Report

Datagovernance

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Subject: Data governance

1   CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion: A lot of organisations all over the world are active in the collection, analysis and publication of data about PFAS and of other substances of concern. While the territories differ, the challenges and difficulties for managing and governing this data are very similar. Therefore, setting up a world-wide community of practice (CoP) for sharing experiences and best practices on data collection and publication is likely to be a succesful initiative. Even more, a well-run CoP will have benefical effects on the FAIRification of public data on substances of concern, data that is Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Reusable.

2   SPEAKERS Q&A

Le Monde - journalist Stéphane Horel (Les décodeurs)

Did the map publication shown succeed in encouraging politicians to take action?

In France it has not been very successful in getting politics moving, but the published information & maps are widely used.

There were 12k extected contaminated sites in France, but due to missing data we know that this is a gross underestimate. Did you know that in Denmark it is mandatory to indicate whether you use PFAS, and there are 19k sites?

In France there would probably be about 100k. This is not surprising, we know that this current figure is far too low and that there must be many more sites.

Isn't there mandatory European reporting for this?

This mandatory reporting is coming, it will indeed become mandatory.

Is this only about PFAS in water or also soil,...?

The data collection contains everything they could find, so the two. The problem was that a lot of data was in PDF format, so they had to ask for this to be supplied in Excel format.

Were there not many errors in the data? Were you not challenged on data quality?

The end result was an Excel list with 40k lines, so it was inevitable that some errors would creep in. The quality of the French data was the poorest, with contaminated sites showing up in the Mediterranean, or elsewhere in the middle of nowhere. They receive weekly mail about this.

Ultimately, the industry received 2 complaints from companies that wanted to be removed from the list: one of these companies was able to demonstrate that they only traded the products, and that there was therefore no pollution. Another company admitted to pfas pollution, but made all kinds of attempts at intimidation in order to be removed from the list.

Brussels region's Department of the Environment – Aurélie Duliere

We saw a lot of data on the website, have there been any complaints regarding privacy? For example, also because of the impact that pfas pollution can have on the sales value of a plot?

No, in Brussels a soil certificate must always be submitted when selling. There may be a lot of concern about this in Flanders, but in Brussels there are no complaints about this.

We see different levels of pollution (orange, red,...). What was the most important type of pollution source?

Fire-extinguishing foams & then metal treatment in particular stood out.

Which PFAS substances were measured exactly?

PFOS, PFOA,...: basically just what the laboratories offer (+- 40 PFAS substances). With regard to the threshold values, people look at Flanders, on the one hand because Brussels does not have an organization like VITO, and on the other hand because Brussels has the same type of soil as Flanders.

What does it do to the emotions of the population involved if there is a high (dark red) color?

First and foremost, it is important to realize that the levels are not nearly as high as those measured in Zwijndrecht. The map was already published in June, but only appeared on TV in

September, so we only see interest if it appears in the press. But it concerns interest, there are many questions, and we therefore see no exaggerated emotion or panic among the population.

<u>US EPA – Michael Barrette</u>

Approximately how many people did it cost to set up this DB with visualizations in Qlik?

One person (PM) together with two technical people to set it up: 3 people. About 10 years ago this would have taken much more effort, but with the current state of data visualization tools, it is not too bad once you have the data. Naturally, there are many people involved in data collection for the various data sources.

How is this database organized in terms of governance?

The database is fed by 13 data sources. Some of these contain data that must be provided in the context of permits and the like. On the other hand, there are also many sources where the provision of data is without obligation, and therefore, for example, no validations will be provided for the completeness of the data: they use what is given.

<u>Environment & Spatial Development Department - Flanders, Belgium - Guillaume Vandekerckhove</u>

When will this site also be available in English?

The PFAS explorer is aimed at Flemish people, so it is only available in Dutch, and there are no plans to translate the site. But the Python library, and the documentation on Github, is completely in English so that anyone can retrieve the data.

ANNEX 1 - PRESENTATIONS

- **US-EPA, Michael Barrette**

- **Environnement Bruxelles - Aurélie Duliere**

- **Le Monde - Stéphane Horel**

- **Department Omgeving - Guillaume Vandekerckhove**

ANNEX 2 - LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Flemish Government (Departement Zorg, Departement Omgeving, Department of Mobility and Public Works, VMM, OVAM, Astoria Consultancy, Brussels Airport Company, Brussels Environment, Bruxelles Environnement, Common Ground, Cornet & Renard, Danish Regions, Databank Ondergrond Vlaanderen, DEME Environmental, ERM, European Commission, FPS Health, food chain safety and environment, German Environment Agency, Imec, Jan De Nul / Envisan, Le Monde, Salesforce, Sodecon NV, SPAQUE SA, SPW - Direction de l'Assainissement

des Sols, University of Antwerp, US-EPA, VMM, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, WHO, Witteveen+Bos Belgium nv