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## **International POPs Elimination Project**

*Fostering Active and Efficient Civil Society Participation in  
Preparation for Implementation of the Stockholm Convention*

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# **The Time to Act: Addressing Obsolete Pesticides English Summary**

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### **About the International POPs Elimination Project**

On May 1, 2004, the International POPs Elimination Network (IPEN <http://www.ipen.org>) began a global NGO project called the International POPs Elimination Project (IPEP) in partnership with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP). The Global Environment Facility (GEF) provided core funding for the project.

IPEP has three principal objectives:

- Encourage and enable NGOs in 40 developing and transitional countries to engage in activities that provide concrete and immediate contributions to country efforts in preparing for the implementation of the Stockholm Convention;
- Enhance the skills and knowledge of NGOs to help build their capacity as effective stakeholders in the Convention implementation process;
- Help establish regional and national NGO coordination and capacity in all regions of the world in support of longer term efforts to achieve chemical safety.

IPEP will support preparation of reports on country situation, hotspots, policy briefs, and regional activities. Three principal types of activities will be supported by IPEP: participation in the National Implementation Plan, training and awareness workshops, and public information and awareness campaigns.

For more information, please see <http://www.ipen.org>

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The views expressed in this report are those of the authors and not necessarily the views of the institutions providing management and/or financial support.

This report is available in the following languages: English Summary and Full report in Russian

# The Time to Act: Addressing Obsolete Pesticides

## English Summary

### Project The Time to Act

#### Key objectives of the project:

- to reduce adverse health and environmental impacts of banned and obsolete pesticides
- to enhance public roles in addressing problems of identification, storage and elimination of stockpiles of banned and obsolete pesticides and their adverse health and environmental impacts;
- to strengthen partnerships between the general public, local and federal authorities in decision-making on reduction of adverse health and environmental impacts of pesticides.

#### Mainstream activities:

- analysis of information on pesticides submitted by local residents of Kaslinskiy, Krasnoarmeiskiy and Agapovskiy districts of Chelyabinsk Oblast;
- comparative analysis of official data vs. information submitted by local residents;
- adjustment of field survey routes in settlements of the above districts;
- organising meetings between leaders of field survey groups and representatives of local authorities before field surveys and after these surveys;
- conducting field surveys to identify unauthorised storages of banned and obsolete pesticides;
- organising joint discussions on surveys' findings - with participation of all stakeholders (inc. local authorities, representatives of Plant Protection Facilities, governmental environmental and public health bodies, NGOs, local residents, experts, high school pupils and students);
- development of recommendations to address problems associated with stockpiles of banned and obsolete pesticides in districts under survey;
- distribution of the recommendations among interested governmental bodies, mass media outlets and members of the general public;
- organisation of monitoring the implementation of decisions made.

#### Analysis of the situation

In 1960s, in the former USSR, the policy of intensive agricultural application of chemicals was declared - as a result, every collective or state farm in the country had at least one storage facility for fertilisers and pesticides. These storage facilities maintained reporting on supply and application of chemicals and controlled use of hazardous chemicals. Agriculture chemicals generated adverse health impacts but were considered necessary to improve agricultural productivity and ensure food independence of the country.

In Chelyabinsk Oblast, in the period from 1965 to 1979, about 60 different pesticides were applied. The range of the most common ones (83.4%) incorporated 5 pesticide brands: herbicides - 2,4-D amine salt (28.6%), 2,4-D butyl ester (8.2%), insecticides – HCCCH (20.3%) (also known as lindane), 30% wettable powder of vofatox (17.7%) (also known as parathion) and 80% technical grade chlorophos (11.7%) (also known as trichlorfon).

In 1980s - 1990s, the range of pesticides substantially changed but the share of the above chemicals still remained fairly high (62.1%).

The deep crisis in agriculture generated numerous environmental problems for residents of rural areas, including the problem of pesticides and agricultural chemicals that became uncontrolled in the course of agricultural reforms.

The problem is particularly urgent due to high concentrations of pesticides and other agricultural chemicals at relatively small areas. In the majority of cases, evenly distributed pesticide storage facilities in rural areas are now destroyed and pose serious health and environmental hazards. According to official data, as at 01.01.2003, stockpiles of banned unusable and obsolete pesticides in Chelyabinsk Oblast were estimated as about **131,387.5 kg** (including 56,847 kg that must be eliminated).

### **1. Information support**

In the course of development of the survey plan for 3 districts of Chelyabinsk Oblast, participants of project "The Time to Act" used two sources of information - official reports as at 01.2003 and information of local residents.

The comparative analysis of official data vs. information of local residents allowed us to reveal some differences, particularly in Krasnoarmeiskiy district. In this connection we decided to survey some additional areas, referred to by local residents (including information submitted by the Hot Line service).

In the course of survey activities, in addition to locations of pesticide storages, the project team members were interested to assess general views of rural residents on quality of local environment and health impacts of pesticides, particularly their views on health impacts on children.

In the course of meetings and communications with local residents, we found that they were particularly concerned about state of destroyed pesticide storages and lack of control that provokes pesticide looting. Residents of Kaslinskiy and Krasnoarmeiskiy districts were particularly concerned. These areas were affected by radioactive contamination in the past and local residents are aware of problems of liquidation of chemical weapons in neighbouring Kurgan Oblast (Schuchie). Residents of these areas consider the problem of pesticides as fairly relevant but they tend to consider it as a component of other serious environmental problems of the region.

Pensioners tend to share the most pessimistic views. They do not believe that there are people interested in addressing pesticides-related problems. They attribute it to decline of agricultural facilities that in turn, results in decline of rural settlements. However, they also provided information on locations to be surveyed. Participants of the survey said: "I know that the storage is not duly guarded, the site is easily accessible", "I would like to know, what program was approved on pesticide processing. How do they plan to collect and process pesticides?", "My younger child is seriously ill. Could it be connected with pesticides in close proximity?"

Many local residents referred to nearby pesticide burial sites as a serious problem: "Ammonia production waste and pesticides are located nearby. The storage is not controlled. People take these chemicals and use them at their gardens. They do not understand what they are doing, they are glad to get anything for free."

Some local residents submitted information on specific sites for survey and expressed hopes that "There are residual pesticides here. Earlier these pesticides were produced for agriculture. There are concentrated chemicals. Maybe the plant for decommissioning of chemical weapons will be able to eliminate them. We have 15 tons of pesticides in the district." All our respondents unanimously agreed that they live in environmentally affected areas.

We paid particular attention to communications with adolescents and tried to involve them into our survey activities. We proposed that younger children draw their views of pesticides-related problems and communicated with them to specify these views (see Annex).

Organisers of the field surveys paid major attention to the wishes of local residents. Some of them include: "... to provide more information on measures to improve our life", "someone should visit us and tell us about future prospects of our village"; "we think it is important to get information on results of pesticide surveys. Moreover we need to get information on measures to be taken to address associated problems"; "we want to live safely". Results of our meetings with local residents were used to adjust routes of our field surveys and were submitted to relevant local authorities.

Overall, 11 rural settlements were surveyed, including 9 settlements that were surveyed at the base of information supplied by local residents.

The Table below contains information on areas surveyed. The data are shown for early 2003 and for the project completion period.

Districts	Total as of:		Including mixtures	Data of local residents	Survey results
	01.01.03.	01.15.04.			
	(kg)				
<b>Kaslinskiy district:</b>					
Bagaryak	2825	3000	2825	App. 1000	1935 kg of pesticides were additionally included into the state register
Severniy	3000	1300		App. 500	
Schaburovo		60		App. 100	
Bulzi	1300	3000		App. 1000	
<b>Krasnoarmeiskiy district:</b>					
Petrovskoye	6000	6000	1200	App. 1200	395 kg of pesticides were additionally included into the state register; pesticide amounts in Brodokolmak will be
Lazurniy	1200	1500		App. 200	
Krasnoarmeiskii	100	195		App. 1300	

Brodokolmak	1500			updated after melting of the snow cover (about 1500 kg). Overall: 1895 kg.
Agapovskiy district: MOS Rzavka Primorskii	No information available		Local residents were more concerned about quality of land areas under former pesticide storage areas and possible health impacts.	Open areas without vegetation were found, with numerous manure heaps and unauthorised waste dumps.

According to the surveys' findings, the Inventory Records on Banned and Obsolete Pesticides were adjusted and updated (information on 3830 kg of pesticides).

### WHAT HAS BEEN DONE

The Government of Chelyabinsk Oblast issued the "Order on Tightening Control of Storage of Pesticides in Agricultural Facilities of Chelyabinsk Oblast". The order stipulates measures to ensure security. To this end, a site was allocated for storage of banned and obsolete pesticides in Yesaulka village (Sosnovskiy district). Agricultural facilities were recommended to repackage pesticides into metal containers for temporary storage.

In the course of the project implementation, the issue of improvement of storage and utilisation of banned and obsolete pesticides was discussed. With involvement of the Sanitary and Epidemiological Facility and the Plant Protection Facility, control of compliance with rules of storage of agricultural chemicals in agricultural facilities of the oblast was organised. Inspections revealed that no records are maintained on pesticides with expired shelf life, banned and obsolete pesticides, responsible persons were not appointed to control storage and application of pesticides, no reporting is maintained on issuance of permits for application of pesticides, in the course of bankruptcy of agricultural facilities their pesticide storage facilities are simply abandoned.

The Counter-terrorism Commission of Chelyabinsk Oblast discussed the issue of "Ensuring Safety and Potential Utilisation of Plant Protection Chemicals that Might be Used by Terrorists".

Specialists developed recommendations on utilisation of banned and obsolete pesticides and submitted these recommendations to senior district officials and managers of agricultural facilities. These recommendations were based on requirements of Sanitary Rules 1.2.1077-01 "Sanitary Requirements to Storage, Use and Transportation of Pesticides and Agricultural Chemicals" of 08.11. 2001 (No. 34).

The Ministry for Radiation and Environmental Security of Chelyabinsk Oblast developed measures to organise a pilot facility for testing and introduction of a technology for neutralisation of hazardous waste (including pesticides) by "Meriz" Co. (Chelyabinsk). The company conducted

neutralisation of a pilot pesticide batch by incineration with use of magnesium oxide aerosol (MgO). Similar pesticide elimination tests were also conducted by "New Environmental Technologies" Company (Moscow). The Government of Chelyabinsk Oblast allocated budgetary funds (4.765 million roubles) for utilisation of banned and obsolete pesticides.

At the base of the primary inventory surveys of obsolete pesticides and other agricultural chemicals in rural areas, 6 working meetings with oblast-level officials and specialists were conducted to address problems of repackaging, transportation and utilisation of pesticides. **3 secondary inspections** were conducted to check reliability of information with participation of specialists of the Plant Protection Facility.

Several papers were published, including: "Public Initiatives in the Sphere of Health and Environment" (in "Environmental Problems of Chelyabinsk Oblast"), "Assessment of Agricultural Application of Pesticides in Chelyabinsk Oblast, from 1975 to 2003" (in compendium of 17th Theoretical and Practical Conference on Problems of Agriculture Development in Chelyabinsk Oblast). Another paper - "Migration of Pesticides and Use of Biological Preparations to Reduce Aggression" is ready for publication.

Information on pesticides-related problems, public participation in primary inventories of banned and obsolete pesticides was published in 4 newspapers. Oblast TV channel aired a topical program on pesticide storage in Petrovskoye village.

The permanent inter-sectoral group on pesticide storage and utilisation was established. The group developed recommendations for incorporation into the Target-oriented Action Program for Environmental Improvement in Chelyabinsk Oblast for 2006 - 2010 (sections "Environmental Protection from Hazardous and Solid Municipal Waste" and "Public Information on Environmental Quality and Protection").

In the course of the project implementation, the project team involved new partners, including the UNESCO Club, environment and health lecturers of the Chelyabinsk State Pedagogical University, the State Medical Academy, Chelyabinsk subsidiary of Russian National NGO "Environmental Union", the Chelyabinsk Green Cross, the Information and Analysis Centre on Chemical Security, etc.

A group of skilled experts was established. Its members incorporate project managers and leaders of field survey teams (Professors Zybalov V.S., Panov G.A, and Ustsov N.V.).

Participants of project "The Time to Act" maintain public monitoring. They have found that by 01.10 2004, 40.514 tons of pesticides (from the overall amount of 131,387.5 kg) were repackaged and delivered to temporary storage sites. From 56,847 kg of pesticides that need elimination, by 01.10.2004, 23 tons of herbicides and 3 tons of pitezin (also known as atrazine) were transported to Moscow ("New Environmental Technologies" Co.) for utilisation.

The inter-sectoral group has developed the Follow-up Action Plan to ensure storage and utilisation of banned and obsolete pesticides.

No.	Actions	Deadlines	Responsible persons
1.	To develop a background document on the project results and distribute it among relevant authorities and libraries of the oblast.	by 10.01.	Sobol M.Ya.
2.	To conduct a press-conference for media representatives of the project results.	by 20.01.2005.	Sobol M.Ya. Timashova L.E.
3.	To prepare and conduct an extended session of the Expert Consultative Council on the survey results to discuss recommendations for oblast-level and municipal authorities, educational and public health facilities, NGOs	by 15.01.2005.	Motovilov N.L. Krivopalova Z.F. Ivanova S.V. Sobol M.Ya. Zybalov V.S. Panov G.A. Ustsov N.V.
4.	To recommend supervisory bodies to carry out a secondary inventory of temporary repackaged banned and obsolete pesticides (in metal containers).	by 10.12.2004.	The inter-sectoral group
5.	To recommend the Ministry for Radiation and Environmental Security to incorporate the Chairperson of the inter-sectoral group into the working group of developers of the Target-oriented Action Program for Environmental Improvement of Chelyabinsk Oblast for 2006 - 2010.	by 15.12.04.	Sobol M.Ya.
6.	To recommend the Ministry for Radiation and Environmental Security to incorporate participants of the project (Zybalov V.S., Panov G.A., Ustsov N.V.) into the expert group.	by 20.01.2005.	The inter-sectoral group Sobol M.Ya.
7.	To recommend the Ministry for Radiation and Environmental Security to identify funds for repackaging and transportation of obsolete pesticides from abandoned storage facilities, to stipulate allocation of these funds in the oblast budget in 2005.	by 21.12.2004.	The inter-sectoral group Sobol M.Ya.
8.	To recommend the Ministry for Radiation and Environmental Security to incorporate the following activities into the Target-oriented Action Program for Environmental Improvement of Chelyabinsk Oblast for 2006 - 2010: 1. Survey of areas under destroyed pesticide storages and adjacent contaminated territories in Kaslinskiy, Krasnoarmeiskiy and Agapovskiy districts. 2. Study of contamination of groundwater and surface water bodies nearby contaminated areas: Bagaryak, Kaslinskiy district. 3. Implementation of actions to rehabilitate areas in Kaslinskiy, Krasnoarmeiskiy and Agapovskiy districts: - removal of polluted soils - transportation of polluted soils to a designated site. 4. Improvement of polluted areas: - delivery of clean soil (if necessary)	by 21.12.2004.	The inter-sectoral group



	- planting grass/trees. 5. A series of information dissemination and awareness raising actions "Towards Sustainable Development"		
9.	Organisation and maintenance of permanent monitoring of implementation of actions for secure storage and utilisation of obsolete pesticides.	In 2005 - 2006	The inter-sectoral group
10.	To initiate sending letters to senior officials of rural municipal entities and senior agricultural managers on the need to take measures to comply with Sanitary Rules 1.2.1077-01 "Sanitary Requirements to Storage, Use and Transportation of Pesticides and Agricultural Chemicals" of 08.11. 2001 (No. 34).	In February 2005	The Expert group with support of supervisory bodies.
11.	To recommend senior officials of rural municipal entities to delegate waste disposal functions to municipal services, using experience of Kaslinskiy District Municipality.	April 2005	The inter-sectoral group
12.	To participate in organisation and holding of hearings at the level of people's deputies in Krasnoarmeiskiy district.	January - February	The inter-sectoral group
13.	To organise broad public awareness raising and information dissemination on the project results, environmental quality and methods of individual water treatment	Within the year	The Expert Group
14.	To involve active members of the general public into a public movement for identification of unauthorised waste dumps and organisation of waste removal to designated sites, in the framework of project "Towards Sustainable Development".	Within 2005	The Information and Analysis Centre on Chemical Security of the Chelyabinsk Green Cross.
15.	To develop information materials on banned and obsolete pesticides for teachers of secondary schools.	1st quarter	The Expert Group

16.	To conduct a meeting with students of Agro-environmental Institute of Krasnoarmeiskiy district to initiate their public information activities on safe management of pesticides.	by December 10, 2004	Panov G.A., Sobol M.Ya.
17.	To hold a seminar in Rzhavsk Secondary School of Agapovskiy district with deputy school directors on Educational Agro-environmental Actions of Schoolchildren (with use of the survey results in terms of schoolchildren's participation in primary inventories of waste, banned and obsolete pesticides).	December 11-12, 2004.	Zybalov V.S. Tyutikova
18.	To hold a seminar in Kasli City Children's Library for biology and geography teachers on the survey results, to provide them information materials.	1st quarter of 2005	Drakova D.K.
19.	To organise public information field visit of the project participants to areas of survey, in order to inform local residents on the survey results and measures to be taken by oblast/local authorities.	2nd quarter of 2005	The inter-sectoral group, chiefs of field survey groups.
20.	To integrate practical actions in the sphere of environmental education and awareness-raising with promotion of healthy lifestyles, mass physical culture and introduction of health-friendly technologies.	Within the year	Chelyabinsk Green Cross, the Public Health School, the Chair of Health-friendly Technologies of Chelyabinsk State Pedagogical University
21.	To continue operations of the Hot Line Service	Within the year	Editorial Board of oblast newspaper "The Nature and Us".