The structured digital exchange of safety data in the supply chain is about to become reality.
PROJECT SUMMARY

The Safety Data Sheet is a significant source of information in the supply chain of hazardous substances and mixtures. Safety Data Sheets have to be provided, processed and filed for ten years in the entire supply chain and across all levels of trade. In the German construction industry, around 400 manufacturers and suppliers, around 2,500 building materials dealers and more than 570,000 businesses are subject to these requirements of the European regulatory framework for the management of chemicals (REACH).

Given the vast amount of substances and mixtures, businesses are having difficulties handling this information overload. However, this information is vital to securely process building materials and chemicals.

Most businesses create their Safety dDta Sheets using special software. Thereby the data is already available in a digital format. However, along the supply chain information is mostly passed on in the PDF format or on paper.

Companies using the information provided by the Safety Data Sheets have to copy these data manually. It is obvious that an electronic standard is still missing for smoothly processing both the information and data of Safety Data Sheets in a machine readable manner.
PROJECT GOALS AND IMPLEMENTATION

Partners in the joint research project develop a standardized exchange format for Safety Data Sheets. The format also supports and facilitates data transfer to central organisations such as the German Berufs- genossenschaft der Bauwirtschaft (BG BAU) and its associated web portal WINGIsonline. This is just one example of a dedicated website creating archives for companies in the construction industry. The exchange format is compatible with the SDScomXML format already used by companies across Europe.

Initially, the SDBtransfer project develops an universal process for an electronic exchange of safety-related data in the supply chain of the construction industry and its suppliers. Using digital safety data sheets reduces costs and prevents media disruption. Especially small and medium-sized companies will benefit from this solution resulting in a reduction of administrative tasks.
CHALLENGES FOR IT SYSTEMS

The exchange format is fully developed and designed to meet the requirements of practical application. Adjustments to changes in the legal framework are guaranteed. It is a great challenge to gain the support of all parties involved in the supply chain for this new format. The exchange format itself is a well-established standard in existing systems and provides numerous advantages. At the end of the day, everybody will benefit.

Some major IT system suppliers have created an export function for the SDBtransfer exchange format and more are about to follow shortly. Some suppliers have recently implemented an import function in their systems. The project website www.sdbtransfer.de provides an up-to-date list of available solutions.
MAJOR RESULTS

The SDBtransfer interface provides continuous and automatic electronic exchange of Safety Data Sheets along the entire supply chain. Participants simply need to connect their systems using export and import interfaces.

The SDBtransfer project significantly contributes to the digitalization in the construction and chemical industry. It is one of the pillars for implementing the high-tech strategy "Industry 4.0" launched by the German government.
FUNDING

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