

Framework for action on the sound management of
public health pesticides
in the Eastern Mediterranean Region
2012–2016



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Cover photo: Compressor sprayers for application of insecticide on interior walls of houses

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Introduction

Countries of the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region are facing an increasing burden of vector-borne diseases. Progress in controlling these diseases and in scaling up universal access to vector control interventions is compromised by the limited number of vector control interventions, most of which rely on the use of pesticides. The lack of new pesticides under development and the spread of vector resistance necessitate judicious use of existing pesticides to preserve their public health value. In doing so, it is also important to reduce risks to human health and the environment by their appropriate use and safe handling.

The public health burden caused by nuisance pests (mostly insects and rodents) is also significant in the Eastern Mediterranean Region, leading to the use of considerable volumes of pesticides for personal protection. However, comprehensive statistics on pesticides used for such purposes are not available for the Region.

A WHO global survey, conducted in 2010 among countries endemic with or at risk of major vector-borne diseases assessed registration and management practices of public health pesticides. The study concluded that the national capacity to manage public health pesticides throughout

their life-cycle was inadequate in most countries. This challenge is further compounded where adequate capacity has not been established under decentralized health systems. The survey also highlighted an alarmingly low capacity for safe disposal of pesticide containers and waste, as well as limited capacity for quality control and enforcement of pesticide regulations, and for monitoring of exposure to pesticides.

In May 2010, the 63rd World Health Assembly in resolution WHA63.26 urged Member States to establish or strengthen their capacity to regulate pesticides throughout their life-cycle, with a high degree of commitment from WHO to work closely with all stakeholders on the sound management of these chemicals.

In October 2011 the WHO Regional Committee for the Eastern Mediterranean adopted a resolution (EM/RC58/R.10) on managing the use of public health pesticides in the face of the increasing burden of vector-borne diseases. This resolution is further evidence of the commitment of countries of the Region to strengthening their capacity for sound management of public health pesticides and to ensuring that management of these chemicals is incorporated into health and other relevant policies.

The framework for action builds on the global and regional resolutions and the following policies and principles.

1. Integrated vector management as a key strategy to improve efficacy, cost effectiveness, ecological soundness and sustainability of vector control interventions.
2. The International Code of Conduct on the Distribution and Use of Pesticides, which provides standards of conduct and serves as a point of reference in relation to sound pesticide management practices, in particular for government authorities and the pesticide industry.
3. Obligations of Parties to legally binding international instruments, in particular the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade, and the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal.
4. The health-related Millennium Development Goals, in particular Goal 6 (Combat HIV/ AIDS, malaria and other diseases) and Goal 7 (Ensure environmental sustainability).



Empty insecticide containers stacked after compressing for safe disposal or recycling

Aim and objectives

The aim of the regional framework for action is to protect human health and the environment through sound management of public health pesticides and contribute to sustainable development in Member States of the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region.

The objectives of the framework for action are to streamline sound public health pesticide management into national health policies and relevant programmes and build or strengthen capacities of Member States for life-cycle management of these chemicals. The specific objectives are:

1. to develop a comprehensive pesticide policy and legislation;
2. to operate an effective pesticide registration scheme;
3. to ensure proper procurement, storage and distribution of pesticides, and disposal of pesticide containers and waste;
4. to establish effective pesticide quality control, enforcement of regulations and post-registration monitoring; and
5. to ensure safe and judicious application of pesticides for control of vectors and for nuisance pest control.



Field training in data collection and inventory of obsolete pesticides

This regional action framework is intended to guide WHO and countries in developing policies, strategies and action plans to ensure low-risk handling and judicious use of public health pesticides.

Recommended action

Objective 1: To develop a comprehensive pesticide policy and legislation

Member States

- Establish, review and where necessary revise pesticide legislation to include life cycle management of public health pesticides through national multisectoral collaboration and civil society participation.
- Allocate sufficient resources for implementation of pesticide legislation.
- Establish a national public platform to ensure relevant stakeholder participation and support for implementation of pesticide legislation.
- Raise public awareness and promote political support through advocacy and ensure adequate resource allocation for these activities.
- Incorporate sound management of public health pesticides into national health policy.

WHO

- Provide technical support in review, needs assessment and development of legislation.
- Establish a web-based system for exchange of information on pesticide management issues.

Objective 2: To operate an effective pesticide registration scheme

Member States

- Establish and/or strengthen an autonomous interministerial pesticide board which will have the mandate to implement and



Improper and disorderly storage of insecticides

enforce all provisions of pesticide legislation including registration.

- Develop and publish national guidelines and procedures for registration of public health pesticides.
- Allocate sufficient resources and strengthen capacity for assessment of application dossier for registration of public health pesticides.
- Establish intercountry collaboration on registration and management of public health pesticides.

WHO

- Provide technical support to countries and strengthen capacity for registration of public health pesticides.
- Facilitate intercountry collaboration on pesticide registration, information exchange and mutual acceptance of data.

Objective 3: To ensure proper procurement, storage and distribution of pesticides, and disposal of pesticide containers and waste

Member States

- Develop/improve national guidelines for procurement, storage, distribution, transport, and disposal of pesticide containers and waste.
- Survey, collect, safeguard and dispose of existing stocks of obsolete pesticides and containers.
- Set up schemes for collection and recycling of pesticide containers.
- Build capacity for supply chain management of pesticides and ensure availability of standard storage facilities at different levels.

WHO

- Provide guidance on establishment of pesticide storage facilities and supply chain management.

- Provide technical support and capacity strengthening on proper procurement, storage, distribution of pesticides and disposal of pesticide containers and waste.

Objective 4: To establish effective pesticide quality control, enforcement of regulations and post-registration monitoring

Member States

- Establish a national scheme for quality control of public health pesticides and application equipment.
- Build capacity and establish a national reference centre for quality control of pesticides.
- Establish and/or strengthen national poison centre(s) and institutionalize collection of data on poisoning incidents.
- Monitor health and environmental impacts of pesticide use/application.

WHO

- Provide technical support on quality



A well-equipped insecticide quality control laboratory



Holding tubes used in evaluation of insecticide susceptibility of vectors

control of pesticides, assessment of capacity of national pesticide quality control laboratories and in development of pesticide specifications as well as monitoring of insecticide resistance.

- Designate regional collaborating centre(s) for quality control of pesticides.

Objective 5: To ensure safe and judicious application of pesticides for control of vectors and pests of public health importance

Member States

- Build national capacity to develop and implement risk communication strategies for raising public awareness on low risk use of pesticides.
- Build national capacity in medical

entomology, surveillance, monitoring, evaluation and sound pesticide management for vector control including insecticide resistance based on principles of integrated vector management.

- Establish facilities for maintenance, bench testing and quality control of application equipment for vector control.

WHO

- Provide technical support and training in medical entomology, vector control, implementation of integrated vector management and sound management of vector control pesticides.
- Provide technical support on development of specifications for pesticide application equipment.

Countries of the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region are facing an increasing burden of vector-borne diseases. Use of pesticides is an important component of public health strategies to control the vectors that transmit disease. However, it is important that the pesticides are used appropriately and safely in order to prevent the spread of vector resistance and reduce risks to human health and the environment. The framework for action on the sound management of public health pesticides in the Eastern Mediterranean Region is intended to guide countries of the Region in strengthening their capacity for the sound management of pesticides.

Further information

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