

Press Release

Japan starts a program to facilitate gathering safety information of chemicals.

The Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare (MHLW), the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) and the Ministry of the Environment (MOE) of the Japanese Government announced, on June 1, 2005, a program to facilitate safety information collection of High Production Volume (HPV) chemicals. The program named “Japan Challenge Program” is a joint initiative of the Japanese Government and industry, especially manufacturers and importers of the chemicals in Japan.

Key features of the program are shown below.

- ◇ The target chemicals of the program are organic substances produced or imported in Japan over 1,000 ton per year (a link to the list of substances). The program, however, does not exclude low production volumes chemicals in particular, for effective development and application of category approach.
- ◇ Information will be gathered in accordance with OECD SIDS initial assessment.
- ◇ The program will avoid duplication with the past, ongoing and planned safety information collection activities including OECD-HPV and the US Challenge Program. The program will make efforts to contribute to the OECD-HPV wherever possible.
- ◇ Industry volunteers to sponsor information gathering of the listed chemicals. Sponsors for each chemical will gather safety information. Forming a consortium is recommended for efficient use of resources and avoidance of duplicative testing. Proposals to employ category approach are encouraged.
- ◇ It is anticipated that collection of the information on HPV chemicals in Japan (excluding those which are subject to information collection under OECD-HPV Chemicals Programme or other initiatives) be accomplished by the end of Japanese fiscal year 2008,
- ◇ Collected safety information will be available to the public through the Internet,
- ◇ The list of target substances may be reviewed when appropriate.

The List of HPV chemicals and details of the program are available on MHLW, METI and MOE websites (the details are only in Japanese).