

Implementation of the Rotterdam Convention



The Rotterdam Convention regulates the exchange of information and the honouring of import decisions concerning international trade in certain hazardous chemicals. The producing countries may only authorise the export of such substances, if the importing country has given its explicit consent (PIC: Prior Informed Consent). The signatories to the convention are to cooperate in setting up the necessary infrastructure and capacities for chemical management. In doing so they must take into account the particular requirements of developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

The necessities and activities regarding the implementation of the Rotterdam Convention in the respective countries are very different. Flexible concepts have to be applied to tailor technical assistance specifically to the needs of the recipient countries. The Convention Project Chemical Safety supports implementation activities in developing countries.

Example Argentina

As the initial step a workshop was held in Argentina to elaborate a working plan for the implementation of the Rotterdam Convention. In the workshop the multisectorial structure of the Designated National Authority (DNA) for the PIC procedure, with the participation of different ministries was suggested by the participants.

During this time Argentina's Ministry of Health was in the process to elaborate and collect background data once to obtain the ban of the most hazardous asbestos types amphibole and chrysotile and second to notify both varieties for the PIC list. To learn about the experiences in the ban process of asbestos, two governmental representatives visited responsible bodies in countries which had already banned asbestos. In October 2000 the ban of amphibole was signed in Buenos Aires by the Minister of Health and in July 2001 the ban of chrysotile was also agreed.

As a follow-up activity, the GTZ Convention Project Chemical Safety supported a regional workshop on asbestos in Latin America to enforce the interchange of opinions among trade partners, and the build up of a political approach for asbestos within the region. The workshop discussed also the possibilities for alternatives or replacements of asbestos, installed asbestos in buildings and issues related with.



International negotiations for the Convention in Bonn, Germany 2002.

(Picture: Susanne Scholaen)



Transportation and trading of pesticides in China.

(Picture: Wolfgang Schimpf)



Example Thailand

Experts from the Thai DNAs discussed the implementation of the PIC procedure with their DNA colleagues in European countries. One of the most important achievements was related to better understanding of the implementation of the export notification procedure. Further, it was found that the responsibility and performance of the Thai customs services are also relatively weak. They need to be improved and rearranged.

With the assistance of an external expert, a national inventory of PCB and PCB containing capacitors and transformers was initiated. From the beginning, the customs office has been involved in the project. It needs to control the import and export of products which might contain PCBs. The inventory data and PCB management guidelines provided are valuable tools to implement procedure to check products which are suspected to contain PCBs or to be PCB-contaminated.

Fields of action

Capacity building activities for the implementation of the PIC procedure focus on:

- ▶ Strengthening the performance and administrative functions of Designated National Authorities for the PIC procedure.
- ▶ Facilitating the information exchange and cooperation between importing and exporting countries.
- ▶ Support for risk evaluations as basis for import decisions.

To facilitate the discussions between all stakeholders at the national level a systematic template can be used to describe the responsibilities of the country and to identify the necessary activities and sub-activities for the implementation of the Rotterdam Convention. This approach has already been used successfully in pilot countries.

Commissioned by:



Bundesministerium für
wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit
und Entwicklung



The Rotterdam Convention regulates the international trade of certain hazardous chemicals.

(Picture: Wolfgang Schimpf)



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