



**a toxics-free future**

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## **International SAICM Implementation Project (ISIP)**

In 2010, in an effort to demonstrate SAICM implementation via IPEN Participating Organizations, IPEN launched an International SAICM Implementation Project, also known as ISIP. ISIP aims to mobilize resources for initial enabling activities pertaining to national priorities, in keeping with the work areas set out in the strategic objectives of section IV of the SAICM Overarching Policy Strategy.

In particular, the ISIP supports the Governance objective of SAICM's Overarching Policy Strategy paragraph 26, which calls for enhanced "cooperation on the sound management of chemicals between Governments, the private sector and civil society at the national, regional and global levels."

In addition, ISIP builds on the 2008-2009 Global SAICM Outreach Campaign to raise awareness about SAICM and strengthen collaboration among the public interest, health and labor sectors.

### **ISIP Objectives**

ISIP's four objectives include:

- Promoting the need for sound chemicals management
- Advancing National SAICM Implementation
- Promoting global SAICM implementation by global civil society
- Building capacity among NGOs developing countries and countries with economies in transition

**Title of activity:** "Building a Website for Raising Awareness on Chemicals"

**NGO:** Toxisphera

**Country:** Brazil

**Date:** December 2011

### **Elements of SAICM Covered:**

Include civil society representatives in Government committees formulating, carrying out and monitoring SAICM implementation plans, or useful inputs into the process where NGOs encounter barriers to their substantive direct participation, broad and meaningful participation of stakeholders, including women, at all levels in devising responses to chemicals management challenges and in regulatory and decision-making processes that relate to chemical safety (164, 206)

**Description of Stockholm Convention or SAICM implementation-related policy processes that you have participated in or contributed to:**

We make up part of the National Chemical Safety Commission and other coordination groups related to chemicals with the federal government. The new government (President Dilma Rousseff) is being structured and the area of chemicals probably won't be a priority.

During the execution of the project we submitted a membership application for the network WECF in Europe and we were accepted as associate members.

Representatives from Toxisphera also regularly contribute to and participate in policy processes related to the Stockholm Convention, SAICM, and Mercury Treaty by attending regional meetings and Conferences of the Parties.

**Description of NGO positions, priorities and concerns with the process:**

The Brazilian government has not provided a Portuguese version of the SAICM text yet. The lack of a plan to implement SAICM is another obstacle to talk about SAICM with people in general who want to research the issue, since in Brazil the main language is Portuguese and very few people read in English or even in Spanish. It is visible that government is not implementing SAICM. There is not any National Implementation Plan of SAICM in progress. The recent law on lead in paints was not regulated to offer more details, which avoids a clear interpretation of the law provisions and consequently the implementation of operating measures of inspection by the part of the authorities – also, there is not an official methodology and laboratories publicly certified to analyse the samples in case of an official inspection and collection of samples.

Nanotechnology and chemical substances in products are not officially discussed internally or with society by the part of health and environmental authorities, except in the case of Fundacentro, a foundation of the Ministry of Labor that is beginning to work on this theme, but has budgetary restrictions and the activities are restricted to the state of Sao Paulo (some workshops and brochures). Mercury is maybe the issue that is receiving a little more attention, due to the negotiations in progress, but we have not seen any significant measures to reduce emissions or to ban the use in products by the part of the federal government. A recent law on solid waste is causing a debacle with a lot of provisions about voluntary measures and agreements for wastes for which there is not a previous law, causing interruption in the Working Groups of CONAMA which were discussing proposals of resolutions to regulate the environmental management of lamps and electro-electronics. At least one more year will pass before we can go back to the discussions. The regulatory decree of the law indicates that only government and private sector are going to discuss actions – which shall be voluntary - towards the environmentally sound management (civil society is not part officially of the “sectorial agreements” provided in the regulations of the law).

**Project Outcomes:**

**Description of the activity conducted or type of participation that was organized:**

Logo, cards & letterhead are ready. The website design main structure is ready ([www.toxisphera.org](http://www.toxisphera.org)). The webpage has a “mission” page, publications and partners’ pages, with basic themes around four main projects: SAICM, POPs, Mercury and PRTR. SAICM project includes information on SAICM itself and articles about nanotechnology (including a requirement to the National Environmental Council – not answered by the authorities), lead in paints, toxic metals in products, asbestos. POPs page has text about Stockholm Convention, endocrine disruptors and POPs Guide for NGOs publications. PRTR shows a brief introduction to the issue, and information

about the federal government project which is just beginning. Mercury page shows the Minamata Statement of Japanese NGOs, a press release about INC-2 (there is other information to be posted there) and articles. Also, a recent study on mercury legislation in Brazil (by APROMAC and Toxisphera) was published.

The first stage of Webpage is not fully ready because the web designer is facing some technical problems and cannot still totally deliver the download actions for us. This means that we are waiting for him to surpass these technical issues to continue to improve the website with more articles and publications, which are ready, such as articles on dental amalgamations, cadmium in children's jewelry, local news on pesticides fumigation, and others. The professional promised to correct the technical issues after the Carnival taking place in the middle of the next

#### **Impact on target groups:**

Toxisphera has now its visual identity and a website to post the information necessary to raise awareness of civil society and communities about chemicals, safety, human rights. The website is the first step for publishing our future campaigns, projects, and local, national and international events and facts. After the technical issues (technical problems and our necessity to better understand its functioning) are solved, new articles and publications will be posted, and the website can be better explored for our projects and campaigns support.

#### **Impact on target policies:**

The website started with articles and information about international treaties, and translations about significant themes on chemical safety and products. It was also published a requirement on nanotechnology information submitted to the National Environmental Council by a NGO (APROMAC) requiring the government to clarify what it was doing and what it intended to do about nano and regulation, labeling, health safety, etc. The requirement was never answered by the responsible authorities, the government claimed that the National Environmental Council was not the appropriate forum to clarify such information for the civil society, even though the Internal Rules and Law creating the Council establish clearly that this is one of the main purposes of the Council. After some weeks posted at the website (and taking into account that the website has not been announced to the public) we received two special contacts: one of them from a lawyer of the Rio Grande do Sul Federal University who writes articles and scientific works on nanotechnology and legislation. He contacted us inviting us to work together and asking more contacts in Brazil to help him in his articles. One of his articles is published at the website now, and his conversations with scientists of the RENANOSSOMA (a civil society network on nano in Brazil) and FUNDACENTRO (a foundation of the Ministry of Labor who shelters some independent scientists) are going on. The second contact was of a science-environment area journalist of a great national newspaper (O Estado de São Paulo) interested in talking about lead in paints. The conversation was very rich and extended to SAICM, POPs, chemical safety policies and a lot of other issues. The website and Toxisphera (even that is not fully ready) was put available for his research on these themes. Taking into account that it is very difficult for small NGOs to approach the big nation-wide newspaper to publish our articles about lead in paints, mercury, POPs and others, we hope that it means an open door.

#### **Outreach to stakeholders:**

Due to the nature of the project, all the work was done among the Toxisphera's members and the external contracted professionals. The team to define the website is formed by Zuleica Nycz and Hassan Sohn (Toxisphera's directors) on a voluntary basis, and a contracted web designer Alexandre Casagrande. Even though the price to build

a web design is very much higher than the price we offered to him, he agreed to work with Toxisphera after the webpage was ready on a voluntary basis, solving eventual technical problems and teaching the directors about how to deal with the different tools and systems. In fact, the work with the website designer shall continue after the end of this project because many problems are still arising out of the handling of the electronic tools (some corrupted devices were identified and Toxisphera was asked to stop using the website tools for a while). Next week (after the Carnival) we will solve some problems that are not allowing us to post many other articles and useful information, such as the international campaign to ban endosulphan (India) and other national emergencies. Also, some articles are not seen in their respective pages, requiring complicated commands by the user to find them. The logos of the networks partners are not shown very well on the home page, also requiring corrections. The sections are not always responding the commands, and finally, there are some visual corrections that need to be made in some texts (covers format of publications, repetition of an article in the same page, for example).

**Deliverables, outputs and/or products:**

The case of the correspondence about the nanotechnology ruling with the university professor and the contact with the journalist in Sao Paulo are examples that the website can be a special tool for us to pilot many other discussions and campaigns to promote participation of the public for our demands and to give information. Of course, due to our personnel and financial limits, the website may be a tool greater than our capacity to deal with its resources in the beginning.

**Description of communication efforts:**

As we are having some problems with the website, we decided to postpone the announcement of the website officially until we have solved them. However, the website is accessible ([www.toxisphera.org](http://www.toxisphera.org)) for the general public. We are also in the process of learning how to further explore the website to expand the possibilities to raise awareness, strengthen democratic participation and improve public policies.

**NGO Recommendations to achieve desired NGO participation:**

We would like to develop campaigns to better explore the website qualities. Petitions, change of information, criticisms, proposals, denouncements, etc. There is the idea to open a special section of the website for small local NGOs post their messages about their actions (the NGOs that might not have a website, but are doing something related to chemical safety and human rights).