



The Informal Prior-Informed Consent (*iPIC*) Mechanism



INTRODUCTION

The Informal Prior-Informed Consent Mechanism (*iPIC*) was established by UNEP DTIE OzonAction to assist Parties in better managing trade in controlled ozone depleting substances (ODS) and meet their phase-out targets under the Montreal Protocol. The mechanism is designed to exchange information on intended trade between trade partners in ODS, ODS-containing mixtures, products and equipment. It is a voluntary and informal system. However even non-members are encouraged to contact *iPIC* members and respond to *iPIC* consultations.

Essentially the countries participating in *iPIC* are requested to share details of authorised importers and exporters with *iPIC* members of other countries

and to exchange information prior to shipments of ODS. In practice, applying the *iPIC* procedure means that before issuing a trade licence (for import or export), the relevant authorities request the *iPIC* focal points of their trade partner to confirm that they agree to the intended trade and that they will issue an import/export licence accordingly. The information exchange and cross-checking is carried out between the designated *iPIC* focal points of the trade partners through a secure online *iPIC* platform or via a simple exchange of emails or by telephone to a counterpart focal point in the trade partner country. *iPIC* data are only shared among the designated *iPIC* focal points of the member countries.

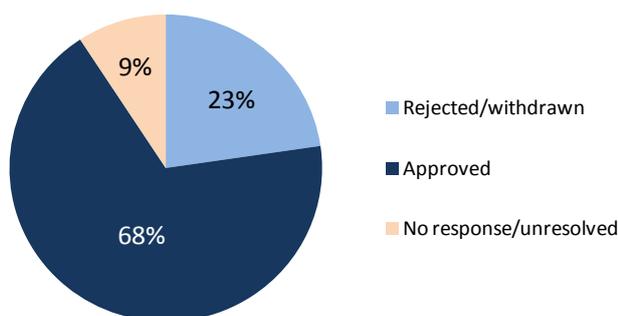
THE BENEFITS OF *iPIC*

The quick exchange of information facilitated by *iPIC* helps expedite legal trade and prevent illegal or unwanted ODS trade. ODS trade screened through the *iPIC* mechanism enables Parties to better monitor the controlled substances entering and/or leaving their territories, ensuring the country's compliance with the Montreal Protocol phase-out provisions. *iPIC* has proven to be a valuable mechanism for facilitating information exchange and has helped to clarify the status of hundreds of intended shipments of ODS since its inception. It has been responsible for preventing numerous illegal or unauthorised shipments. For example, in 2014, of the reported 141 *iPIC* consultations, over 30% resulted in rejections or cancellations of the licence request and this prevented unwanted trade in more than 545 metric tonnes of ODS including HCFCs and halons.

iPIC has been recognised by the Parties of the Montreal Protocol as a useful tool which can be used to reduce discrepancies between import and export data, to identify and reduce illegal trade and cases of non-compliance with domestic legislation.

iPIC contributes to forging valuable links and fosters good working relations between responsible staff in trade partner countries. UNEP's regional *iPIC* focal points can provide valuable assistance and support to follow-up on specific cases, as required.

Number of queries reported through iPIC in 2014 by outcome (percentage)



HOW TO JOIN *iPIC*

Participation in *iPIC* is simple. Countries must have established and implemented a national licensing system for ODS import and export. Licensing systems should require individual permits for every shipment of ODS (import or export). Once the above requirements are met the basic steps to join *iPIC* are as follows:

Step 1. Upon request from the country, UNEP initiates the process by creating a new data entry form for that country.

Step 2. The designated focal points receive a notification message by email containing their access information for the *iPIC* system and a link to

validate their contact information. The country now has access to *iPIC*.

Step 3. The designated *iPIC* focal point completes the simple *iPIC* data form with information on their national licensing system, including details of registered importers and exporters, any trade bans or exemptions in place, etc. The full contact details of the designated and alternative *iPIC* focal point(s) should also be provided. UNEP can also assist in entering the initial *iPIC* data into the *iPIC* system.

Members are encouraged to update their country data at least annually.

CONDUCTING *iPIC* CONSULTATIONS

Designated national *iPIC* Focal Points perform key actions in an *iPIC* consultation:

- Upon receiving a request to issue an ODS import/export licence, the *iPIC* information provided by the requesting trade partner can be consulted to verify whether the company is a registered and authorised importer/exporter of the relevant ODS.
- The requesting party usually receives a response on the same day. It is recommended to copy the regional UNEP *iPIC* focal points in queries so that they can assist in following up to ensure a timely response is received.

- In order to avoid any undue delays to the trade, the absence of a reply to an *iPIC* query after a reasonable period of time (e.g. five days) may be considered at the discretion of the country as an agreement to allow the trade to proceed.

Countries that are not yet *iPIC* members can still contact members by using *iPIC* platform's "Send Query" function to inquire about specific ODS shipment/trade. They may also consult the National Ozone Unit or focal point and the designated licensing focal point in the trading partner country for confirmation, copying the UNEP regional *iPIC* focal point.

Additional information

'informal Prior-Informed Consent (*iPIC*) brochure - available at http://www.unep.org/ozonaction/Portals/105/documents/publications/7732-e-iPIC_Supporting_compliance_through_prevention_of_illegal_and_unwanted_trade_2014.pdf

iPIC online (see About *iPIC*: FAQs, *iPIC* Reports)
<http://62.160.8.45/iPIC/Account/Login>

How to use *iPIC* Online (instructional videos)
<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLtrv5041EuYf0jaRbtkQsws847BV9sc>

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