

Helsinki, 1 April 2021

BACKGROUND PAPER

Committee for Socio-economic Analysis

Summary: The Committee for Socio-Economic Analysis (SEAC) is currently looking for specialists to be nominated in particular in the fields of:

- economics (welfare, regulatory, public sector, environmental and/or health economics)
- chemical engineering (substitution of hazardous substances and analysis of technical feasibility of alternatives)

1 Introduction

The Committee for Socio-economic Analysis (SEAC) of the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) plays an important role in the key REACH¹ processes concerning restrictions and authorisations. Furthermore, it delivers opinions on any other aspects that arise from the operation of REACH relating to the socio-economic impacts of possible legislative action on substances.

This document has been developed to support the Member States (MSs) in the process of renewal of memberships of SEAC, and/or of nomination of new candidates. It provides details on the expected workload of the members and the level of support required from their nominating Member State. Finally, the paper presents an overview of the fields of expertise to be covered in SEAC.

2 Composition, role and tasks of the Committee for Socio-economic Analysis

SEAC is composed of members appointed by the Management Board based on nominations made by the Member States and EEA-EFTA countries. At the moment there are 36 members. In addition to members, SEAC can co-opt up to five additional members.

In accordance with Article 77(1) of the Regulation, the task of ECHA is to provide the best possible scientific and technical advice on questions related to chemicals. The ECHA Committees (RAC, SEAC and MSC) are an essential part of the smooth functioning of REACH. The tasks of SEAC are described in REACH in Article 76(1)(d).

SEAC formulates an ECHA opinion in relation to the following:

- **Authorisation** – Assessing the socio-economic factors related to applications for authorisation and the availability and technical and economic feasibility of alternatives.
- **Restrictions** – Assessing proposed restrictions and their socio-economic impact.

¹ Regulation (EC) No 1907/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 concerning the Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation, and Restriction of Chemicals (REACH).

In addition, the Executive Director of ECHA may ask SEAC to draw up an opinion on any other aspects concerning the safety of substances on their own, in preparations or in articles (Article 77(3)(b) and (c)).

3 Working procedures

There are fixed, tight deadlines for the delivery of SEAC's opinions, and consequently the committee will be under time pressure to deliver its opinions.

Article 87(1) stipulates that the Committee shall appoint one of its members as a rapporteur in order to draft its opinions. Further to this, a co-rapporteur may be appointed.

SEAC is chaired by an ECHA staff member, Ms Maria Ottati, and is supported by a committee secretariat provided by ECHA.

4 Expectations of expertise for the SEAC members

The REACH Regulation makes it clear that members of the Committees must possess the necessary qualifications in order to allow the Committees to meet the high expectations put on them. A grid showing the fields of expertise that are relevant to SEAC is enclosed to this document (see the separate Excel-file 'SEAC Expertise Grid.xls'), and nominees are asked to fill it in showing their level of expertise in each field.

Key areas of expertise required

The three key areas of specialised expertise required by the Committee are:

- Economics, in particular welfare, regulatory, public sector, environmental or health economics;
- Methodologies analysing costs and benefits of regulation, including the analysis of technical feasibility of alternatives and their costs;
- Knowledge about substitution and substances of concern, such as SVHCs.

Each of the members of SEAC need to possess the expertise and the English-language skills necessary for actively participating in drafting, commenting on and discussing opinions on proposals for restrictions and applications for authorisation.

Support for members' activities

In accordance with Article 85(6) of the REACH Regulation, Member States are obliged to support the SEAC members by providing adequate scientific and technical resources to them. A 50% time commitment is required from all SEAC members who share their responsibilities, which include acting as dossier (co-)rapporteurs, contributing to the discussions at SEAC with timely comments (both in writing in response to consultations on opinions and other documents, and verbally during the plenaries), and participating in other SEAC activities such as working groups.

Reimbursement

When attending meetings in person, ECHA reimburses the travel and accommodation expenses and pays a subsistence allowance to the members. Where relevant, ECHA remunerates the rapporteur and co-rapporteur for the work undertaken in line with the rules adopted by the Management Board (MB/41/2020).

5 Further considerations

SEAC meetings are held four times a year, typically for up to 2 weeks, and the provisional dates are published on the Committee pages of the ECHA website at least a year in advance. The actual number and duration of meetings will naturally depend on the workload of the Committee. A proportion of the meetings of SEAC will be held in person, with a significant proportion taking place remotely.

Considering the above, it is estimated that the SEAC member should expect to work half time with SEAC-related issues in the coming three years.