



# International Code of Conduct on the Distribution and Use of Pesticides

Annotated list of Technical Guidelines for the  
implementation of the International Code of  
Conduct on the Distribution and Use of Pesticides



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## Introduction

Pesticide Management is an area within the overall framework of the Plant Production and Protection Division of FAO. It aims to introduce sustainable and environmentally sound agricultural practices that reduce health and environmental risks associated with the use of pesticides.

The **International Code of Conduct on the Distribution and Use of Pesticides (CoC)** is the worldwide guidance document on pesticide management for all public and private entities engaged in, or associated with, the distribution and use of pesticides. It was adopted in 1985 by the Twenty-fifth Session of the FAO Conference and has since been revised several times. The CoC provides a guiding framework for pesticides life cycle management to Governments, pesticide industry and other stakeholders involved in pest and pesticide management to prevent harm to pesticide users, the public and the environment.

**Technical Guidelines** are issued to elaborate specific articles of the CoC and related technical aspects of pesticide management. These guidelines provide a framework to establish or strengthen national legislation, institutions, policies and strategies for pest and pesticide management. These guidelines are developed by the FAO/WHO Joint Meeting on Pesticide Management (JMPM) to ensure an informed and independent process. Older guidelines may have been reviewed through different mechanisms, but always involved broad expert peer review.

This **Annotated list of Technical Guidelines for the implementation of the International Code of Conduct on the Distribution and Use of Pesticides** provides a brief overview of all Guidelines and their purpose. It is aimed as a hand-out for meetings related to pesticide management to enhance familiarity with, and use of, the available technical guidelines. The annotated list follows the same structure as the actual list of guidelines on the FAO website. Guidelines that are no longer considered fully up-to-date are marked with this symbol: “🕒”.

**This document is subject to continued changes** as older guidelines get updated and new guidelines get approved by JMPM. Furthermore references to additional tools may be added.

In addition to the Guidelines, there are specific **Tools** for each area that can be found through the FAO webpage for the technical guidelines. These include manuals, reference material, tool kits and further technical guidance that has not been reviewed by the FAO/WHO Joint Meeting on Pesticide Management. <http://www.fao.org/agriculture/crops/core-themes/theme/pests/code/toolkits/en/>

The actual **Technical Guidelines on Pesticide Management** are available on-line: <http://www.fao.org/agriculture/crops/core-themes/theme/pests/code/list-guide-new/en/>

# 1. Legislation

## 1.1 Guidelines for Legislation on the Control of Pesticides [1989] [Under revision] ([English](#), [Russian](#))

These guidelines are intended for Governments wishing to develop, review, update or strengthen national legislation for the control of pesticides.

Updating or strengthening may for instance be required to:

- Clearly establish the institutional responsibilities and mandates for the control of pesticides;
- Strengthen enforcement mechanisms;
- Reflect requirements of international instruments that the country has ratified;
- Address overlap and inconsistencies with related legislation (e.g. chemicals; environment; health)
- Address new concerns or new developments.



Revised guidelines will be issued in 2013. These serve as a reference for the preparation or review of pesticide legislation and cover all specific elements of such legislation. They describe specific requirements for all stages of the pesticide life-cycle, from manufacturing to use or disposal. An overview of the international regulatory framework is provided along with guidance on how to reflect requirements of international instruments in national legislation. Further, they provide guidance on how to reflect the specific national context for pesticide legislation.

# 2. Policy

## 2.1 Guidance on Pest and Pesticide Management Policy Development [2010] ([English](#), [French](#), [Spanish](#))

The document provides guidance on pest and pesticide management policy development in support of pesticide risk reduction and sustainable agricultural production. It aims to encourage governments and other stakeholders to consider the question to what extent current pesticide use is actually justified. It places pesticide management in the broader context of pest management, and elaborates on linkages between sustainable pest management and policy objectives related to environmental protection, human health, food safety and trade.

Special attention is given to Integrated Pest Management (IPM), including biological control, as an approach to sustainable pest management and a means to reduce reliance on pesticides and their associated risks.

This guidance document is targeted at policy makers, government departments and other relevant stakeholders involved in policy development related to agricultural pest and pesticide management in developing countries. Governments are encouraged to analyse their pest and pesticide management situation, to identify areas for improvement, and to develop plans to realize these improvements. An overview of policy tools that can play a role in such plans is provided.

The guidance document further elaborates on:

- the concept of pesticide risk reduction and the steps involved;
- the policy formulation process and an overview of policy tools;
- guidance on conducting a situation analysis and the formulation and implementation of action plans to strengthen pest and pesticide management.

## **3. Registration**

### **3.1 FAO/WHO Guidelines for the Registration of Pesticides [2010]**

[\(English\)](#), [French](#), [Spanish](#) )

These guidelines are intended to provide guidance on how to establish and implement a pesticide registration scheme. They provide general advice on principles, process and requirements for registration of pesticides, including institutional and administrative organization. They also provide guidance on post-registration activities; coordination and collaboration; regular review of registered pesticides; funding of pesticide registration. A number of specific issues are discussed, such as: formulants; equivalence determination; minor uses; comparative risk assessment; registration of biopesticides.

The importance of collaborative roles of the health, environment and agriculture sectors in pesticide registration is explained. It is recognized that there are large differences between countries and therefore scenarios for the phased establishment of registration schemes are provided. Resource poor countries can start with initial schemes that can be elaborated later on. It is also explained how countries can collaborate in order to make best use of limited resources.

### **3.2 FAO/WHO Guidelines on Data Requirements for the Registration of Pesticides [2013]**

[\(English\)](#)

These guidelines focus on the scientific data and other information that generally may be required to determine what products can be permitted for use and for what purposes. The data and other information described can be used to register all types of pesticides, including public health pesticides. It includes description of: the types of data and information required and why; how the data may be used in decision-making; factors that affect data requirements. The guidelines also address some special situations such as, biological pest control agents, emergency approvals and experimental use. The annexes provide comprehensive lists of recommended data requirements.

### **3.3 Guidelines on Efficacy Evaluation for the registration of Plant Protection Products [2006]**

[\(Arabic\)](#), [English](#))

These guidelines provide guidance for both the pesticide industry and governments on the design, conduct and evaluation of pesticide efficacy trials, as stipulated by the Code of Conduct. They elaborate on the general principles of a harmonized pesticide efficacy testing method and evaluation of plant protection products for registration purposes. The guidelines are limited to pesticides for plant protection, including pesticides for the protection of stored produce, plant growth regulators and desiccants or defoliants, biological control agents, behaviour modifying chemicals and plant extracts.

### 3.4 Guidelines on Good Labelling Practice for Pesticides [1995] [Under Revision] ([English](#))

These guidelines aim to establish common, harmonized, requirements for pesticide labelling. They are intended to be used when designing regulations for pesticide labelling and by registration authorities responsible for the approval of labels, as well as by those in industry involved with label preparation.

These guidelines identify the main objectives and considerations in preparing a label and provide guidance for the layout and required information to be presented. Details are provided on the establishment of toxicity and hazard classifications, pictograms, text for warnings and hazard statements, etc., including sample labels. Guidance is also given on writing a label while considering the level of knowledge of users.



### 3.5 Revised Guidelines on Environmental Criteria for the Registration of Pesticides [1989] ([English](#))

Part I of these guidelines explains the principles for environmental impact assessment, while Part II provides guidance for appropriate test procedures, including a stepwise approach of data production for each assessment procedure. The assessment of effects on the environment is an integral part of the process of pesticide development and registration. It explains how such assessments should be designed to identify potential hazards and to enable identified risks of adverse effects on the environment to be quantified and evaluated in relation to benefits.

The nature and amount of data required for pesticide registration depends on the properties and use of each type of substance. Research resources should be focused on the identification and evaluation of major risks. A stepwise sequence, described in these guidelines, allows an efficient selection of tests essential to each individual risk analysis.

Note: These guidelines are from 1989 and may not be entirely up to date anymore with the revised Code of Conduct or relevant international conventions or recent scientific insights, and should therefore be used with caution.

### 3.6 Guidelines on the Registration of Biological Pest Control Agents [1988] [Under revision]

([English](#))

These guidelines define the various types of biological pest control agents and the data requirements for their registration. Biological pest control agents are naturally occurring agents that are distinguished from conventional chemical pesticides by their unique modes of action, low use volume, and target species specificity. There are two major categories of biological pest control agents: the biochemical pest control agents and the microbial pest control agents.



*Parasitic nematodes*

Note: These guidelines from 1988 are considered outdated and will be replaced by new guidelines on Microbial Pesticides, which are under preparation.

## **4. Compliance and Enforcement**

### **4.1 FAO/WHO Guidelines for Quality Control of Pesticides [2011]**

([English](#), [French](#), [Spanish](#), [Russian](#))

Guidance to responsible authorities, the pesticide industry, retailers, users and civil society is provided on the legislative, administrative, organizational and infrastructure (facilities and trained staff) requirements and procedures to implement a scheme of regulatory quality control of pesticides. Guidance on sample selection and sampling procedures is included. Quality control of pesticides is a crucial and integral part of pesticide management. These guidelines pay specific attention to countries that face constraints in the setting up of an effective pesticide quality control system.

### **4.2 Guidelines on Compliance and Enforcement of a Pesticide Regulatory Programme [2006]**

([English](#))

This document provides a comprehensive source of compliance and enforcement guidance to support implementation of the Code of Conduct. Legal tools and instruments to achieve this are provided, and the core principles of compliance and enforcement are described. It provides basic information about the policy and theoretical framework for achieving compliance. It explains the major steps or elements which must be considered to establish an effective system.

## **5. Distribution and Sales**

### **5.1 FAO/WHO Guidelines on Pesticide Advertising [2010]**

([English](#), [French](#), [Spanish](#))

The guidelines provide directions for the pesticide industry, trade associations, those developing advertising or other promotional material for pesticide products, public interest organizations monitoring pesticide sales and distribution, and other interested parties. The information provided supplements Article 11 (Advertising) of the Code of Conduct and elaborates on both self-regulation and statutory measures. They recommend best advertising practices and are intended to cover advertising in relation to all pesticide uses, applications and services (including agriculture, public health, forestry, home and garden, pest control operators, etc.)

They also serve to suggest a framework for monitoring pesticide advertisements, and indicate steps to take when encountering non-compliance with national legislation or non-observance of the Code of Conduct.

## **5.2 Provisional Guidelines on Tender Procedures for the Procurement of Pesticides [1994]**

[\(English\)](#)

These provisional Guidelines provide guidance to both suppliers and procurers of pesticides, on the steps to be taken to ensure that pesticides obtained are of the required quality and are suitably packaged and labelled, taking into account local transport and warehousing facilities.

The guidance provided is relevant to all procurement agencies - government agencies, donor agencies or other organizations and private procurers, regardless of whether the pesticides concerned are for use by farmers or others. The document was prepared in collaboration with the pesticide industry and is called provisional because it has not been reviewed and endorsed by an FAO/WHO expert panel.

## **5.3 Guidelines for Retail Distribution of Pesticides with particular reference to Storage and Handling at the Point of Supply to Users in Developing Countries [1988]** [Under Revision]

[\(English\)](#)

Pesticides present risks to health and the environment from manufacturing until they are used or disposed off. Generally, there is particular risk during storage and handling at the point of supply to users. The risks tend to be greater in developing countries where distributors and retailers often lack knowledge and infrastructure, and where government inspections schemes are often not well established. These guidelines provide advice on proper storage and handling to reduce risk and to prevent accelerated product deterioration.

## **6. Use**

### **6.1 Guidelines for Personal Protection when Working with Pesticides in Tropical Climates [1990]**

[\(English\)](#)

These Guidelines are aimed principally at government registration officials and agricultural officers, consultants and others in the field who may be asked by farmers for information about the proper use of pesticides in tropical conditions. They are intended to offer practical and realistic advice, taking into account the protection needs of the user, but also practicalities of its use in hot humid climates and possible budgetary constraints of poor farmers. They provide an introduction on understanding hazards and the principles of personal protection. The various modes of protection and associated gear are described.

These recommendations may provide guidance to drafting of regulations, to preparation of extension programmes and to reviewing and approving of label instructions.





*Spraying pesticides without protective clothing*



*Young boy performing hazardous tasks handling pesticides for application*

## **6.2 Guidelines on Good Application Practices:**

These guidelines serve to offer practical help and guidance to decision-makers, managers, field supervisors and spray operatives and all those involved in using pesticides for food and fibre production or in public health programmes. They cover the main terrestrial and aerial spray application techniques and have been designed to provide information and practical advice on good practices once a decision has been taken to use a pesticide.

- ✓ [Guidelines on Good Practice for Ground Application of Pesticides \[2001\]](#)  
([English](#), [French](#), [Spanish](#))
- ✓ [Guidelines on Good Practice for Aerial Application of Pesticides \[2001\]](#)  
([English](#), [French](#), [Spanish](#))

## **7. Application Equipment**

### **7.1 Guidelines on Procedures for the Registration, Certification and Testing of New Pesticide Application Equipment [2001]**

([English](#), [French](#), [Spanish](#))

### **7.2 Guidelines on the Organization of Schemes for Testing and Certification of Agricultural Pesticide Sprayers in Use [2001]**

([English](#))

This set of guidelines outline how governments can influence pesticide safety by controlling the quality of the pesticide application equipment manufactured in or imported into the country.

By incorporating into national legislation, a requirement for manufacturers and importers to declare that application equipment meets acceptable, international standards of safety and durability, or to set up national or regional testing and certification procedures, it should be possible to gradually reduce and ultimately eliminate sub-standard application equipment from the market and from farms.



### **7.3 Guidelines on Minimum Requirements for Agricultural Pesticide Application Equipment:**

An important objective of the guidelines on minimum requirements is to assist FAO and other agencies to ensure that sprayers purchased are safe to users and to the environment as well as being efficient and durable in operation. Price will always play an important part in purchase decisions on equipment but even the cheapest sprayer models should meet minimum standards of safety and durability. The FAO minimum requirements take into account sprayers that are already on the market, many of which already meet the requirements. The objective therefore is that countries should adopt these minimum standards to begin to eliminate substandard and unsafe sprayers from national markets and ultimately from the international scene.

The guidelines on minimum requirements are presented in separate volumes covering different categories of application equipment and related test procedures, such as the principal types of portable (operator-carried) sprayers, including rotary atomizers, vehicle-mounted and trailed (tractor) sprayers and others.

1. [Guidelines on Minimum Requirements for Agricultural Pesticide Application Equipment – Volume 1: \(operator-carried\) sprayers \[2001\]](#)  
([English](#), [French](#), [Spanish](#))
- ✓ [Guidelines on Minimum Requirements for Agricultural Pesticide Application Equipment – Volume 2: Vehicle-mounted and trailed sprayers \[2001\]](#)  
([English](#), [French](#), [Spanish](#))
- ✓ [Guidelines on Minimum Requirements for Agricultural Pesticide Application Equipment – Volume 3: Portable \(operator-carried\) foggers \[2001\]](#)  
([English](#), [French](#), [Spanish](#))
- ✓ [Guidelines on Minimum Requirements for Agricultural Pesticide Application Equipment – Volume 4: Ground-based locust and grasshopper sprayers \[2004\]](#)  
([English](#))
- ✓ [Guidelines on Standards for Agricultural Pesticide Application Equipment and Related Test Procedures – Volume 1: Portable \(operator-carried\) sprayers \[2001\]](#)  
([English](#), [French](#), [Spanish](#))
- ✓ [Guidelines on Standards for Agricultural Pesticide Application Equipment and Related Test Procedures – Volume 2: Vehicle-mounted and trailed sprayers \[2001\]](#)  
([English](#), [French](#), [Spanish](#))

### **7.4 Guidelines on Organization and Operation of Training Schemes and Certification Procedures for Operators of Pesticide Application Equipment [2001]** ([English](#), [French](#), [Spanish](#))

These guidelines consider the training, testing and certification of those who actually operate pesticide application equipment. Even the most well designed and maintained sprayer can do immeasurable damage in the hands of an unskilled operator and the importance of these guidelines should not be underestimated.

These guidelines provide a general framework, which outlines the need for training and the assessment and confirmation of operator competence to improve the safety and efficiency of pesticides in farm use.

## 8. Prevention & Disposal of Obsolete Stocks

### 8.1 Guidelines on Management Options for Empty Containers [2008]

([English](#), [French](#), [Spanish](#))

This guideline provides advice on management options for empty pesticide containers that have been used. Empty pesticide containers are hazardous waste and unless they are managed correctly they are a risk to health and the environment. There is particular concern that empty containers could be reused for storing food and water, which could result in pesticide poisoning. Containers abandoned in the environment could cause pesticide contamination of soil and groundwater.



A container management scheme can minimize these risks and is part of the “life-cycle concept”, requiring the engagement and support of all stakeholders in the supply chain for pesticides.

This guideline identifies how each of these stakeholders can contribute to a container management scheme. The guideline considers the role of manufacturers in the design of the containers and the formulation of the product, as well as their responsibility in product stewardship

### 8.2 Guidelines for the Management of Small Quantities of Unwanted and Obsolete Pesticides [1999]

([English](#), [French](#), [Spanish](#))

Guidance is provided on what to do with the small quantities of unwanted and obsolete pesticides that are often found on farms, in homes and in many other situations. Special attention is given to concerns about undesirable disposal practices for small quantities of unwanted pesticides, empty containers and other contaminated waste, such as burning or burying. To avoid such practices, recommendations are provided on preventing the accumulation of unusable pesticides at user level and removing waste where it exists.

### 8.3 Disposal of Bulk Quantities of Obsolete Pesticides in Developing Countries [1996]

([English](#), [French](#), [Spanish](#))

These guidelines address the specific, but widespread problem of large obsolete stocks of pesticides in developing countries and the need for their containment and disposal. They offer guidance on what to do with obsolete pesticides, and warn against improvised disposal methods that may cause severe environmental and health problems. The cost of mitigating the effects of irresponsible disposal can be many times higher than the cost of safe and environmentally sound disposal as recommended in these guidelines that were prepared in close collaboration with UNEP and WHO.

### 8.4 Prevention of Accumulation of Obsolete Stocks [1995]

([English](#), [French](#), [Spanish](#))

The objective of these guidelines is to raise awareness about the mechanisms through which obsolete pesticide stocks accumulate and to enhance the formulation and implementation of policies and procedures aimed at preventing such accumulation. These guidelines are particularly aimed at governments of developing countries, aid agencies and the pesticide industry.

## **9. Post Registration Surveillance**

### **9.1 Guidelines on Prevention and Management of Pesticide Resistance [2012]**

[\(English\)](#), [French](#), [Spanish](#)

These guidelines address the problem of pesticide resistance in agriculture and how to limit its development while continuing to protect crops from pests. The guidelines are intended for scientific, technical, and policy experts who prepare or evaluate pesticide resistance management plans, and for pesticide regulators who assess the risk of resistance development during registration of new pesticides or renewal of already approved products. Detailed guidance is provided on evaluating risk of resistance, and on resistance prevention and management.

### **9.2 Guidelines on Post-Registration Surveillance and Other Activities in the Field of Pesticides [1988]**

[\(English\)](#)

Registration involves a number of activities undertaken before a pesticide product is introduced in the market. A well-devised and operated registration scheme does not stop at this pre-market evaluation stage. It also incorporates post-registration surveillance to ensure enforcement and monitoring of the actual use of the product to ascertain that the goals of registration are met. This involves follow-up to ensure that registered products are properly handled, distributed, and used in accordance with applicable rules and regulations.

Post-registration surveillance activities provide a means of measuring the validity of predictions based on registration data, regarding efficacy, safety and environmental effects of a particular pesticide. These activities should be basic components of any law regulating the trade, production and use of pesticides.

### **9.3 FAO/WHO Guidelines on Developing a Reporting System for Health and Environmental Incidents Resulting from Exposure to Pesticides [2010]**

[\(English\)](#), [French](#), [Spanish](#)

This guideline aims to assist governments in taking the first step in the development and establishment of a basic reporting program for pesticide incidents, which are defined as situations where pesticide exposure has resulted in a health or environmental problem. The information collected can be used to minimize adverse impacts on human health and the environment through appropriate pesticide risk reduction measures. Information on incidents should be provided to pesticide regulatory authorities as a means of strengthening national decision making on pesticides.

The guideline provides directions on how to collect information about pesticide incidents, the type of information that should be collected, and how to analyse the data in order to determine if the use of a pesticide requires further risk mitigation actions or further in-depth monitoring.

Incident data could be used in the context of the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure (PIC) for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade.

## **10. Monitoring and Observance of the Code of Conduct**

### **10.1 Guidelines on Monitoring and Observance of the Revised Version of the Code [2006]**

[\(English\)](#), [French](#), [Spanish](#))

These guidelines encourage monitoring of the implementation of provisions of the Code of Conduct with the aim of improving implementation. Distinction is made between regular monitoring and ad hoc monitoring and reporting. Procedures are proposed for both types of monitoring.

Regular monitoring provides information that enables FAO to describe the worldwide status on pesticide management. The Guidelines identify information to be gathered and ways to ensure that it will be accessible and used effectively to support further implementation of the Code of Conduct. Over time, their implementation will provide an ongoing source of information to evaluate progress in observing the Code of Conduct, and for identification of critical areas in pesticide management where further work is needed.


Ad hoc monitoring provides a procedure for stakeholders to notify FAO of cases of non-compliance that can have health or environmental implications. Such cases will be brought to the attention of the government concerned and, if needed, to the FAO/WHO Joint Meeting on Pesticide Management, which then may provide recommendations for follow-up actions.

Furthermore, the process of monitoring itself can be a tool for self-assessment of governments at the national level to improve decision-making on pesticide management and environmental performance.

## 11. Further Tools

In addition to the Guidelines, there are specific **Tools** for each subject area that can be found through the FAO webpage for the technical guidelines. These include Manuals, reference material, and further technical guidance that has not been reviewed by the FAO/WHO Joint Meeting on Pesticide Management. <http://www.fao.org/agriculture/crops/core-themes/theme/pests/code/toolkits/en/>

### Examples of Tools available on the FAO Website

<b>Legislation</b>
<b>FAOLEX:</b> Comprehensive and up-to-date computerized legislative database, one of the world's largest electronic collections of national laws and regulations on food, agriculture and renewable natural resources. It includes pesticide laws of many countries.
<b>Guidance Document:</b> Designing National Pesticide Legislation [2007] <a href="#">English</a> , <a href="#">Spanish</a> 
<b>GLOSSARY:</b> The Glossary of Terms and Definitions contains all definitions provided in the Code of Conduct and its supporting guidelines. Governments and all other stakeholders are encouraged to use these definitions in order to enhance harmonization in the use of definitions and terms.
<b>Registration</b>
Manual on the Submission and Evaluation of Pesticide Residues Data for the Estimation of Maximum Residue Limits in Food and Feed [2009] <a href="#">English</a>
<b>Enforcement</b>
Manual on the Development and Use of FAO and WHO Specifications for Pesticides [2010] <a href="#">English</a>
FAO/WHO Pesticide Specifications <a href="#">English</a> , <a href="#">French</a> , <a href="#">Spanish</a>
<b>Disposal</b>
The Preparation of Inventories of Pesticides and Contaminated Materials [2010] <a href="#">English</a> , <a href="#">French</a> , <a href="#">Spanish</a>
Environmental Management Tool Kit for Obsolete Pesticides (EMTK) - <a href="#">Volume 1</a> , <a href="#">2</a> , <a href="#">3</a> , <a href="#">4</a>
FAO Training Manual for Inventory Taking Obsolete Pesticides [2001] <a href="#">English</a>
Assessing Soil Contamination: a Reference Manual [2000] <a href="#">English</a>
Pesticide Storage and Stock Control Manual [1995] <a href="#">English</a>

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