ezzeddine Boutrif: Secretary FAO Biosecurity Inter-Departmental Working Group at Ezzeddine.Boutrif@fao.org

www.fao.org

1. Objective and target group

Please describe the objective(s) and target group(s) of the database

On the one hand, FAO has signalled increased interest in global sanitary and phytosanitary measures from a number of stakeholders, such as international agencies, national trade, agriculture, food safety, environment and consumer protection services, international trading partners and private sector organizations. Each of these requires reliable information on standards, regulations, scientific evaluations, and other supporting information to make decisions on trade-related issues or to prepare relevant regulations or measures.

On the other hand, the FAO is considering that

- Obtaining accurate and current information can be difficult. A user may need to search the websites of a number of different international standard setting bodies to retrieve all the relevant information on a particular commodity or on a specific topic that transverses traditional sectors. The same scenario is repeated at the national level where standards, regulations, and related information may be spread across the websites of several agencies.
- There are two common problems: 1) information may be difficult to locate, and 2) it may not always be clear which source represents the official position on a given subject. This is compounded where information is relevant to multiple sectors or more than one country.
- Moreover, internet access remains problematic in some countries and information has not yet been transferred to electronic media, so trading partners must go through a lengthy and expensive process of contacting each trading partner directly to obtain standards and import information.

For these reasons, FAO initiated the development of an internet-based portal: the International Portal on Food Safety, Animal and Plant Health (IPFSAPH).

2. Scope

The portal will cover

- international sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures (i.e. food safety, animal and plant health standards and relevant supporting materials) developed by international agencies and standards setting bodies;
- where possible, national sanitary and phytosanitary information.

The national sanitary and phytosanitary measures will be obtained by the FAO through “mobilising national support”, through the main standard setting bodies (the Codex Alimentarius Commission [Codex], International Plant Protection Convention [IPPC] and the Office International des Épizooties [OIE]).

The portal also includes information on SPS issues from the World Trade Organisation, and on Biosafety from the Biosafety Clearing House of the CBD.

3. Information on data presented

The portal permits an authoritative search for current standards, regulations and other relevant official materials from a single access point.

Ways of information gathering

FAO will not be responsible for data gathering from each individual source; rather, this is the responsibility of the information owners with links to the portal. However, it is FAO’s task to include as many relevant websites as possible. To this end, FAO is discussing with various parties on making (inter)national regulations and related supporting materials available systematically through the portal, e.g.:

- international agency partners
- national food safety, animal and plant health officials from various countries
- representatives from countries involved in the import and export of food and agricultural products

Both the plant and animal health sectors have formal commitments (through IPPC and OIE) for national information sharing. However, there is no equivalent commitment for food safety, so FAO can only encourage parties working in the area of food safety to join the portal. These efforts are (it seems) primarily focused at **governmental institutions**. Arguments used by the FAO to share information through the portal are e.g.:

- countries which make available their standards, regulations, and other formal texts relating to food safety will benefit through increased viability of international trade.
- The increase in transparency enables one to anticipate some reduction in the effort required to monitor and control trade at national points of entry, and should help increase the number of accepted shipments into that country.
- countries that are in the process of formulating regulations and standards will also benefit from the ability to view the various approaches taken by others to address similar issues.

4. Set-up of database

Set-up:

The portal offers:

- (1) links to existing websites of international and national organisations;
- (2) publication facilities for any countries without pre-existing websites to allow them to post information.

The key design consideration for the portal has been that the relevant agency or national body retains data ownership. Data owners remain fully responsible for maintenance and liable for the quality of the content displayed. This applies to international standard setting bodies as well as national government agencies.

The process of linking is automated as far as possible, though recognising the different levels of sophistication of the main source sites. Information is exchanged by an automatic exchange of metadata in some cases; in other cases, source sites do not use any formal scheme of content description, and in these cases material is harvested from source sites via a process of 'scraping' html (where sets of pages use standard designs) or even manually produced batch files.

Relationship with FAOLEX and ECOLEX:

The IPFSAPH portal presents the subset of FAOLEX information with relevance to SPS issues. As FAOLEX is one of the feeder sites to ECOLEX, the IPFSAPH has a subset of ECOLEX information in the portal.

Language:

The use of a common formal scheme for describing materials on the portal and in the source websites is also useful for handling material in multiple languages. The portal will make all materials available in the original language, but will also ensure that the resource is described using a controlled vocabulary, which will in due course be available in one of five official FAO languages (English, French, Spanish, Chinese and Arabic). This translation will permit keyword searches to be performed in each of these languages.

While this portal currently offers a unique compilation of material representing the international regulatory framework on food safety, animal and plant health, the portal will only realise its full potential with further national participation to make available relevant regulations and formal texts for access by trading partners.

5. Monitoring and evaluation

Regarding the current status of the project, the portal currently (May 2004) contains content drawn from the three SPS-recognized standard setting bodies, as well as from CBD, FAO (including FAO's internal legislation and regulatory database (FAOLEX)), WHO, and WTO, in addition to demonstration 'nodes' of 250 items from the US, a further 1,600 from the EU, and smaller data sets from selected developing countries. There are currently over 15,000 items referenced by the portal, each described using a set of keywords supported by a powerful free text search facility.

In addition, plans are in hand to include further data sets from larger developing countries. Coverage will also be extended over the coming months by the progressive inclusion of supporting material to the official standards (for instance, more detailed information from the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Consultation on Food Additives and Contaminants (JECFA) and the Joint FAO/WHO Meeting on Pesticide Residues (JMPR)).

The portal was formally launched on 25 May 2004, on the occasion of the FAO/WHO Regional Conference on Food Safety for Asia and the Pacific (Seremban, Malaysia, 24-27 May 2004). It is now freely accessible from the FAO Biosecurity PAIA webpage (www.fao.org/biosecurity) or directly from www.ipfsaph.org. Interested users are invited to visit the portal site, share the link with other users, and provide feedback to the FAO project team on the portal content and usability.

Regarding evaluation and monitoring, the portal has been designed to incorporate measurement using the normal package of web statistics (visits, downloads, etc). These will be kept under constant review. However, it is recognised that these are only a weak indicator of success – most web statistics provide limited information about users and their usage patterns; also even document downloads are a poor proxy for the impact of the system.

For this reason, the portal team will also be monitoring use of the system by potential information providers. A number of pilot national implementation projects are planned to start in the coming months (funding is already in place) which will in turn give rise to demonstration events. Interest in these events – and the subsequent implementation of national nodes - will be key indicators of the perceived value of the portal at national level.

Interest in co-operation on international clearinghouse mechanism

The organisation is interested in co-operation on an international clearinghouse mechanism for environmental (and social / health & safety) requirements and a representative of the portal team is planning to attend the UNCTAD workshop from 7-8 June to further discuss the possible co-operation.

Additional comments

A programme of capacity building integrated into existing capacity building efforts by the various agencies is planned to follow this launch, with further initiatives to be well coordinated between agencies. This will include:

- i. building awareness and understanding of the benefits of information exchange to support safe trade;
- ii. development of national strategies for the exchange of official information;
- iii. assistance in the development of computing facilities and information management capacity to support information exchange;
- iv. human resource development and training sessions for national authorities on the use of the portal and data input and editing functionality; and
- v. tailored training sessions to targeted audiences of end users on the use of the portal.

Through this capacity building program, it is envisaged that arrangements can be made with other countries for automatic and/or manual loading of their national information.

8. OneWorldMarket

Database address:

<http://www.oneworldmarket.nl>

1. Objective and target group

OneWorldMarket is an online forum for sustainable trade, serving two purposes:

1. Trade Function: OneWorldMarket is partially a trade platform

- Companies from the North and the South can present themselves, meet, communicate, close transactions and share the management of product and trade dossiers.
- OneWorldMarket facilitates linkages between companies in the same product chain.
- OneWorldMarket facilitates cooperation between entrepreneurs and NGOs in the North and the South.

2. Knowledge Function: OneWorldMarket is also a knowledge platform

- Companies and NGOs can find crucial information, news and knowledge relevant for the establishment of sustainable chains.
- Companies and NGOs can obtain information about best practices in the field of sustainable chain development and collaboration.
- NGOs and entrepreneurs can exchange knowledge, information and ideas on ways to create and maintain sustainable trade and production relationships.
- The exchange of knowledge could influence and contribute to the coherence of policy in the field of international trade.

The target group of the OneWorldMarket project consists of small and medium-sized enterprises in the agro-industrial sector in the South and in Western Europe. The project is also targeted at civil society organisations active in development cooperation, as well as in the environmental and social sectors. OneWorldMarket primarily targets the agro-industrial sector because of its importance in developing countries.

2. Scope

The database is expected to be fully operational as from December 2004. From June 2004 on, the database will be operational step by step.

Once operational, the database can be used by an entrepreneur to find the right supplier to meet his demands. Search can then be performed by sector, product or country. Trade information, news, legislation and certificates will also be available. Furthermore, the database will be usable by a producer to search for the right buyer. Search can also be performed by sector, product or country. In addition, trade information, news, legislation, quality requirements and certificates will be available. It is to be expected that one can use the database as well as information offered for free.

All participants – entrepreneurs as well as producers – will have to comply with sustainability (i.e. economic, ecological and social) requirements. Sustainability can

be proven by the use of internationally known guidelines (e.g. OECD guidelines, UN norms), a trademark of a certification.

Product groups covered are fruit/vegetables, fisheries and primary products.

Through a contact form (available on the website)

The participation of NGOs and companies in the Netherlands and (initially) in Africa is vital for the success of OneWorldMarket as a platform for sustainable trade and investment. One can register through a contact form, available on the website.

3. Information on data presented

This information cannot be given, as the database has not been completed yet.

Ways of information gathering

The database is maintained through several methods of information gathering:

- Stichting Maatschappij en Onderneming ('SMO', a foundation for society and enterprise)
SMO is a knowledge centre for the business community in the Netherlands, with effective access to almost every entrepreneurial sector in the Netherlands. SMO has also built up a network of leading players in sustainability amongst African and Dutch entrepreneurs in the agricultural industry. In the long term, the network will be broadened to include other sectors and regions, such as the cotton industry in Asia. Knowledge available by SMO through its network, forms input for the database.
- OneWorld Nederland
OneWorld Nederland has a network of nearly 100 NGO partners in the Netherlands with contacts in the South. The international OneWorld.net, of which the Netherlands is a component, has 1,300 partners in the North and the South. Knowledge available by OneWorld Nederland through its network, forms input for the database.
- Koninklijk Instituut voor de Tropen ('KIT', royal tropical institute)
KIT is a knowledge institute specialized in international cooperation and intercultural communication. Contrary to SMO and OneWorld Nederland, KIT is not operationally involved with the database. However, it provides information input.

4. Set-up of database

The database only provides an example of how it may work in the future under the title 'give it a try'. See 2. above for future search possibilities.

5. Monitoring and evaluation

Plans to improve the OneWorldMarket database in future are:

In the years to come OneWorldMarket will develop into a marketplace where entrepreneurs and NGOs from around the world will be able to interact and participate. The platform will ultimately be positioned as a regular commercial service provider to businesses in the North and the South. In view of its functionalities, OneWorldMarket will be capable, in due course, of generating sufficient income for profitable commercial exploitation.

During the commercial phase, NGOs will remain involved with the platform as experts and advisers. The continued involvement of civil society organisations will ensure the

provision of valuable knowledge to supplement the expertise provided by the business sector.

In addition, local organisations in Benin and Costa Rica will be established to promote the OneWorldMarket concept and possibly, to provide operational assistance.

9. Ecolex

Database address:

<http://www.ecolex.org>

1. Objective and target group

ECOLEX - A New Initiative to Provide Global Access to Environmental Law Information

ECOLEX is an environmental information gateway that was recently launched and provides a comprehensive, global source of information on environmental law. It is operated jointly by FAO, IUCN and UNEP. The long-term objectives of ECOLEX in building capacity worldwide are as follows:

- Maintain, refine and develop the environmental law databank and its related information and resources;
- Present these data in a user-friendly format, facilitating searches for references and full texts through the development of multilingual retrieval possibilities (English, French, Spanish);
- Provide global access to the database in an efficient and cost-effective manner;
- Address the special needs and access problems of users;
- Develop a distributed network of associates, at regional and national level;
- Develop special ECOLEX products and services aimed at increasing knowledge and building capacity in environmental law at the local, national and regional levels; and
- Expand the consortium of partners of ECOLEX.

The target group consists of all people who wish to retrieve information on environmental law, e.g. governments, academia, NGOs, companies and members of the public.

2. Scope

Users can search on 4 directions: Treaties, National legislation, Court decisions and Literature. The topics covered include information on treaties, international soft-law and other non-binding policy and technical guidance documents, national legislation, judicial decisions, and law and policy literature etc. within the field of environmental law, available with FAO, IUCN and UNEP. Users have direct access to the abstracts and indexing information about each document, as well as to the full text of most of the information provided.

3. Information on data presented

Taking the sources of the ECOLEX database into account, the database may be considered complete. There is no guidance on the website as to use of the database or interpretation of the information provided. Access is free.

Ways of information gathering

The FAO Legal Office has developed FAOLEX, a database of references to national legislation linked to electronic versions of their texts. Selected texts of major significance pertaining to FAO's mandate, including legislation on agriculture, energy,

environment, fisheries, food, forestry, land, livestock, mineral resources, plants, water, wild fauna and flora, are summarized and indexed in the database. Access to the summary, index and full text of each piece of legislation is provided.

IUCN Environmental Law Centre (ELC) created a comprehensive information system on environmental law (ELIS). ELIS evolved into a large set of references to treaties, national legislation, soft law and legal literature.

For the past thirty years UNEP has provided leadership to the development and implementation of global and regional international environmental agreements, the strengthening of national environmental legislation and capacity building in the field of environmental law. This work has led to the collection of a very significant amount of legal materials in electronic and hardcopy form, which have been made available by UNEP to ECOLEX.

To join forces and combine the strength of the three, it is in 2001 that a partnership Agreement was signed by FAO, IUCN and UNEP for the integration of their data and of FAOLEX into ECOLEX, FAOLEX being one of the feeder sites to ECOLEX.

As such, ECOLEX is also available as a subset of the International Portal for Food Safety and Animal and Plant Health (IPFSAPH, see Fact Sheet no.7).

4. Set-up of database

The website is available in the English, Spanish and French language. The website has been structured as follows:

- Home: Explains very short the database and by whom it is operated. In addition, from here a user can start the search machine.
- About: Provides more information about ECOLEX and its objectives.
- User Agreement: Gives the terms and conditions for accessing ECOLEX.
- Contact us: Provides the possibility to send an e-mail (no standard format).

The search machine allows for advanced searching by a large set of parameters. Users can search in English, Spanish and French either on Treaties, National Legislation, Court Decisions or Literature. There are two possibilities to search: simple or advanced. Advanced search contains options for: type of document, subject(s), key word(s) [within some parts: in progress], word(s) from, country, region/basin, year/period, entry into force, place of adoption, depositary, language of document, superseded/obsolete, species (flora/fauna). Simple search contains options for: subject(s), country, year/period and key word(s). A cross search through the entire database is also possible when a user chooses two or more options from Treaties, National Legislation, Court Decisions and Literature.

When a certain agreement is searched for and found, information thereof becomes available including date and place of adoption and entry into force, official publication source, original languages, available translations, depositary, reference to amendments and related treaties, list of parties, date of entry into force for each party, etc.

5. Monitoring and evaluation

Plans to improve the ECOLEX database in future are:

ECOLEX will be maintained, refined and further developed with a view to serving the end users as efficiently as possible.

10. EIATRACK & ECOTRACK

Database address:

www.eiatrack.com

www.eco-track.com

Contact details:

ESHconnect Inc.

283 East Java Drive

Sunnyvale

CA 94089-1022

USA

phone: +1 408 822 8301 / fax: +1 408 822 8001

www.eshconnect.com

sales@eshconnect.com

EIATRACK and ECOTRACK are databases developed by ESHconnect in cooperation with different parties. Both databases aim to assist producers in understanding legislation and requirements related to environmental aspects of production and products. Although the databases should be considered different systems, they are discussed here together because of their similar set-up.

EIATRACK is specifically designed for the electronics industry, whereas ECOTRACK focuses on the textiles and garments sector.

1. Objective and target group

The aim of EIATRACK and ECOTRACK is to assist companies in their understanding of global product requirements, as these can directly affect the ability of companies to manufacture, distribute and to sell products, and to succeed in the ever changing global market-place.

The information is aimed at producers selling their products in a large number of different countries for whom it is difficult to keep track of the different environmental requirements in these areas.

The current clients of EIATRACK and ECOTRACK are mainly multinationals in the electronic, and apparel industry.

Access to the databases is based on an annual subscription, which besides database access, also includes regulatory alerts on new developments (for both systems), quarterly update reports (ECOTRACK) and information sessions by means of regular conference calls.

2. Scope

The focus of both EIATRACK and ECOTRACK is on legislative environmental requirements that affect those companies exporting to the countries covered by the scope of the database. The type of information provided differs however. In the table below you can find basic information on the content of both databases.

EIATRACK (focus electronics)	ECOTRACK (focus apparel)
Restricted substances in products	Restricted substances in products
Product take back and recycling	
DfE and product stewardship	
Requirements for batteries (incl. take back)	
Packaging	
Transboundary waste controls	
Energy efficiency	
Hazardous waste	
	Eco-labels

The country scope of both databases also differs and is ever expanding. The scope of both databases currently covers over 50 jurisdictions, where the different US states are included as separate ones. The whole EU is covered, several other European countries, a selection of Asian and south American countries as well as the USA and Canada.

3. Information on data presented

The EIATRACK and ECOTRACK teams strive towards the presentation of complete and up-to-date information on the themes and countries covered. In general downloadable versions of official documents are presented on each topic, as well as a summary of the requirements, focusing on the most important issues.

Different parties are involved to cover the different topics in the databases, but they all work in a similar way. Information sources are regularly scanned ((official) publications, news services) and for more information or clarifications contacts are made with governments.

ECOTRACK also includes, besides information on legislative requirements restricting the presence of certain (hazardous) substances in apparel, information on eco-labels and product safety labels focussing again on the restriction of hazardous substances in the product. Examples of labels included are Öko-Tex 100, SchadstoffGeprüft, EU Eco-label textiles, Korean Eco-Mark, Nordic Swan and several others.

Ways of information gathering

The database is maintained through several methods of information gathering:

- Several different parties with their own expertise are involved in the maintenance of the database. Their knowledge and network assists in keeping track of new developments and in up-to-dates of information.
- Several commercial and non-commercial news services are scanned on a regular basis, including Official Journals where the different countries publish their legislation, but also ministerial press releases and other media.
- The Network of consultants involved have their own direct government contacts which are contacted on a regular basis, of which the interval also depends on the relevant developments within a jurisdiction.
- The clients of the databases, a number of over 50 multinationals in the electronics sector for EIATRACK and of 5 multinationals in the apparel sector for ECOTRACK also function as a source of information since they, in their daily business, are confronted with the requirements above.

4. Set-up of database

The set-up of the relational databases is similar. They provide, on each of the topics covered, a summary of information highlighting the most relevant issues of requirements for the target group. In addition in most cases the official documents are presented as downloadable documents with each summary. These documents are most of the time presented in the official language and, where available, a translation in English is also provided.

Within each topic it is with links easily possible to move on to a similar requirement in a different country or to a different requirement in the jurisdiction you are currently reviewing.

The service includes a question and answer service enabling each member to present the database teams with questions. The number of questions asked are limited per subscription year (unless it merely is a clarification on unclear information), and the questions and answers are added to the database with links to the relevant topics so that other users can learn from questions asked by other users as well. In addition, contact details of the party delivering the information are provided with each subject.

5. Monitoring and evaluation

Please provide information on monitoring and evaluation of the database, including:

- monitoring data on e.g. number of users, user experiences,
- plans for future development/ expansion
- interest in co-operation on international clearinghouse mechanism.

The number of users for EIATRACK is large, over 50 multinationals. For ECOTRACK this number is relatively low but still growing. Currently ECOTRACK has 5 member companies. The type of countries registered are mainly multinationals which are generally very content with the information provided.

Currently there are no concrete plans to expand the scope of the databases. It is however considered to develop a “supplier version” which will probably provide basic information on the requirements of the topics addressed in the databases, for a much lower registration fee. The target group for this supplier version are foreseen to be suppliers of components to the electronics industry as well as smaller companies that do not have the financial capacity to join the full service.

Interest in co-operation on international clearinghouse mechanism

It is currently unknown if there exists interest in co-operation with the international clearinghouse mechanism.

Table 2.1 Objectives and target groups of existing information sources

Information source	Objective	Target group
AccessGuide, Expanding Exports Helpdesk	Facilitate market access for producers in developing countries to the European market	Producers, exporters and Business Support Organisations in developing countries interested in supplying the EU market
Inmetro	Inform exporters, particularly SMEs, of proposed technical regulation and conformity assessment procedures notified to WTO's Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade	Brazilian exporters, particularly SMEs
Market Access Database	Ensure that EU trading partners effectively comply with international commitments	European exporters of goods and services
TRAINS	Increase transparency in international trading conditions, provide assistance in trade negotiations and in general research on international trade	Policy makers and exporters in all countries
TIRC	Provide assistance in the research and selection of relevant trade information sources	Governmental trade institutions in developing countries (and countries with transition economies)
IPFSAPH	Facilitate access to reliable, accurate and current information on global Sanitary and Phytosanitary measures	International trading partners and stakeholders in SPS measures
OneWorldMarket	Facilitate 'matchmaking' and trade between companies in developing countries and Europe and provide access to information on a range of sustainability issues relevant to companies and NGOs in developing countries	Small and medium-sized enterprises in the agro-industrial sector in the South and in Western Europe, civil society organisations active in development cooperation, environmental issues and social issues
ECOLEX	Provide global access to information on environmental law in an efficient and cost-effective manner, addressing the special needs and access problems of users, and present these data in a user-friendly format	Everyone, e.g. governments, academia, NGOs, companies and members of the public etc. who wish to retrieve information on environmental law
EIA/ Ecotrack		

Table 2.2 Scope of information sources in relation to (environmental) market requirements

Information source	Types of standards covered	Standards covered related to...	Sectors covered	Geographical area
AccessGuide	- legislative standards - voluntary standards	environment, social, consumer health & safety, quality	16 product groups (see table)	EU and several EU Member States
Inmetro	Technical requirements as notified under the TBT Agreement	the protection of human health or safety, animal or plant life or health, or the environment, labelling and packaging requirements	all sectors (industrial and agricultural)	Global standards relevant to Brazilian exporters
Market Access Database	Trade barriers in non-EU countries	Limited information on environmental measures in the section Standards, Sanitary and Other Technical Requirements	all major business sectors covered	Information on trade barriers by individual country; all major EU trading partners covered
TRAINS	Trade Control Measures (Tariff, para-tariff and Non-Tariff Measures) information	International trade	All sectors based on HS codes	More than 150 countries covered
Expanding Exports Helpdesk	Information on tariffs, customs documents and rules of origin.	Expansion with information on non-tariff trade information in future.	All product groups based on HS codes	All countries are covered.
TIR	References to sources of information on international trade matters, including references to information sources for environmental requirements	Search for environmental references by keyword, e.g. 'non-tariff barriers', 'environment', 'environmental legislation' and 'environmental management'	N/a	N/a
IPFSAPH	- References to legislative SPS standards - References to voluntary SPS standards	- References to national and international standards for food safety, animal and plant health (SPS measures) - relevant supporting materials	SPS relevant sectors	Standards at national and international level
OneWorldMarket	Trade information, news, legislation, quality requirements and certificates, available as of December 2004	Economic, ecological and social requirements to be included	Fruit, vegetables, fisheries and primary products.	(Unknown)
Ecolex	Legislative environmental standards	Information on treaties, international soft-law, other non-binding policy and technical guidance documents etc. on environmental law, available with FAO, IUCN and UNEP. Direct access to texts.	All	International
EIA/ Ecotrack				

Table 2.3 Presentation of the data in the information sources

Information source	Completeness of the data, update frequency and additional features
AccessGuide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Complete overview of legislative and non-legislative environmental, health and safety and social requirements (e.g. regulations, standards, labels, codes of conduct); - <i>Legislative requirements</i>: the information in AccessGuide is complete; AccessGuide documents on legislation aim to be informative and interpretative - <i>Non-legislative standards</i>: a selection is made of the most relevant ones on the EU market; information on voluntary schemes is not always in-depth (a link to the original source is provided). - Update frequency: Continuous update of the information presented, but only with legislative and voluntary requirements that have been adopted by governments or large players in industry. - Additional features: supported by a Question & Answer service for users, which is delivered by all parties that provide input to the database <p>Additional features: Inmetro has a 'proactive' alert functionality: whenever a draft technical regulation or conformity assessment procedure notified to the WTO TBT Committee is publicised, the system sends, to previously enrolled users, an e-mail with the contents of the material notified, together with a summary in Portuguese. The system matches the contents of the notified proposal with the profile previously informed by the users, i.e, the products/sectors and target countries.</p>
Inmetro	Additional feature: Trade barrier report functionality
Market Access Database	
TRAINS	
Expanding Exports Helpdesk	Additional features: Trade Forum, a matchmaking forum for trading partners Links, an overview of trade helpdesk links to additional information sources, e.g. on the website of the Directorate General for Trade of the EU.
TIR	Global coverage of all relevant trade information (tariff and non-tariff) on all possible product groups. The main function of TIRS is to operate as a reference to (sources of) information, not necessarily offering the information itself. Additional features: TIRC offers a range of services to its partner organizations in developing and transition economies: - A current awareness service through the International Trade Documentation Bulletin (ITD) - Production of specialized bibliographies or directories - Upon request, assistance in the identification of trade information sources and preparation of selective bibliographies. - An alert system to selected groups of users on new acquisitions, new sources, and information files on specific subjects, etc. - Useful links to other relevant information services.
IPFSAPH	Authoritative search for current standards, regulations and other relevant official materials from a single access point. Update frequency: Responsibility of the owners of websites linked to the portal. Additional features: a publication facility for any country that has no website but wishes to post information with regards to SPS measures. (not operational yet)
OneWorldMarket	Access to the summary, index and full text of each piece of legislation is provided. The database also provides tools for interpretation (literature, judicial decisions etc) of the information provided.
Ecoléx	
EIA/ EcoTrack	

Table 2.4 Methods for information gathering

Information source	Methods for information gathering

AccessGuide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Through CBI consultants (one for each product group), who have a (commercial) background in the industry sector they represent. They travel frequently to target countries, have contacts with industry and also visit seminars etc. Therefore, they know what's going on in the sector they represent and signal important topics for the AccessGuide. - CBI is part of the network of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, including its embassies, which is also an important source of information. - In addition, CBI organises marketing promotion seminars per product group for large companies, trade promotion organisations etc., which are a source of information on actual issues related to the product group and the sector. - The content is delivered by external consultancy agencies hired by CBI that have expertise on environmental and social requirements. They have access to several information services on the topics covered, legislative texts etc. as well as a network of contacts at government institutions e.g. to check on the interpretation of laws. They are able to provide additional information and answer to specific questions from the database users (the database supports a Q&A service). <p>The information is obtained through daily searches at the WTO webpage, more precisely to what is notified to the TBT Committee. The database does not yet include information on voluntary requirements, as they are not covered by the transparency obligations of TBT Enquiry Points.</p> <p>The database section on Sectoral and Trade barriers is maintained by information from (among others) industry, EC Delegations abroad, Member States and the WTO.</p>
Market Access Database	Sources of governmental institutions
TRAINS	@@
Expanding Exports Helpdesk	
TIR	The TIRC has developed a wide network of reliable information providers specialized in the field of international trade and related issues and has constituted a substantial collection of selected information materials. In this way, ITC has become a large source of information on international trade and related issues.
IPFSAPH	<p>The FAO will not be responsible for data gathering from each individual source; rather, this is the responsibility of the information owners with links to the portal. However, it is FAO's task to include as many relevant websites as possible. To this end, FAO is discussing with various parties on making (inter)national regulations and related supporting materials available systematically through the portal. e.g.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - international agency partners - national food safety, animal and plant health officials from various countries - representatives from countries involved in the import and export of food and agricultural products - Both the plant and animal health sectors have formal commitments (through IPPC and OIE) for national information sharing. However, there is no equivalent commitment for food safety, so FAO can only encourage parties working in the area of food safety to join the portal. These efforts are primarily focused at governmental institutions.
OneWorldMarket	<p>OneWorldMarket will develop the database by using the following ways of information gathering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stichting Maatschappij en Onderneming (SMO, a foundation for society and enterprise), is a knowledge centre for the business community in the Netherlands, with effective access to almost every entrepreneurial sector in the Netherlands. SMO has a network of leading players in sustainability amongst African and Dutch entrepreneurs in the agricultural industry and other sectors and regions to be included in future. Knowledge available by SMO through its network, is the main source of input for the database. - Through OneWorld Nederland, which has a network of nearly 100 NGO partners in the Netherlands with contacts in the South. The international OneWorld.net, of which the Netherlands is a component, has 1,300 partners in the North and the South. Knowledge available by OneWorld Nederland through its network, is the main source of input for the database. - Koninklijk Instituut voor de Tropen (KIT) is a knowledge institute specialized in international cooperation and intercultural communication. KIT has a consultative role and provides information to be included in the database.
Ecolex	<p>The Ecolex database is based on three main sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - FAOLEX (developed by the FAO), a database of (1) references to national legislation linked to electronic versions of their texts and (2) index and summaries of selected texts of significance pertaining to FAO's mandate (e.g. legislation on agriculture, energy, environment, fisheries, food, forestry, land, livestock, mineral resources, plants, water, wild fauna and flora). - ELIS, a comprehensive information system on environmental law (developed by IUCN). ELIS evolved into a large set of references to treaties, national legislation, soft law and legal literature. - The UNEP collection of legal materials in electronic and hardcopy form. - A Partnership Agreement between FAO, IUCN and UNEP regulated the integration of these sources in ECOLEX in 2001.
EIA/ Eco-track	

Table 2.5 Set-up of information sources

Information source	Set-up of information source
AccessGuide	<p>The AccessGuide database is composed of a collection of word-documents, which address a specific issue in the sectors and countries covered (e.g. azo dye restrictions in textile products in the EU). All documents have been categorized in one of the four main themes (environment, social, consumer health & safety, quality). The database supports three types of search methods: (1) a quick keyword search function, (2) a quick search option and (3) an advanced search option. Search results are presented on a summary page with a description of the contents of the document, a link to download the complete document (this requires subscription first), links to related documents available in the database and useful external links (e.g. to original information sources).</p> <p>Subscription to the AccessGuide database is free of charge for the target group. The database is equipped with several services to support users, e.g.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Sector documents ('Information-scans'), which provide an overview of all documents available per product sector. -Help page for new users, a FAQ page with (example) questions from producers -Contact page, where users can address their questions (or suggestions, comments) to CBI. These may be questions on the use of the database but also on the contents, and the user will receive a personal reply. The database thus also provides a consultancy service.
Inmetro	<p>The exporter alert e-mails sent by Inmetro contain a summary in Portuguese and linkages to the draft technical regulation or conformity assessment procedure notified to the WTO TBT Committee.</p> <p>The information on the users' profiles are filed in the Inmetro system, so that the user can change his/her profile by simply entering his/her logon and password whenever necessary.</p>
Market Access Database	<p>The information on environmental market requirements offered by the Market Access Database is organised in the following sections:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Sectoral and Trade Barriers (free): Information on export and investment conditions in non-EU countries, including all major EU trading partners. In addition, the database includes trade barriers affecting a producer's area of activity in the individual countries. Search function -by country (all major EU trading partners covered) -by sector (all major business sectors covered) -by measure (see Fact Sheet for details) -Studies (free): downloadable reports concerning market access related studies referring to geographical areas, selected business sectors or relevant horizontal issues (e.g. labelling). <p>The information on non-tariff trade barriers is limited. The information on environmental measures is included in the section Standards, Sanitary and Other Technical Requirements.</p>
TRAINS	<p>The TRAINS database is available both on Internet (after registration) and on CD-ROM. The CD-ROM contains the tariff data for the most recent year for each country and summary data for the last five years for all available countries. The Internet version provides access to current and historical data, and is updated frequently with new software and data.</p>
TIR	<p>TIRC provides a range of services (please see previous section) to its trading partners, of which Reference information is only one part. The reference information provided by TIRC is accessible through several sections, e.g.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Online access to bibliographical databases -Webindex, a search tool -Publications, Online Trade Journals, Useful links <p>Access to these data is partly free, partly paid.</p>
Expanding Exports Helpdesk	<p>The information that has been included in the Expanding Exports Helpdesk so far is organised in four main areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Import tariffs: assistance to developing country exporters on EU preferential trade regimes available for developing countries. -Customs documents: information concerning the documents to be produced by the exporter in order to qualify for preferential duty treatment. -Rules of origin: information on preferential origin rules, which lay down the specific conditions that need to be met if goods are to qualify for advantageous tariff treatment, otherwise the full duties are applicable. -Trade statistics: information on trade statistics to identify EU market potentials. <p>The pages on customs documents are standard for all products and provide information and links on Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) and documentary requirements under GSP.</p>
IPFSAPH	<p>The IPFSAPH is a portal, which means that it creates access to existing websites. Thus, the key design consideration for the IPFSAPH is that the relevant agency or national body retains data ownership. Data owners remain fully responsible for maintenance and liable for the quality of the content displayed. This applies to international standard setting bodies as well as national government agencies.</p> <p>In addition, the portal will be set-up on basis of the following considerations:</p>

	<p>- The process of linking will be automated as far as possible. For example, the portal will have to facilitate the exchange of metadata: formal descriptions of the content on the source sites, which also include the current address of the webpage to be viewed. If the source of the information changes, the version visible from the IPFSAPH also changes.</p> <p>- With regards to language, the portal will make all materials available in the original language, but will also ensure that the resource is described using a controlled vocabulary in one of five core languages (English, French, Spanish, Chinese and Arabic). Translation of the controlled vocabulary will permit keyword searches to be performed in each of the five languages.</p> <p>The IPFSAPH portal will only be truly successful with national participation through the making available of relevant regulations and formal texts for access by trading partners.</p>
Ecolex	<p>The Ecolex website is available in the English, Spanish and French language. The information on the website has been structured as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Home: explanation how the database has been set up and a link to the search machine. - About: background information on ECOLEX and its objectives. - User Agreement: description of the terms and conditions for accessing ECOLEX. - Contact page <p>Users can search on Treaties, National Legislation, Court Decisions or Literature (the search function supports the three different languages). There are two possibilities to search: simple or advanced.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Simple search contains options by subject(s), country, year/period and key word(s). A cross search through the entire database is also possible by selection of several options at the same time - Advanced search enables searching by a large number of options, e.g. type of document, subject(s), keyword(s), word(s) from, country, region/basin, year/period, entry into force, place of adoption, depositary, language of document, superseded/obsolete, species (flora/fauna). <p>When a certain agreement is searched for and found, information thereof becomes available including date and place of adoption and entry into force, official publication source, original languages, available translations, depositary, reference to amendments and related treaties, list of parties, date of entry into force for each party, etc.</p>
EIA/ EcoTrack	

Table 2.6 Monitoring and evaluation of the information source

Information source	Monitoring and evaluation	Plans for future development
1. AccessGuide	<p>User registrations for the AccessGuide database are by name only; therefore CBI can monitor which organisations have registered to the database (registration is free but obligatory in order to download documents). CBI also monitors the number and type of documents that have been downloaded.</p> <p>-For example: In March 2004, AccessGuide had 3.553 registered users; the number of users is expanding every month with an average growth rate of around 150.</p>	<p>CBI has several plans to improve the AccessGuide database in future, among which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Expansion of the database with a notification service for environmental requirements / non-tariff trade barriers (NTBs). Every user can report an (new) environmental requirement to CBI. The objective of this service is to enhance transparency on NTBs and solve them if possible. CBI has taken the initiative for this service to address the lack of overview of NTBs and information sources on these. -Increase promotional activities for the AccessGuide database. CBI is of the opinion that the database is not sufficiently known by its target groups, and wants to put more emphasis on marketing of the database. -Levying of a membership fee for users not directly belonging to the target groups. <p>Inmetro aims to expand the system with a dissemination function for information on voluntary requirements, particularly those concerning health and environmental issues</p>
2. Inmetro	<p>Inmetro has access to information concerning number of users and their profiles.</p>	<p>Inmetro aims to expand the system with a dissemination function for information on voluntary requirements, particularly those concerning health and environmental issues</p>
3. Market Access Database	<p>n/a</p>	<p>n/a</p>
4. TRAINS	<p>The Internet version of TRAINS currently has more than 2000 registered users. In general, most users have given positive feedback on TRAINS.</p>	<p>Future development plans for TRAINS are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -expansion of the country coverage, -expansion of the data coverage with all existing bilateral agreements for preferential tariffs -improvement of the data on non-tariff barriers (coverage and quality).
5. Expanding Exports Helpdesk	<p>n/a</p>	<p>@@ sheet @@</p>
6. TIR	<p>(no data available)</p>	<p>(no data available)</p>
7. IPFSAPH	<p>Monitoring through standard package of web statistics (visits, downloads, etc), in combination with monitoring activities, e.g. use of the system by potential information providers. A number of pilot national implementation projects are planned to start in the coming months, which will in turn create demands for demonstration events. Interest in these events – and the subsequent implementation of national nodes – will be key indicators of the perceived value of the portal at national level.</p>	<p>Future development plans for the IPFSAPH focus on further inclusion of data sets from larger developing countries. The data coverage will also be extended over the coming months by the progressive inclusion of supporting material to the official standards (for instance, more detailed information from the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Consultation on Food Additives and Contaminants (JECFA) and the Joint FAO/WHO Meeting on Pesticide Residues (JMPR)).</p>
8. OneWorldMarket	<p>n/a</p>	<p>The owners of the OneWorldMarket website aim to develop it over the next years into a marketplace where entrepreneurs and NGOs from around the world are able to interact and participate. The platform will have to operate as a regular service provider to businesses in the North and the South and will be exploited commercially. NGOs will remain involved with the platform as experts and advisers. The continued involvement of civil society organisations will ensure the provision of valuable knowledge to supplement the expertise provided by the business sector. In addition, local organisations in Benin and Costa Rica will be established to promote the OneWorldMarket concept and possibly, to provide operational assistance.</p>
9. Ecolex	<p>(no data available)</p>	<p>(no data available)</p>
10. EIA/ ECoTrack	<p>(no data available)</p>	<p>(no data available)</p>

Table 2.7 Existing information sources: strengths and weaknesses

Information source	Strengths	Weaknesses
1. AccessGuide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Relevant content with regards to environmental market requirements: coverage of both legislative and non-legislative standards related to environmental / social / health & safety issues - Database also provides interpretative documents on standards - Reliable sources of information and good maintenance - Free access and many additional features, services (Question & Answer service supported by experts) and events - Active monitoring and many plans for future development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Currently coverage of European Member States only - Labour-intensive maintenance - Interpretative documents includes a 'risk' as well - No regulatory alert function
2. Inmetro	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regulatory alert function for environmental legislation, with links to legislative source and compliance assessment - Direct service for producers exporting to foreign markets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Portuguese only - No coverage of non-legislative (environmental) standards
3. Market Access Database	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Objective is to facilitate market access by providing information on all trade barriers - Trade barrier report functionality - Good maintenance supported by extensive and reliable network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Limited coverage of environmental market requirements - Targeted specifically at producers in European Member States
4. TRAINS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Large coverage, large number of users and outreach - Information gathered from reliable sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Non-tariff trade barriers is not the key focus - Low update frequency of non-tariff trade barriers
5. Expanding Exports Helpdesk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Specifically targeted at producers in developing countries - Objective is to facilitate market access by providing information on environmental market requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Section on environmental market requirements not available (yet)
6. TIRC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Very large source of information related to all trade issues, large coverage of topics, countries, publications etc. - Reliable information sources - Continuous update 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Information source too large to look for specific issues - Familiarity with TIRC with target groups unknown
7. IPFSAPH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Specific services for TIRC partner organisations in developing countries - coverage of both legislative and non-legislative standards on food safety, plant and animal health - Developed by large international organisation - Many promotional events and pilot testing with target group - Option for countries to post information on SPS measures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - specific focus on SPS measures - portal service only; e.g. no direct control on update frequency, content delivered by external information providers - Success dependent on ability to mobilise national organisations to make data available
8. OneWorldMarket	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Initiators have large network incl. contacts with industry / producers in developing countries - Initiators have large knowledge of trade and environment issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Database section of the website not (yet) operational
9. Ecolex	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Large content from reliable sources - Advanced search options - Summary and direct link to law texts - Available in four different languages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No coverage of non-legislative standards - Country coverage?
10. EIA/ ECOtrack	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Global coverage of environmental product law plus related areas (energy, packaging, labelling) - Alert functionality for new legislation - Interpretative summaries with direct link to la texts - Many additional services, e.g. Question & Answer service, special reports, special information sessions - 'Lean' supplier version currently under development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No inclusion of voluntary standards in EIA-track - Limited product groups: electronics and textiles only - Database developed on commercial basis, paid service only