

## **GC3 Retail Portal Project Call June 30, 2010**

*Present: Cal Baier-Anderson, EPA DfE; Mark Buczek, Independent Consultant; Melissa Coffin, Lowell Center for Sustainable Production; Jenny Gitlitz, Green Depot; Stephen Greene, Howland Greene Consultants LLC; Kevin Myette, REI; Yve Torrie, Lowell Center for Sustainable Production, Gabe Wing, Herman Miller; Jeff Yorzyk, Five Winds, Ken Zarker, Washington State Department of Ecology.*

At the 2010 GC3 Roundtable, a Retail Portal working group developed plans to build on the research work in the report: *Best Practices in Product Chemicals Management in the Retail Industry*, by developing an online resource / inventory of product chemicals management systems currently existing or under development that are available for the consumer product and retail sector.

As a first step, a request was sent to GC3 participants for suggestions of current systems and tools available or under development for the retail / consumer product sector that could be used in this online inventory. The information received was captured in a table of information that was the main topic of discussion for the call.

### **Goal of Retail Portal Project**

Some retailers are making progress in the area of sustainability, but the issue of toxics remains a difficult one to tackle. The goal of this retail portal is to offer help and solutions to retailers who are in the process of developing or changing their product chemicals management systems.

The larger goal of this project is to bring retailers into the GC3 supply chain dialog where until recently, they have had little representation. Retailers are playing an increasingly important role in demanding changes throughout the supply chain so having them involved in the GC3 dialog can only aid this role. In the future we would like to hold a retailer discussion around safer chemicals and products and this portal and the retailer report published in December 2009 are a basis for such a discussion.

### **Scope / Parameters of the Project**

Information received from GC3 participants in response to our request raised questions about the scope and parameters for this project.

- Should we include chemicals management systems used by both retailers and consumer product manufacturers or just retailers?
- Should we include “stand-alone” tools or only tools that are part of a chemicals management system?
- Should we include consumer product rating systems?
- Should we include compliance systems? Standards? Labels?

Although we didn't come up with definitive answers to these questions, we agreed to start small; likely with retailers' product chemicals management systems only. In time we can add to the portal if it is proving to be a useful resource.

### **Data Collection and Structure**

Discussion about the data focused more on structuring the data than gaps in the data. Structuring the data with a chemicals lens and a product lens were both seen as important because retail stakeholders look at data from both perspectives. The data will be simply tabulated to make it clear which systems (and tools within that system) are useful for compliance and which systems go beyond compliance and are precautionary.

### **Next Steps**

- A small group will begin to develop a structure so the product chemicals management system information for retailers can be captured. Once the group has a draft structure developed, they will bring it back to the GC3 for further input. If you are interested in developing the structure to capture this information or have any suggestions, please contact Yve: [yve\\_torrie@uml.edu](mailto:yve_torrie@uml.edu), or 978.934.3121.