

Convention Project Chemical Safety

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Chemical Safety



Some 500 million tonnes of chemicals are produced, used and processed worldwide each year. The International Labour Organization estimates that 99% of all fatal accidents with agro-chemicals occur in developing countries, although only about 20% of the chemicals produced worldwide are used there. The task of the project is to indicate ways of improving chemical safety in our partner countries and to show how this can be sustainably implemented under their conditions in accordance with internationally accepted standards and the relevant international chemical conventions.

Chemical safety and development

Damage to human health by chemicals and pollution of water and soil resources and the atmosphere must be prevented – for this jeopardizes the livelihoods of the entire population. Moreover, it is crucial to the sustainable development of a country that:

- ▶ The health of a working population is not impaired by workplace accidents and poisoning.
- ▶ No need arises for costly clean-up and disposal measures.
- ▶ Exported products are not rejected because of chemical contamination.

Chemicals know no boundaries. Toxic substances can be transported over great distances by air, water and contaminated foodstuffs. A single source of chemicals pollution can thus affect locations all around the globe. Handling chemicals safely is a precautionary approach to global health and environment protection.

International conventions

Project activities build upon Agenda 21, specifically Chapter 19, which is concerned with management of toxic chemicals. Two international conventions are pivotal:

The Rotterdam Convention (PIC)

This regulates the exchange of information on the compliance with import decisions in international trade with certain hazardous chemicals. Exporting countries may only allow the export of chemicals which fall under the Convention if the importing country has given explicit prior informed consent (PIC).

The Stockholm Convention (POPs)

This bans the production and use of certain persistent organic pollutants (POPs) or severely restricts their release. It applies to plant protectants, industrial chemicals and highly toxic by-products of production and incineration processes, such as dioxins and furans.



Chemicals dumped in the backyard endanger human health and contaminate soil and water.

(Picture: Susanne Scholaen)



Applying pesticides without proper protecting gear leads to severe health problems.

(Picture: Wolfgang Schimpf)



Fields of action

The project is financed by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and implemented by the GTZ. Activities are coordinated on the technical level with the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU).

The project takes part in the international negotiations for the Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions and the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety (IFCS). This makes it possible to have on the one hand a close matching of the project activities with international developments, and on the other hand the possibility to introduce the experiences of the project into the international discussion.

Project activities with our partner countries focus on:

- ▶ Integrating chemical safety into development cooperation measures.
- ▶ Implementing the Rotterdam (PIC) and Stockholm (POPs) Conventions.
- ▶ Building institutional capacity for implementation of the Conventions in developing countries.
- ▶ Testing tools for sustainable chemical safety under the conditions prevailing in developing countries.
- ▶ Promoting collaboration among public and non-state actors in dealing with chemical safety issues.

Our work centres on building human resources and institutional capacities in partner countries. Through pilot measures, the task of the project is to indicate ways of improving chemical safety in developing countries and to show how this can be sustainably implemented in accordance with internationally accepted standards.

Commissioned by:



Bundesministerium für
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In production and burning processes toxic chemicals can be liberated into the air.

(Picture: Wolfgang Schimpf)



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