

ECHA's approach to engagement with its Accredited Stakeholder Organisations¹

Introduction

ECHA's engagement with the Accredited Stakeholder Organisations is linked to the Agency's new corporate identity and especially to the five values: transparency, trustworthiness, efficiency, independence and commitment to well-being. These values encourage ECHA to extend the engagement from what is stated in the REACH Regulation². Engagement is based on cooperation models providing maximum mutual benefit, and is proactive.

This builds further on the previous Stakeholder Policy (adopted by the Management Board on 13 February 2008), and covers the principles for cooperation with ECHA's Accredited Stakeholders.

Accredited Stakeholders are organisations that ECHA has selected according to eligibility criteria adopted by the Management Board in the document adopted on 13 February 2008³ and revised in its meeting from 21-22 June 2011⁴. All Accredited Stakeholders have a legitimate interest in ECHA's work, have activities at European Union level, are representative of their field of interest and are non-profit making.

Objective

Accredited Stakeholders represent several different areas of interest and allow the Agency to engage in a dialogue with key actors having an interest in REACH and CLP at European Union level. Building open and trustworthy relations with the Accredited Stakeholders and working together through meaningful activities are the main objectives for the Agency's stakeholder engagement policy.

Engagement is built on two key pillars:

- Channelling feedback from the field: Accredited Stakeholders may contribute with their scientific and technical expertise and may bring with them perspectives from the field, helping ECHA to develop efficient high-quality tools and processes that meet its stakeholders' needs.
- Multiplication of information: Accredited Stakeholders have contacts with relevant actors in the field and can help ECHA to produce and distribute information to the stakeholders whom ECHA might otherwise not reach.

¹ Endorsed by the Management Board on 16 December 2011 (MB/69/2011)

² Recitals 95 and 97, Articles 77, 85, 86, 108 and 123, among others

³ Proactive engagement with all ECHA's Stakeholders

⁴ Revised eligibility criteria for ECHA's Accredited Stakeholders, MB/34/2011 final

Selection of the Accredited Stakeholders

The selection of relevant organisations as Accredited Stakeholders is a prerequisite for successful engagement. ECHA has defined explicit eligibility criteria to ensure that the Accredited Stakeholders form a relevant reference group. The revised eligibility criteria were adopted by the Management Board in June 2011. The criteria and supporting definitions are presented in Attachment 1.

Cooperation principles

Cooperation is built on five principles reflecting ECHA's corporate values⁵. These principles are the cornerstones of ECHA's stakeholder engagement. The following list seeks to match values and principles as a means of highlighting their respective relevance, but should be read as a cumulative compilation and thus understood in its totality.

Value	Cooperation principle
Transparency ECHA is open and transparent in its actions and decision-making. ECHA strives to be easy to understand and to approach.	Balanced treatment of ECHA's Accredited Stakeholder Organisations ECHA keeps all Accredited Stakeholder Organisations informed about key developments and upcoming events through regular communications activities and targeted correspondence. In this way, all organisations will be able to benefit from their position as an Accredited Stakeholder to ECHA. However, the level of involvement depends on the activity and commitment of each of the organisations.
Trustworthiness ECHA's decisions are science based, consistent and impartial. Accountability and the security of confidential information are cornerstones of all ECHA's actions.	Proactive consultation Accredited Stakeholder Organisations are representatives of the field and ECHA appreciates hearing their views and knowledge. They are therefore eligible to be invited to ECHA's meetings and encouraged to give feedback through public consultations.
Efficiency ECHA is goal-oriented, committed and seeks to use resources wisely.	Efficient working methods Accredited Stakeholder Organisations nominate a contact person and a press or communications contact to ensure efficient collaboration and to update ECHA on any changes in the organisation's contact information. These changes are done electronically. Accredited Stakeholder Organisations have an important role as information multipliers and are therefore given priority in being invited to relevant events organised by the Agency and given advance notice of major changes or developments in ECHA's area of work.

⁵ ECHA's Corporate Identity, (MB/64/2010)

<p>Independence ECHA is independent from all external interests and impartial in its decision making. ECHA consults members of the public openly before taking many of its decisions.</p>	<p>Respect for confidentiality Confidentiality requirements apply especially for organisations participating in the Committee meetings. The confidentiality requirements are described below under the paragraph “Principles governing participation in the Committees and Forum”.</p>
<p>Commitment to well-being ECHA stimulates the safe and sustainable use of chemicals to improve the quality of life of all citizens in Europe and the environment.</p>	<p>Multiplication of information Accredited Stakeholder Organisations are important information multipliers in promoting the safe and sustainable use of chemicals and thereby support ECHA in achieving this aim.</p>

Principles governing participation in the Committees and Forum

To protect the scientific integrity and independence of ECHA’s bodies, the input of stakeholder observers has to remain scientific or technical. The meetings are not to be used to promote political objectives or for lobbying. To ensure efficiency and continuity, the Accredited Stakeholder Organisations participating in the Committee meetings should preferably appoint one person, with the possibility to bring experts for particular agenda points, in agreement with the respective chair.

All Accredited Stakeholder observers are asked to sign a declaration of interest, a code of conduct, and a declaration of confidentiality, before they can participate in the work of the Committees or the Forum. If there is a change of participant, the declarations need to be signed again. This applies also for any experts accompanying the observers in the meetings.

Observers to Committees and Forum meetings should respect the Code of Conduct for observers at ECHA meetings. The Committees and Forum retain the option to hold the entirety of a meeting, or parts thereof, in closed session, e.g. for reasons of confidentiality.

The principles are presented in more detail in the Code of Conduct for observers at ECHA meetings⁶.

ECHA continuously works on improving the transparency of the work of its bodies. For the sake of efficiency, Accredited Stakeholder Organisations are engaged in the Forum through specific Forum Stakeholder Workshops. The Forum and the Forum Secretariat will endeavour to conduct the Forum Stakeholder Workshops in the most meaningful manner as regards both content and their opportunity for a mutually fruitful dialogue on salient enforcement topics.

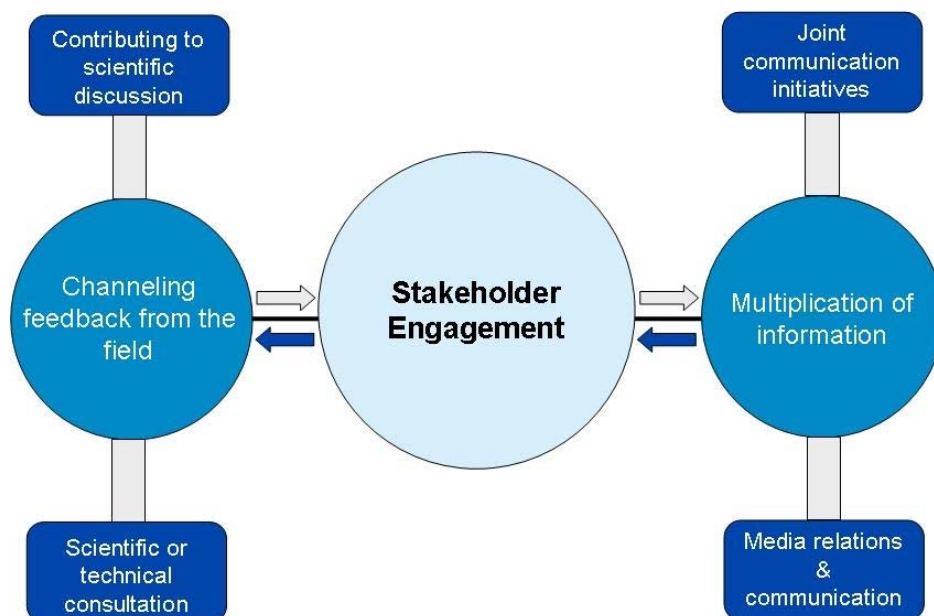
In respect to Committee meetings, ECHA strives for the efficient use of time through well-organised and timely agendas, use of technology to allow remote participation and other means to facilitate stakeholders’ participation in a meaningful way.

⁶ Code of Conduct for observers at ECHA meetings (ED/62/2008) 9 October 2008

Working methods

Having Accredited Stakeholder Organisations offers ECHA a unique opportunity to interact with a manageable number of relevant stakeholders representing a large proportion of all interest groups at EU level.

ECHA works along two engagement pillars: channelling feedback from the field and multiplication of information. These two pillars motivate the cooperation for both ECHA and the Accredited Stakeholder Organisations offering maximum benefit for both parties and strengthening ECHA's existing processes. These two pillars are complemented by a communications function, which strengthens and enhances the cooperation.



Stakeholder engagement activities are planned on an annual basis and presented in detail in the Agency's work plans. All stakeholder engagement activities have a direct connection to ECHA's priorities defined in the Multi-Annual Working Programme and the related processes. Involving Accredited Stakeholder organisations in these processes contributes to increasing the efficiency and transparency of ECHA's work.

Channelling feedback from the field

Contributing to the regulatory scientific discussion

The core of ECHA's engagement with the Accredited Stakeholders is their possible participation in the work of the Agency's bodies: the three Committees and the Forum. The role of the stakeholders varies slightly depending on each body, as presented in Attachment 2.

Also ECHA's Management Board has three non-voting members from interested parties. As specified in REACH Article 79, these non-voting members are appointed by the European Commission for a term of office of four years.

The Committees and the Forum may invite Accredited Stakeholders to participate as observers, and their involvement is reflected in the rules and procedures of the respective bodies⁷⁸⁹¹⁰. Accredited Stakeholders contribute with their scientific expertise and view-points from the field, thereby supporting the Agency's vision of becoming the world's leading regulatory authority on the safety of chemicals and ensuring transparency in decision-making.

Being accepted as an Accredited Stakeholder does not guarantee an invitation to the meetings of the Committees and Forum. The selection of Accredited Stakeholder observers to these bodies is based on the indication of interest in the application form. Observers can be selected either as regular observers or as sector-specific observers to be invited on a case-by-case basis. For the sake of transparency, the names of the invited organisations are published on ECHA's [website](#).

In order to participate in the Committee and Forum meetings, Accredited Stakeholders need to be registered in the [Transparency Register](#), maintained by the European Union.

Accredited Stakeholder observers are selected for the same fixed term as the members of each body. Their term of office may, however, be extended if it is considered relevant by the individual bodies. Given the need to limit the number of stakeholder participants and in order to ensure a good stakeholder representation, the bodies may decide to discontinue inviting regular observers that have had a very low level of attendance in previous meetings or that do not respect the Code of Conduct for observers in ECHA meetings¹¹.

Scientific and technical consultation

ECHA considers the Accredited Stakeholders as a primary reference group for the Agency. They are regularly consulted on scientific and technical issues, such as the updating of guidance documents, testing of new IT-tools or commenting on new processes. ECHA's networks, such as the HelpNet, Partner Expert Groups (PEGs) and Risk Communications Network (RCN) also benefit from the Accredited Stakeholders' expertise by inviting observers to participate in their work, for example by attending their meetings and commenting on papers.

Public consultations, including the possibility to comment on ECHA's annual and multi-annual work programmes, are important ways for ECHA to understand the views of the Accredited Stakeholder Organisations, and through them the field in large. As ECHA's close collaborators, the Accredited Stakeholder Organisations are expected to actively participate in these consultations.

⁷ Rules of Procedure for the Committee for Risk Assessment (MB/05/2010 final), Article 6

⁸ Rules of Procedure for the Committee for Socio-Economic Analysis (MB/06/2010 final), Article 6

⁹ Rules of Procedure for the Member State Committee (MB/50/2010 final), Article 6

¹⁰ Rules of Procedure for the Forum for Exchange of Information on Enforcement (MB/36/2011 final), Article 6

¹¹ Code of Conduct for observers at ECHA meetings (ED/62/2008) 9 October 2008

Multiplication of information

Joint communications initiatives

Joint communications projects can be set up with relevant organisations in order to reach out to key audiences. Activities might include, for example, joint campaigns, publications, events, information or simply sharing embargoed news to ensure that stakeholders can brief their members in a timely and professional fashion.

Accredited Stakeholder Organisations are invited to participate in ECHA's annual Stakeholders' Day which is an open event for all interested parties, and have a priority when ECHA invites participants to other events and webinars. They may also be involved in the planning of events or as suppliers of external speakers to such events.

As a specific activity, a workshop for Accredited Stakeholders is arranged in Brussels as a recurrent event. The workshop provides a forum for strategic discussion and a possibility to develop joint activities.

Communications and media relations

Accredited Stakeholder Organisations are kept informed about developments in ECHA's areas of work primarily through the Agency's communications vehicles (website, e-News, press releases and Newsletter). Direct contacts (letters from the Executive Director, phone meetings and emails) are used to complement these channels in specific cases.

Press releases or other press material may in specific cases be distributed through a network of press or communications officers within the Accredited Stakeholder Organisations. This network may receive embargoed press releases and early warnings of upcoming issues. In some cases, joint press releases may also be issued. These activities are initiated on the basis of mutual interest and coordinated by the Communications Unit.

A survey is carried out annually with the Accredited Stakeholder Organisations to collect their feedback and to measure their level of satisfaction with their involvement in the Agency's work. The survey also covers their roles in the various ECHA bodies and networks.

Attachment 1 – Selection of Accredited Stakeholder Organisations

Organisations can apply to become an Accredited Stakeholder through an open call for expressions of interest, which is published on ECHA's [website](#) and promoted at relevant ECHA events, such as the Stakeholders' Day and in the Agency's communications vehicles. ECHA may also encourage organisations to apply through direct contact, for example if it foresees benefits from the organisation's participation or if the organisation comes from an under-represented field.

In order to ensure a transparent and consistent selection process, the ECHA Secretariat has introduced supporting definitions for each of the criteria and given an explicit indication of how this information is to be verified. This information has been published together with the eligibility criteria on the ECHA [website](#).

Present eligibility criteria for ECHA's **Accredited Stakeholder Organisations**¹²

1. They are legally established within the EU/EEA and have activities at the EU level

Definition:

An eligible organisation has to be legally established in one of the EU Member States, Iceland, Liechtenstein or Norway. EU level activities are activities targeted at an EU-wide audience, i.e. not limited to the local, national or regional level.

Evidence:

The place of legal establishment may be evidenced by the founding document or any other suitable document proving that the entity's seat is located in the EU, Iceland, Liechtenstein or Norway. Organisations can explain the scope of their activities in the application form.

2. They have a legitimate interest in ECHA's areas of work

Definition:

The organisation represents a sector affected by the EU chemicals legislation (such as the REACH, CLP, Biocides or PIC Regulations) falling within the scope of the tasks of ECHA. An organisation is also considered as having a legitimate interest in the areas of work of ECHA, if it represents a sector indirectly affected by the legislation. This also includes non-governmental organisations engaged in issues affected by the mentioned legislation.

ECHA's Accredited Stakeholders are accordingly typically active in industry, human health, animal welfare, environmental protection, scientific research and development, and consumer protection.

Evidence:

Organisations can explain their legitimate interest in the application form.

¹² Revised eligibility criteria for ECHA's Accredited Stakeholders, MB/34/2011 final

3. They are representative in the field of their competence

Definition:

The organisation must represent the interests of a substantial part of the actors in its field of competence. ECHA's Accredited Stakeholders should be representative of actors in their sector or field of competence. The necessary number of member organisations and their size depends on the structure of the relevant sector. Also, the sector need not have a particular size, but must be distinguishable from other sectors with different fields of interest.

Evidence:

Organisations need to set out why they can be considered representative in the application form.

4. They are non-profit making and do not exclusively represent individual companies

Definition:

For the purpose of ECHA's Accredited Stakeholder applications, a non-profit organisation does not operate for its own commercial profit or gain. It conducts its operations for the benefit of its members or of the general public.

Evidence:

This may be evidenced by the founding document or any other suitable document provided during the application process.

5. They are registered in the Register of Interest Representatives maintained by the European Commission. This criterion only applies if they wish to participate as observers in the Committee and Forum meetings of ECHA.

Definition:

Accredited Stakeholders wishing to participate as observers in ECHA's Committee or Forum meetings must be registered in the Register of Interest Representatives maintained by the European Commission. Registration is free of charge and can be completed via the following website:

<https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/transparency/regrin/welcome.do>

Evidence:

The organisations are requested to indicate their registration number in the application form.

Attachment 2 – Roles of Stakeholder observers in ECHA's bodies and networks

Committees

The Member State Committee, Committee for Risk Assessment and Committee for Socio-Economic Analysis each invite stakeholder observers following their inclusion in the list of Accredited Stakeholder Organisations. Each stakeholder observer is subject to approval by the respective Committee as required by the Rules of Procedures of each Committee.

Forum

In order to increase mutual understanding on compliance, the Forum invites stakeholder observers to participate in specific stakeholder workshops. Forum documents, such as meeting minutes are published on ECHA's website.

Risk Communication Network

The Risk Communication Network invites stakeholder observers following an expression of interest, according to its own criteria and subject to the approval of the Steering Group.

HelpNet

HelpNet invites organisations with REACH or CLP helpdesks at an EU/EEA level as observers. In addition to participation in meetings, all of the selected observers can benefit from access to meeting documents posted on the Circa database.

PEGs

The Partner Expert Groups select stakeholder observers from the interested organisations in order to get a wide coverage of expertise needed for specific projects. In addition to attending the meetings, the observers can also provide comments on the draft documents.