



FOR INFORMATION

SIXTEENTH ITEM ON THE AGENDA

Report of the Director-General**Second Supplementary Report: Activities of the International Occupational Safety and Health Information Centre (CIS) in 2004-05**

1. This report on the activities of the CIS covers the 2004-05 biennium. For the report on the preceding biennium, see GB.289/17/2.

Objectives

2. CIS pursues the strategic objectives of the Social Protection Sector by helping ILO constituents to target and take effective action to improve safety and health and conditions of work, with special attention to the most hazardous conditions at the workplace (operational objective 3b (action to improve working conditions)). This enhances the sector objective of social protection for all. Originally constituted as a joint ILO-ISSA body with substantial support from other international and national bodies, CIS has always sought to find outside sources of financing for its activities, thus keeping its impact on the ILO regular budget as low as possible.
3. CIS is an important component of the ILO's knowledge base, continuously monitoring world literature on occupational safety and health through its contacts with publishers and with about 140 focal points at the national or regional level ("CIS national, collaborating and regional centres"). Summaries and citations of the most useful publications, as well as products based on the collected information, are disseminated electronically and in print. In the last few years, the Internet has become the primary medium through which CIS distributes its information, and it is the intention of CIS to maintain its site as the most important portal to safety and health information in the world. In addition, the network of CIS centres contributes to the exchange of information among professionals and other ILO constituents responsible for the establishment and implementation of national policies and programmes.

Achievements

4. Continuing a favourable trend, CIS exceeded its forecast extra-budgetary income.
5. Updating of the CISDOC bibliographic and the CIS thesaurus databases (65,000 and 15,000 records, respectively) was successfully maintained on the new Oracle database

management system. The rate of growth in CISDOC was approximately 1,500 new records per year.

6. The CISDOC database is now partially trilingual. About 15,000 records have been translated into Spanish, thanks to the cooperation of the Spanish national centre.
7. The publication of the CIS printed Bulletin was stopped after 32 years with the last issue of 2004, to be replaced by a virtual Bulletin (in an identical format) that appears on the CIS web site. Unlike the printed Bulletin, which was sold on a subscription basis, the virtual Bulletin is available to all Internet users free of charge. CIS has lost revenue with this changeover, but has gained much higher visibility and usability among ILO constituents. CIS takes pride in preserving the fully bilingual (English and French) nature of its publications, with much material also available in Spanish.
8. A new information product is the **SafeWork Bookshelf**, prepared to a large extent with CIS resources. This is a CD-ROM produced in 5,000 copies, containing the full text of the English-language version of the *Encyclopaedia of Occupational Health and Safety*, as well as of the International Chemical Safety Cards and a large number of ILO normative and guidance documents covering occupational safety and health matters. The SafeWork Bookshelf is primarily aimed at safety and health professionals who do not always have reliable access to the Internet.
9. Five new centres were added to the CIS network, with the accession of national centres in Algeria and Kazakhstan, of collaborating centres in Bangladesh and Portugal, and of a regional centre in the Arab Occupational Health and Safety Institute in Damascus (Syrian Arab Republic). The target for the biennium was five. The total number of centres is now 141.
10. General meetings of the CIS centres were convened in Brussels (2004) and Orlando (2005). The Brussels meeting, generously hosted by PREVENT, the CIS National Centre in Belgium, was complemented by two days of seminars and workshops dealing with the provision of occupational safety and health information. The Orlando meeting was held in association with the XVII World Congress on Occupational Safety and Health. Both meetings had significant representation from centres in developing and transition countries. A new tradition was established by the holding of a regional meeting in May 2005 in Geneva of CIS centres in Europe and the Mediterranean. The two-day meeting was attended by representatives of 16 national centres as well as two observers.
11. The French version of the ILO *Encyclopaedia of Occupational Health and Safety* was placed *in its entirety* on the CIS web site, so that both language versions could be available, free of charge, to the world's occupational safety and health community. Work was started on preparing the French-language version for the SafeWork Bookshelf. The Japanese version of the Encyclopaedia was also completed during the biennium and this authoritative publication and database is now available in full in English, French, Spanish, Russian, Chinese and Japanese. This also demonstrates the CIS commitment to disseminate ready-to-use information in printed format on a large scale. Updating of the present Encyclopaedia has also been started. This gradual process has to be done chapter by chapter and article by article. Technical means have already been devised for this purpose, allowing step-wise enhancement.
12. A monthly newsletter for centres continued to be compiled and disseminated in electronic format by a volunteer editor in the United Kingdom; a paper edition of the newsletter continued to be distributed without charge by the Belgian national centre.

13. The number of International Chemical Safety Cards (ICSCs) made available to the world on the ILO web site increased to more than 1,500. The ICSC collection in some 20 languages, with pages in both HTML and PDF format, remains one of the most frequently visited areas of the CIS web site itself and similar national sites and CD-ROMs. CIS staff participated in the four regularly scheduled meetings for review of the ICSCs. In 2005, these meetings produced 305 (first meeting) and 420 (second meeting) new or updated ICSCs. CIS had the responsibility of organizing the second meeting for 2005.
14. The number of requests for CIS web pages (1.2 million per month, up from a maximum of 500,000 per month during the previous biennium), with the ICSCs in the lead, climbed above 13 per cent of the total traffic on the ILO web site in the last quarter of 2005. With a budget of around US\$3 million, or 0.7 per cent of the ILO total of US\$430 million, the unit thus provided information to ILO constituents and others far out of proportion to the distribution of resources.
15. Two technical cooperation projects that CIS was managing were wound up during the biennium: Asian Regional Project RAS/90/12M/FIN and Interregional (mainly African) Project INT/89/16M/FIN. The remaining funds assisted CIS staff to visit the Cairo Subregional Office and Khartoum (Sudan) in connection with the translation of ICSCs into Arabic. Over the years the projects have had a demonstrated impact on the improvement of national information dissemination capacity in Africa and Asia
16. CIS was an active participant in cooperation with other international and regional safety and health institutions. CIS staff contributed their time heavily in the organization and running of the XVII World Congress on Occupational Safety and Health (organized jointly with the International Social Security Association and the US National Safety Council), held in September 2005 in Orlando, Florida. CIS also actively participated in the planning of the *World Day for Safety and Health at Work*, held now on 28 April every year.
17. CIS collaborated with TRAVAIL and SECTOR in bringing the WIND (Work Improvement in Neighbourhood Development) method to the agricultural sector in a number of developing and transition economies. CIS staff participated in WIND-related missions (including the organization of training courses) in Kyrgyzstan, Republic of Moldova and Senegal.

Shortcomings

18. The CIS web site remained incompletely trilingual. While parity in some areas (e.g. the ICSCs and the Encyclopaedia) can be maintained by referring visitors to other sites, a number of popular items (e.g. Hazard Datasheets on Occupations) exist only in English, and others (e.g. Chemical Safety Training Modules) have been translated into Spanish and French but not yet made available for lack of staff resources.

Financial situation

19. As estimated on 31 December 2005, CIS earned US\$314,784.55 during the biennium and received US\$2,568,508 (standard costs) from the ILO regular budget through IFP SafeWork. Extra-budgetary income consisted of US\$67,760.06 in contributions, US\$40,069.44 in subscriptions, US\$42,148.65 in royalties, US\$156,728.23 in other sales income, and US\$8,078.17 in interest. CIS earnings from the sale of products and services exceeded income projected in the budget by approximately US\$35,000, which represents a surplus income of 12.5 per cent. Total expenses were US\$2,568,508 (standard costs) on the regular budget and US\$405,334.67 on the extra-budgetary account. The difference

between income and expenditure on the extra-budgetary account therefore reduced the carry-over by about US\$90,550.

20. Due to the retirement of three staff members, without replacement, CIS now counts nine staff members.

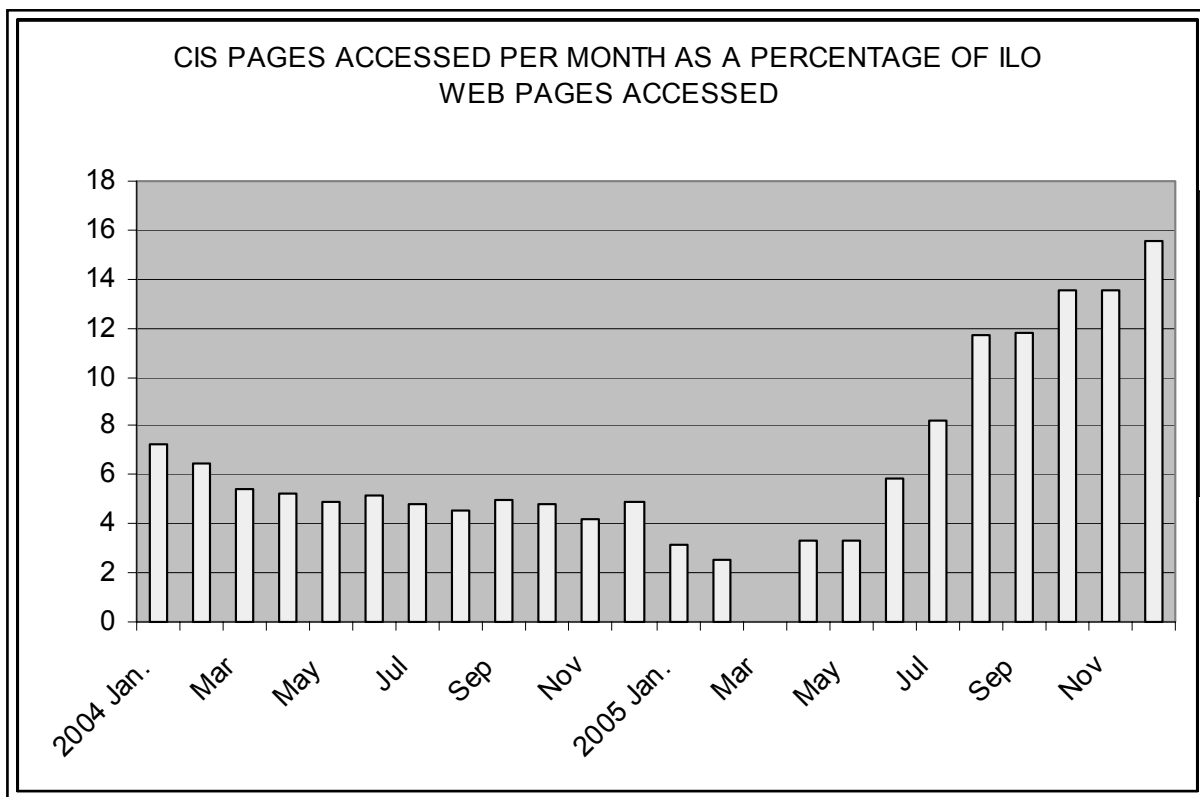
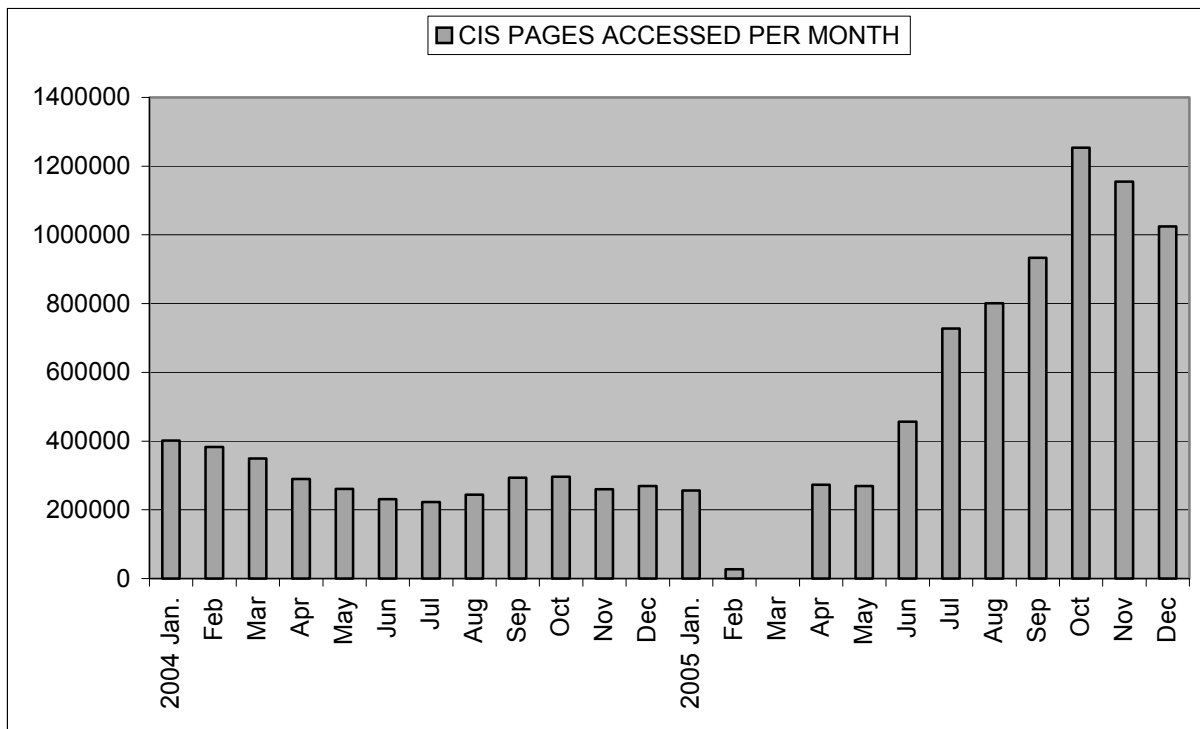
Trends

21. The Internet has firmly become the dominant mode for the dissemination of information in the world, and CIS has established a prominent place for itself on the Web (typing “CIS safety health” into Google will yield more than 2 million hits, although clearly not all of these relate to CIS Geneva).
22. The Internet is by now a mature medium, and it is no longer possible to claim growth in Internet usage similar to that of 4-6 years ago. Nevertheless, since the summer of 2005, access to the CIS site has jumped significantly, and there are now more than 1 million pages accessed per month (see chart in the appendix; note that data for most of February and March 2005 are not available).
23. CIS has now complied with the desire of ILO constituents, as expressed in the Global Strategy adopted by the International Labour Conference and by members of the Governing Body, to make most of its information available to the world without cost. The Bulletin, formerly available for a subscription fee, is now available free of charge on the Internet, together with the database consisting of all the information ever published in the Bulletin. The English and French versions of the ILO Encyclopaedia, together with other CIS information products, are also available under the same conditions. Thanks to improvements in computer technology, all CIS pages on the Internet can be printed for distribution to people for whom Internet access is not convenient or too expensive. It is hoped that ways can be found for CIS to recover income lost by giving up its subscription and other sales income.

Geneva, 17 January 2006.

Submitted for information.

Appendix: CIS web site statistics



NB: In the charts above, data for most of February and March 2005 are not available.