

GUIDELINES FOR IFCS NATIONAL FOCAL POINTS¹

The following criteria are intended as guidelines to be adopted, as appropriate, according to organizational structures and coordinating mechanisms in each government.

1. Each government should have a single National Focal Point identified by the respective Ministry or Department where the National Focal Point is located, or by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as appropriate to act as conduit for communication on IFCS activities and information dissemination. The IFCS President and Executive Secretary will be in communication with governments in order to ascertain their position with regard to the nomination.
2. The Focal Point should be a designated government position, not a person, and be at a sufficiently high policy level so that all national departments sharing responsibilities in chemical safety (health, environment, agriculture, industry, etc.) and their respective concerns can be fully addressed. If possible, it should be located in the Department or Agency that has the responsibility of coordinating national chemical safety activities. Some countries, however, may find it more appropriate for their country's needs to nominate a particular individual as Focal Point.
3. The Focal Point, with guidance from the Secretariat, as required, should promote intersectoral coordinating efforts and develop a mechanism for disseminating information within the country on IFCS activities to appropriate governmental and non-governmental organizations and for providing national inputs into policy directions and recommendations of the IFCS.
4. The National Focal Point should report at least once a year to the IFCS Secretariat on the progress in the implementation of the Priorities for Action and other matters concerning relevant chemical safety issues at the national level. The Forum Standing Committee, after consultation with governments, will approve the basic format to be used for the report. The IFCS Secretariat will propose this format.
5. The Focal Point for the IFCS should liaise with focal points of the participating organizations in the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC) and other relevant international organizations in the country to promote the sound management of chemicals. Their efforts can be assisted by expanded IOMC efforts to inform Focal Points of sponsored meetings.
6. Governments should seek to ensure continuity of National Focal Points. The Forum Secretariat should be advised of any changes by the respective Ministry or Department where the National Focal Point is located, or by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as appropriate. The representative of a government attending each session of the Forum is requested to inform the Secretariat, upon registration, about any new designation of their National Focal Point.
7. Where a government has not yet identified a National Focal Point, the Forum Secretariat should communicate through the respective Ministry of Foreign Affairs until a Focal Point has been nominated.

¹ Fourth Session of the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety, Final Report (IFCS/FORUM IV/16w)