



## COMPENDIUM OF CANADA'S ENGAGEMENT IN INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL AGREEMENTS AND INSTRUMENTS

### *Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Decisions related to the Chemicals Programme*

#### **SUBJECT CATEGORY:**

Chemicals & Wastes

#### **TYPE OF AGREEMENT / INSTRUMENT:**

Multilateral

#### **FORM:**

Legally-binding decisions

#### **STATUS:**

- On December 14, 1960, 20 countries originally signed the Convention on the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. There are currently 38 members in the OECD.
- Signed by Canada December 14, 1960.
- Ratified by Canada April 10, 1961.
- Decisions are legally binding on all member countries that do not abstain at the time they are adopted.
- Canada is an ongoing member of the OECD.

#### **LEAD & PARTNER DEPARTMENTS:**

**Lead:** Environment and Climate Change Canada  
**Partners:** Health Canada. Others: Global Affairs Canada, Natural Resources Canada, Pest Management Regulator Agency, Standards Council of Canada and Canadian Food Inspection Agency.

#### **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:**

##### **Web Links:**

[OECD Chemical Safety and Biosafety website.](#)

##### **Contacts:**

[ECCC Inquiry Centre](#)

[Substances Management Information Line - Chemicals Management Plan](#)

[CMP International](#)

#### **COMPENDIUM EDITION:**

February 2022

#### **PLAIN LANGUAGE SUMMARY**

The OECD Chemicals Programme has been around since 1971. Decisions made within this organization are important to Canada because they contribute to strengthening the international sound management of chemicals. They improve efficiency and cost-savings through leveraging policy, scientific and technical expertise of other nations in areas of mutual interest. The decisions taken within the OECD are legally binding. Canada is an active participant within the programme where it collaborates with other countries on technical and policy issues related to chemicals management (e.g. harmonized approaches to hazard and risk assessment; exposure modelling, test guidelines and emerging scientific issues such as nanotechnology and biotechnology). One of the core aspects is the mutual acceptance of data. By aligning technical and regulatory approaches and sharing the cost of scientific research, the OECD's Chemicals Programme enhances the effectiveness and efficiency of chemicals management in Canada and abroad.

#### **OBJECTIVE**

The Chemicals and Biotechnology Committee oversees the work of the OECD's Environment, Health and Safety (EHS) Programme, which focuses on the development and co-ordination of chemical safety and biosafety activities internationally. Within this work, the Chemicals Programme contributes to activities related to chemical safety (e.g. hazard assessment, exposure assessment, risk management).

The major objective of the OECD Chemicals Programme is to assist countries in developing and implementing policies and instruments that make their systems for managing chemicals as efficient and robust as possible, while protecting human health and the environment.

#### **KEY ELEMENTS**

OECD Council Decisions related to chemicals management include:

- Decision concerning the Minimum Pre-Marketing Set of Data in the Assessment of Chemicals [C(82) 196];

- Decision concerning the Mutual Acceptance of Data (MAD) in the Assessment of Chemicals [C(97)186];
- Decision-Recommendation on Further Measures for the Protection of the Environment by Control of Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs) [C(87)2];
- Decision-Recommendation on Compliance with Principles of Good Laboratory Practice [C(89)87] [C(95)8];
- Decision-Recommendation on the Co-operative Investigation and Risk Reduction of Existing Chemicals [C(2018)51];
- Decision-Recommendation on the Systematic Investigation of Existing Chemicals [C(87)90];

## EXPECTED RESULTS

The work within the OECD Chemicals Programme is expected to help share the burden of scientific investigation and reduce the cost of chemicals management to both industry and member countries. It is also expected to contribute to member countries' ability to work towards the international goal of the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020. The knowledge and expertise developed through the Chemicals and Biotechnology Committee are shared with non-member countries thereby contributing to improved chemicals management globally.

## CANADA'S INVOLVEMENT

Canada's involvement is important because it allows the establishment of robust linkages between the international results/activities of other developed countries and Canada's domestic objectives and priorities with regards to chemicals management. Canada strengthens the delivery of its own domestic chemicals management program by leveraging the work on chemicals within the OECD through access to chemical information, risk assessments, development of technical approaches and methodologies.

The *Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999* (CEPA) provides general authority for action. Environment and Climate Change Canada is responsible for the development and implementation of legislation, regulation, and other controls and policies to apply OECD decisions.

## RESULTS / PROGRESS

### Activities

Environment and Climate Change Canada's main activities in the OECD chemicals work aim at:

- the scientific coordination of the assessment and management of chemicals;
- the sharing of scientific data and information;

- development of technical approaches and methodologies; and
- increasing efficiencies and avoiding duplication.

In addition, it allows Canada to share its domestic work and technical approaches with other member countries.

This is achieved through the participation in several working parties or subsidiary bodies that are coordinated through the Chemicals and Biotechnology Committee.

### Reports

Reports and documents released by the OECD Chemicals program can be found on the [OECD Chemical Safety and Biosafety](#) website.

The [eChemPortal](#) was developed as a location for OECD members, including Canada, to share chemical information. It provides free public access to information on properties of chemicals.

### Results

The OECD has been helping its member governments to develop and implement high-quality chemicals management policies and instruments. OECD countries have access to science-based, rigorous and comprehensive systems for assessing and managing the risk of chemicals. Implementation of such regulatory systems can be time-consuming and expensive, therefore, member countries work together to combine their skills and knowledge, to avoid duplication and to share the burden of testing and assessment, to minimise non-tariff distortions to trade and, ultimately, to be more efficient and effective in managing the safety of chemicals and chemical products. These OECD activities have been estimated to save governments and the chemicals industry more than EUR 309 million a year. More details can be found in the 2019 report "Saving Costs in Chemicals Management":

<http://www.oecd.org/chemicalsafety/saving-costs-in-chemicals-management-9789264311718-en.htm>