

Glossary of terms for the management of toxic chemicals

Abatement Reducing the degree or intensity of, or eliminating, pollution.

Agricultural chemical a substance applied to the soil or to plants in the cultivation of a crop

AOX Chlorinated organic compounds, which may include dioxins, furans, and others, collectively referred to as adsorbable organic halides or AOX.

Bioaccumulation literally means to accumulate in a biological system. However, it is commonly taken to measure the uptake over time of a substance that can accumulate in a biological system.

Bioconcentration considers uptake of a chemical from the non-living environment

Biomagnification considers uptake of a chemical through the food chain.

Biomonitoring The use of living organisms to test the suitability of effluents for discharge into receiving waters and to test the quality of such waters downstream from the discharge.

By-products substances produced during the production of other final products, usually during combustion in industrial processes. (see non-intentional emissions)

Carcinogen a substance that can cause cancer if organisms are exposed to it for a long period of time

Consumer chemical a substance used mainly as an antiseptic disinfectant, preservative or cleaner

Fertilizer compounds given to plants to promote growth; they are usually applied either via the soil, for uptake by plant roots, or by foliar feeding, for uptake through leaves

Flame retardant materials that inhibit or resist the spread of fire. Naturally occurring substances such as asbestos as well as synthetic materials, usually halocarbons such as PBDE, PCB and chlorendic acid derivatives, have been used in this capacity.

Formulation a preparation of a pesticide with other ingredients for effective application against a specific pest

Fungicides substances used to control pests, fungi in this case.

Grasshopper effect it refers to the long range transport of a substance from one place to another far away place on earth.

Half-life it is the mean lifetime of a substance in the environment or in determined conditions. By the time a substance reaches its half-life, its initial concentration reduces to the half.

Heavy Metals Metallic elements with atomic number greater than 20, e.g. mercury and lead. They can damage living organisms at low concentrations and tend to accumulate in the food chain.

Herbicides substances used to control pests, herbal pests in this case

Impact assessment a study of the effects arising from the production, storage, use, handling, transport and disposal of toxic substances on the biota

Industrial chemical a compound which is feedstock to or output from a transformation process or one that is ancillary to any industrial process or operation

Insecticides substances used to control pests, insects in this case.

National Implementation Plan (NIP) Document prepared by every country that ratified the Stockholm Convention in order to take action against PTS.

Non intentional emissions default products (see by-products) of industrial combustion processes.

Lethal doses amount of a chemical compound in the human body that is enough to cause death.

License written authorization by an authority to perform as a pest control operator

Life cycle of chemicals production/importation – distribution – storage – transport – use and disposal

Long Range Transport (LRT) capacity of a substance to be transported via water, air or migratory species to a remote place from where it has been generated.

Organic chemicals/compounds Animal, plant-produced, or manmade substances containing mainly carbon, hydrogen and oxygen.

Persistency capacity of a substance to persist in the environment or an organism for a long period of time, because they are resistant to chemical and biological degradation. The criteria used by the Stockholm Convention is that a persistent substance has a half-life in water of two months and a half-life in soil of 6 months or more

Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) organic chemicals that stay in the environment for a long period of time and are harmful to living organisms.

Persistent Toxic Substances (PTS) organic and inorganic chemicals and heavy metals that stay in the environment for a long period of time and are harmful to living organisms.

Pesticide any substance which by itself, or in combination with others, is proposed, represented or used for destroying or controlling pests

Plagicides synonymous for pesticide

Pollution prevention avoidance of the addition of one or more chemical or physical agents to the air, water or land in an amount, at a rate and/or in a location that threatens human health, wildlife, plants or any other aspect of the environment

Risk assessment a study of the probabilities and magnitude of harm to human health or the environment associated with a physical or chemical agent, an activity or occurrence.

Risk reduction a strategy involving the introduction of control measures to lower the probabilities and/or magnitude of events that are deleterious to human health and the environment.

Rodenticides a category of pest control chemicals intended to kill rodents.

Rural territory having low population density and being mostly agriculture-based

Stockholm Convention The Stockholm Convention is a global treaty to protect human health and the environment from persistent organic pollutants (POPs).

Toxicity capacity of a substance of having harmful effects on life organisms or the environment. Toxicity is evaluated by the magnitude and types of effects, by the necessary doses to produce these effects and by the vias and time of exposition to the substance.

Trade activity of buying, selling or exchanging goods and/or services

Urban territory having high population density and being non-agriculture-based

References

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