



International POPs Elimination Project

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

Public Participation in Primary Inventories of Stockpiles of Banned and Obsolete Pesticides

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

Public Participation in Primary Inventories of Stockpiles of Banned and Obsolete Pesticides

Main project objectives

- To join efforts of local communities, local authorities and businesses for addressing problems of storage and elimination of stockpiles of banned and obsolete pesticides;
- To attract public attention to adverse health impacts of pesticides by means of public participation in primary inventories of pesticides;
- To develop a map of contaminated territories;
- To submit collected materials to authorities for decision-making;
- To establish a permanent initiative group for public control of decisions made.

Project activities were implemented in 4 dimensions in parallel:

- information activities
- primary inventories
- attracting public attention to the problem of pesticides
- co-operation with authorities

Results of primary inventories of obsolete pesticides and agricultural chemicals in rural areas were discussed in the course of **16 working meetings** with high officials and specialists of municipalities, **4 working meetings** with oblast-level officials, dedicated to addressing problems of repackaging, transportation and utilisation of pesticides. Three control field visits were made to inspect storage facilities in Yesaulka village of Chelyabinsk Oblast.

The permanent inter-sectoral group was established to control implementation of decisions made.

1. Information support

In the course of implementation of **Let the Earth Live** project, we used practical experience of the group that participated in primary inventories of banned and obsolete pesticides in 2004. Their information materials were used for information dissemination and awareness raising activities in rural areas. The participants themselves contributed to the project as advisors and experts.

For the first time, in the framework of the project, a working inter-sectoral group was established to implement joint actions: trainings, consultations, inventories, provision of information to local authorities, organisation and holding of meetings at the oblast level. The group incorporated representatives of governmental services (the Russian Natural Resources Supervision Service, the Russian Agricultural Supervision Service, the Ministry for Radiation and Environmental Security, the Ministry of Agriculture of Chelyabinsk Oblast Government, the Agro-engineering University, the South Urals State University, the Medical Academy of Supplementary Education) and non-governmental organisations (the School of Public Health, Chelyabinsk Green Cross, Chelyabinsk Children's Fund, the Association of Paediatricians of Chelyabinsk Oblast).

All participants of the project studied the Methodological Recommendations for NGOs on Primary Inventories of Banned and Obsolete Pesticides, developed by Eco-Accord Centre.

According to the Eco-Accord Recommendations, the following factors were taken into account:

- Qualitative and quantitative parameters of pesticides;
- Parameters of pesticide storage facilities;
- Technologies of pesticide storage operations;
- Natural, geographic and economic features of territories located nearby pesticide storage facilities.

3. Information on the territories surveyed

In the framework of the inter-sectoral group, **4 smaller sub-groups were established** to study pesticide storages in 4 zones of the oblast (**at territories of 258 rural settlements**).

In the course of primary pesticide inventories in Chelyabinsk Oblast, **182,430 tons of banned and obsolete pesticides were found in sub-stores of 70 agricultural facilities and base storage facilities in 17 administrative districts of the oblast. If we account for the oblast rural population of 760 thousand residents, results of the primary inventory suggest that there are 240 kg of pesticides per capita for each average rural resident of the oblast.**

In the course of the project implementation, **67,846** of banned and obsolete pesticides were identified additionally.

All pesticide storage facilities were evenly distributed at territories of rural districts. All these facilities were found to be destroyed. As a result, they pose serious health and environmental risks. Due to liquidation of former agricultural facilities, now at the local level there are no skilled specialists in the sphere of pesticide management.

In the course of planning surveys of storage facilities and adjacent areas, the following factors were taken into account:

- Parameters of territories around storage facilities;
- Economic actors that control storage sites;
- Owners;
- Presence of settlements, individual residential houses at the adjacent territories;
- Cultivated land areas;
- Water bodies.

We studied quality of pesticide storages, identified owners of land where storage facilities are located, identified derelict storages and storage facilities located within water protection zones.

Results of primary inventory works allowed identification of the following facts:

There are **35 storage facilities** at the territory of the oblast, that belong to different agricultural facilities, including **24 dilapidated facilities, 10 badly damaged ones and only one storage facility in a good technical order.**

7 dilapidated storages are located within water protection zones.

12 storage facilities are derelict (including **7 dilapidated ones and 5 badly damaged storage facilities**).

Pesticide storage facilities were mapped. The map of pesticide storages in the oblast contains such information as their locations, amounts of pesticides stored and their technical quality.

In the framework of the project we analysed area contamination at the territory near the pesticide storage facility on the site of "Chelyabinskoye" R&D Association.

The facility is located at an elevation, at a distance of 300 m from the nearby pond. Pesticides were found around the storage facility at distances of 22 m, and along the road to the pond, at distances of 100 m and 250 m.

The above data allow us to suggest the need to study soil and water contamination levels on sites of pesticide storage facilities and at adjacent territories.

3. Attracting public attention to the problem of pesticides

In the course of the project implementation, the project team succeeded in involving well known scientists and specialists of the oblast, concerned about health of local residents and environmental quality. They proposed additional actions that attracted the attention of the public to the problem of pesticides.

The School of Public Health and Chelyabinsk Green Cross initiated the meeting with chief administrators of rural hospitals of the oblast. The meeting participants discussed issues of chemical security and health risks associated with banned and obsolete pesticides and inadequate management of agricultural chemicals.

In the framework of **River Band** project, schoolchildren studied minor rivers, analysed sources of their pollution, including mineral fertilisers and pesticides.

In connection with development of environmental education, pupils of the Environmental Gymnasium developed an abstract on **"Insecticides, their Application, Health and Environmental Impacts"**.

Dokuchaev Society of Agrologists initiated a series of seminars for agricultural specialists on **"Soil Fertility and Stable Harvests; Appropriate Application of Fertilisers"**, etc.

4. Co-operation with authorities

In the framework of the project, we studied relevant issues and developed proposals for authorities on centralised storage of banned and obsolete pesticides and other agricultural chemicals at the territory of Chelyabinsk Oblast and their transfer to "New Environmental Technologies" Co. (Moscow) for utilisation.

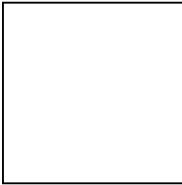
In this connection, a site for collection of all pesticides and agricultural chemicals was selected (a specially equipped storage facility at the territory of Yesaulka village of Sosnovskiy district). The site was selected for several reasons, including: a convenient road network, well equipped specialised storage facilities, a railway platform for transportation of pesticides and other agricultural chemicals to other places for storage and utilisation.

The project participants conducted a meeting with workers of the storage facility, discussed contemporary situation, studied record-keeping procedures, registration and control of storage of pesticides and other agricultural chemicals.

The Government of Chelyabinsk Oblast contracted "MERIZ" Co. to collect and eliminate pesticides, with involvement of "New Environmental Technologies" Co. (Moscow). For these purposes, in 2005, RUR 4.765 million were allocated for utilisation of banned and obsolete pesticides.

Unfortunately, "New Environmental Technologies" Co. does not take granozan (organomercury compound) and pesticide mixtures for storage; as a result, the problem of their storage still remains unresolved.

The project participants regularly make control visits to Yesaulka village to maintain public control of pesticide registration and storage operations. These visits are associated with the fact that some strangers often visit the facility and ask to be sold pesticides, granozan (organomercury compound) and other chemicals. We recommended that the Ministry for Radiation and Environmental Security tighten control of registration and storage of pesticides and other agricultural chemicals in Yesaulka village and to review these issues at a session of the Counter-terrorism Commission under the Governor of Chelyabinsk Oblast.



According to results of discussions, official documents were sent to municipalities of all rural settlements, instructing them to facilitate pesticide packaging works in order to ensure safety and transfer these pesticides to pesticide storage facility in Yesaulka village, if possible.

Unfortunately enough, it is almost impossible to control these activities now. After reorganisation of municipal environmental control services, municipal environmental inspectors are almost powerless. In order to inspect local facilities, municipal environmental inspectors have to involve specialists of the relevant federal ministry. An environmental inspector can only issue a warning or an order. But he/she can apply sanctions only for unauthorised disposal of household waste (pesticides do not belong to household waste).

In the course of the project implementation, the Office of Environmental Prosecutor of Chelyabinsk Oblast examined control of compliance of local self-government bodies of Argyashskiy, Kunashskiy and Krasnoarmeiskiy districts with environmental requirements to safe management of hazardous waste, including banned and obsolete pesticides and other agricultural chemicals. Prosecutors identified cases of non-compliance with legislative requirements to production and consumption waste, safe management of pesticides and other agricultural chemicals, sanitary and epidemiological wellbeing of the population and local self-government.

Unfortunately, the due legislation delegated some conditional rights to local self-government bodies - provided existence of a sanitary-epidemiological agreement, they are authorised to set terms, procedures, conditions and methods of collection, use, neutralisation, transportation, storage and disposal of production and consumption waste. However, rural municipal entities have not ever produced banned and obsolete pesticides (as a result, they cannot be categorised as production waste).

Therefore, the state must address these problems.

The contemporary situation induced the project participants to submit their analytical memo to the Ministry of Radiation and Environmental Security of the Russian Federation. The memo described conditions of pesticide storage facilities in Chelyabinsk Oblast and contained a detailed map of these storages. Besides that, the memo contained substantiated recommendations on incorporation of activities for addressing problems of pesticide storage and utilisation into Chelyabinsk oblast program for improvement of environmental quality in the oblast for 2006 - 2010.

Recommendations of the project team were approved and supported by expert boards of the Russian Natural Resources Supervisory Service and the Russian Agricultural Supervisory Service and incorporated into the oblast-level program (finance allocations of up to RUR 70 million were stipulated).