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The A.I.S.E. Charter for Sustainable Cleaning and its Recent Update

Sustainable Development in Practice

A.I.S.E., the International Association for Soaps, Detergents and Maintenance Products, has over the last 13 years carried out proactive work on sustainable production and consumption for the whole of the industry sector. A.I.S.E.'s mission is detailed in its Agenda for Sustainable Cleaning and follows the Industry Vision which is based on the three pillars of sustainable development - economic, environmental and social - as identified at the UN World Summit in 2005 (Fig. 1).

A.I.S.E., the international Association for Soaps, Detergents and Maintenance Products is the official representative body of this industry in Europe. Its membership totals 37 national associations in 42 countries, covering about 900 companies ranging from small and medium-sized enterprises to large multinationals active both in the consumer goods market and the industrial & institutional (I&I) domains. The industry mission is to benefit society by contributing to the sustainable improvement of the quality and comfort of life through hygiene and cleanliness, in a free, competitive and innovative way.

Economically successful

A.I.S.E. aims to encourage sustainable delivery, in free market conditions and based on sound science and ethical stan-

dards, of competitively priced household and industrial cleaning products that satisfy human needs and bring quality and comfort of life.

Abstract

Approximately 130 companies from all over Europe have so far committed to the A.I.S.E. Charter for Sustainable Cleaning. This voluntary industry initiative covers sustainable production and consumption for the whole detergents, cleaning and maintenance products industry sector. Building on this success - about 80% of the industry's output in Europe is covered - and aiming at constantly offering the most advanced sustainability assurance scheme for promoting best practices within the industry, A.I.S.E. has launched an update of its main sustainability initiative in 2010.

This first major update introduces a product dimension, enabling companies to give a sustainability assurance for individual products with an enhanced Charter logo - so far, companies could only demonstrate via their Charter membership that products have been manufactured taking into consideration key sustainability principles. This new Charter product logo can be obtained by companies through compliance with the new Advanced Sustainability Profiles (ASPs) for product categories. Further new elements concern the Charter Sustainability Procedures (CSPs) which companies have to implement in their management systems, the Key Performance Indicators, which companies report to A.I.S.E. on a yearly basis and the extension of consumer information on packs.



Socially responsible

A.I.S.E. aims to ensure, through a policy of voluntary continual improvement over and above basic legal requirements, that the household and industrial cleaning industry's role in guarding health, hygiene, safety and well-being among end-users and stakeholders is recognised and encouraged by society.

Environmentally sound

A.I.S.E. aims to bring about a voluntary progressive reduction in ecological impact and resource intensity, throughout the life-cycle, of household and industrial cleaning products.

The A.I.S.E. Charter - A European Industry Sustainability Scheme

The A.I.S.E. Charter for Sustainable Cleaning is the European soaps, detergents and maintenance products industry's concrete, proactive program for translating the concept of sustainable development into reality and actions. It was launched in 2005 in all EU countries plus Iceland, Norway, and Switzerland, covering all product categories of the industry, in both the household and the industrial and institutional sectors. It is open to all companies, whether they are member of A.I.S.E. or not, and whether they manufacture, distribute, or market soaps, detergents, maintenance products or cleaning systems.



Fig. 1 A.I.S.E. Agenda for Sustainable Cleaning

The aim is to encourage the whole industry to undertake continual improvement in terms of sustainability and also to encourage consumers to adopt more sustainable ways of doing their washing, cleaning and household maintenance. The Charter is a lifecycle analysis (LCA) based framework. It promotes and facili-

tates a common industry approach to sustainability practice and reporting. A wide variety of activities and initiatives are covered, ranging from the human and environmental safety of chemicals and products, to eco-efficiency, occupational health and safety, resource use and consumer information (Fig. 2).

| RAW MATERIAL | NATURAL RESOURCES | PRODUCTION | CONSUMER | DISPOSAL |
|------------------------------------|---|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| | | | | |
| Chemicals Safety Evaluation | Consumed energy and CO ₂ emitted | Participating companies | Consumer and customer safety | Packaging used |
| Poorly biodegradable organics used | Consumed water | Occupational health and safety | Consumer and user information | Waste - off site, for disposal |
| | | | | |

Fig. 2 The A.I.S.E. Charter covers the whole life cycle of products

Charter Sustainability Procedures (CSPs)

Based on ISO 14001 and other comparable standards, a number of CSPs have been defined for companies to implement in their management systems in order to become members of the Charter. These CSPs must apply to a minimum of 75% of the company's production. For the required Entrance Check the company must be verified on the six 'Essential CSPs', shown in Table 1, by an accredited independent external verifier in order to provide assurance that the company does have the required processes in place, under control, and adequately applied. The remaining six CSPs, which are the so-called 'Additional CSPs', have to be complied to for the first re-verification three years after joining the Charter and for every subsequent three-yearly re-verification.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

The Charter also defines a set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), which are specifically linked to the CSPs. Companies that sign up to the Charter are required to report annually to A.I.S.E. on these KPIs. A.I.S.E. collects and aggregates the results and publishes them in the annual A.I.S.E. Activity & Sustainability Report, providing measurable evidence of the progress for the whole industry sector at European level. The KPI reporting is also externally verified through a process of random audits managed by A.I.S.E. (Table 2).

Independent Verification

Independent verification guarantees that all applicant companies are individually assessed on the same basis by a neutral, external body.

Before a manufacturing company can join the Charter, it is visited by an accredited independent verifier who must certify that the company has the required CSPs in place, under control, and adequately applied.

This verification process is part of the Charter Entrance Check and is designed to follow a well-defined path, directing attention in turn to each of the required sustainability elements. Verifications on

- Raw material selection and safety evaluation *
- Raw material and packaging supplier selection
- Packaging design and selection
- Resource use policy *
- Occupational health and safety management system *
- Environmental management system *
- Distribution risk assessment
- Product recall *
- Consumer and user information
- Finished product safety evaluation *
- Product performance and product review
- Internal target setting (NEW)

(* Essential CSPs)

Table 1 Charter Sustainability Procedures (CSPs) for companies

- Company participation
- Chemicals safety evaluation
- Occupational health and safety
- Use of poorly biodegradable organics
- Packaging used
- Consumed energy and CO₂ emitted
- Consumed water
- Consumer and customer safety
- Consumer and customer information
- Waste
- Percentage of production compliant with Advanced Sustainability Profiles for product categories (NEW)

Table 2 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for industry reporting

all CSPs continue every three years subsequently.

In addition to the CSP checks, the annual reporting on KPIs is also verified each year through a system of random audits of reporting companies, again by an independent external verifier.

■ Success to Date

By the end of 2010, about 130 companies have joined the A.I.S.E. Charter, representing more than 80% of the total production output for Europe.

THE A.I.S.E. CHARTER – A LIVING SCHEME

From the outset, the Charter has been seen as a long term, living scheme, which will continue to evolve over time, to steer better sustainability practice for the whole sector. Regular upgrades of the Charter ensure that it continues to offer the most advanced sustainability assurance scheme for promoting best practice within the industry, using LCA and science as a basis.

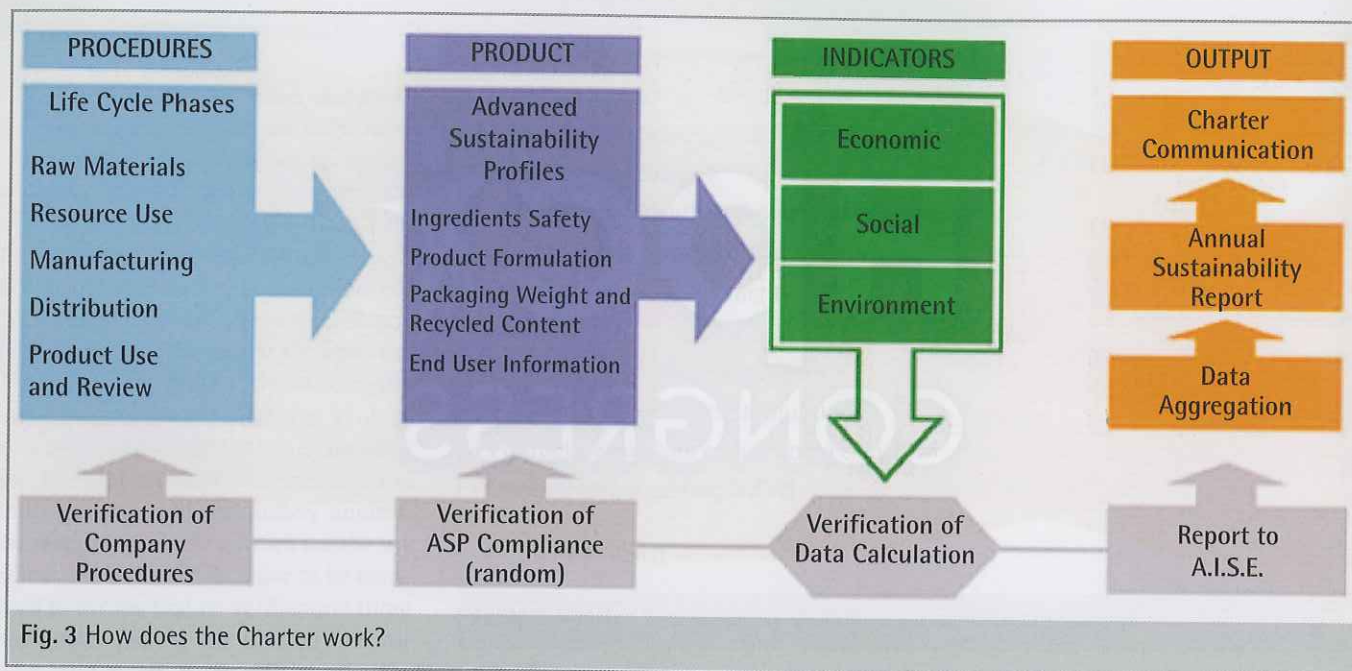


Fig. 3 How does the Charter work?

The process of implementing the CSPs and measuring and reporting the KPIs helps to drive continuous improvement in sustainable production and consumption.

Improvements occur at all stages of the product life-cycle, from product specification, through manufacturing, to end-use and disposal. For example, safety improvements can come from selection of properly risk-assessed raw materials, adopting best practice in manufacturing systems, and increasing the use of on-pack guidance for consumers. Environmental improvements can include reducing use of resources, creating less waste, and emitting less carbon dioxide. In the Charter's first four full years of operation (2006 – 2009), verified returns from companies via the annual KPI reporting demonstrate how Charter members' efforts continue to yield positive results across all Europe:

- Energy consumed per tonne of production: - 5,5%;
- CO₂ emitted per tonne of production: - 8,9%;
- Packaging per tonne of production: - 1,5%;
- Waste per tonne of production: - 3,9%.

■ What is New in the A.I.S.E. Charter?

Product dimension - Advanced Sustainability Profiles

The first major Charter update introduces a product dimension via the 'Advanced Sustainability Profiles' (ASPs). Defined per product category and elaborated based on the main life cycle impacts, ASP status represents a high standard of sustainability in the product characteristics. Products which meet the requirements of these ASPs may use a differentiated Charter logo on pack which signifies not only that the manufacturer is committed to certain sustainability processes at the manufacturing level,

but also that the product itself meets certain advanced sustainability criteria (Fig. 3).

Since 1 October 2010, first product categories benefitting from ASPs include household laundry detergents (liquid, powder) and fabric conditioners. ASPs for other product categories will follow progressively – for instance it is foreseen to make ASPs for dishwashing detergents and cleaners available in the course of 2011.

CSPs and KPIs

Some of the existing Charter Sustainability Procedures have been revised and for the Charter Entrance Check, CSPs

IN LINE WITH THE EU POLITICAL AGENDA

Sustainable development is now enshrined in the EU Treaty as an 'overarching' principle of all EU policies and is also fundamental to the EU's proposed EU 2020 strategy, which focuses on three interlinked priorities: growth from knowledge, creating an inclusive society, and building a greener economy that is competitive at international level. In that spirit, the A.I.S.E. Charter is in line with the European Commission's Action Plan on Sustainable Consumption and Production / Sustainable Industrial Policy (SCP/SIP) published in July 2008. The Action Plan clearly recognizes the value of the role played by self-regulatory voluntary industry initiatives.

must now apply to a minimum of 75% of the company's production (before 50% until the first re-verification after three years, when it rises to 75%). One CSP on internal target setting and one KPI relating to the proportion of ASP rated products have been added.

Synergies

The A.I.S.E. Charter (upgrade 2010) also establishes equivalences between the Charter Sustainability Procedures and certain other manufacturing standards. Where companies are already certified annually under standards like ISO 9001, ISO 14001/EMAS and BS OHSAS 18001, there is a system of 'synergies' in place. Some Charter CSP control activities are essentially the same as the relevant elements of the above mentioned standards. Having those in place they can be regarded as having been already verified. The aim is to avoid duplication of company resources spent on audits.

New logos – indicating sustainability on-pack (Fig. 4)

Only those companies that have signed up to the Charter can use the Charter logo(s). A product carrying the Charter logo signifies that the company placing this product on the market is committed to the A.I.S.E. Charter for Sustainable Cleaning, and that the company has successfully complied with the various Charter requirements. The company is voluntarily committed to delivering continual improvements in safety, environmental impact and other key aspects of sustainability.

Promoting sustainable use of the industry's products (Fig. 5)

In addition to industry's efforts, consumers and professional users have a critical role to play in ensuring that they get the best results from their products, while minimising the impact on the environment (e.g. by reading the label and following the instructions for dosing correctly, washing with full loads, at low temperatures, recycling etc). The Charter builds on a number of campaigns that aim to promote the safe use

Charter Company

»Made by a Charter member company«



This logo certifies that the company which manufactured the product follows the A.I.S.E. Charter sustainability principles.

Charter Product

»Made by a Charter member company and meets high sustainability standards«



This logo certifies not only that the company which manufactured the product follows the A.I.S.E. Charter sustainability principles, but also that the product itself meets the specific 'Advanced Sustainability Profile' for the category as defined by A.I.S.E.

Notes:

The packaging in both charts is provided for illustration purposes only. The Charter logo may apply to any products of the soap, detergent and maintenance industry, provided the company placing it on the market is a Charter member. Only one Charter logo may be used on pack.

Fig. 4 Charter logos

and sustainable consumption of products. It also encourages companies committed to the scheme to promote such tips on packs by featuring the www.

cleanright.eu industry portal. For all details and complete documentation, please visit www.sustainable-cleaning.com.



Fig. 5 Best use tips on packs

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