



Recommendation of the Council on a Comprehensive Waste Management Policy

**OECD Legal
Instruments**

This document is published under the responsibility of the Secretary-General of the OECD. It reproduces an OECD Legal Instrument and may contain additional material. The opinions expressed and arguments employed in the additional material do not necessarily reflect the official views of OECD Member countries.

This document, as well as any data and any map included herein, are without prejudice to the status of or sovereignty over any territory, to the delimitation of international frontiers and boundaries and to the name of any territory, city or area.

For access to the official and up-to-date texts of OECD Legal Instruments, as well as other related information, please consult the Compendium of OECD Legal Instruments at <http://legalinstruments.oecd.org>.

Please cite this document as:

OECD, *Recommendation of the Council on a Comprehensive Waste Management Policy*, OECD/LEGAL/0147

Series: OECD Legal Instruments

© OECD 2018

This document is provided free of charge. It may be reproduced and distributed free of charge without requiring any further permissions, as long as it is not altered in any way. It may not be sold.

This document is available in the two OECD official languages (English and French). It may be translated into other languages, as long as the translation is labelled "unofficial translation" and includes the following disclaimer: *"This translation has been prepared by [NAME OF TRANSLATION AUTHOR] for informational purpose only and its accuracy cannot be guaranteed by the OECD. The only official versions are the English and French texts available on the OECD website <http://legalinstruments.oecd.org>"*

Date(s)

Adopted on 28/09/1976

Background Information

The Recommendation on a Comprehensive Waste Management Policy was adopted by the OECD Council on 28 September 1976 on the proposal of the Environment Committee (now called Environment Policy Committee). The Recommendation includes seven principles of comprehensive management of waste which protects the environment in its entirety, ensures rational use of energy and resources and does not create detrimental effects on other countries.

THE COUNCIL,

HAVING REGARD to Article 5 b) of the Convention on the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development of 14 December 1960;

HAVING REGARD to the Recommendation of the Council of 26 May 1972 on Guiding Principles concerning International Economic Aspects of Environmental Policies [C(72)128];

HAVING REGARD to the Recommendation of the Council of 14 November 1974 on the Implementation of the Polluter-Pays Principle [C(74)223];

CONSIDERING that the quantities of waste to be disposed of have increased substantially in many areas;

CONSIDERING that the incorporation in waste of a wide range of hazardous materials makes waste disposal more and more difficult and expensive;

CONSIDERING that waste recycling and prevention can make a major contribution to resource saving policies and waste disposal policies;

CONSIDERING that measures taken to protect one particular sector of the environment (water, air, sea, soil) sometimes result in transferring pollution problems to another sector;

HAVING REGARD to the Report by the Environment Committee on Waste Management in OECD Member countries [C(76)154];

On the proposal of the Environment Committee;

I. RECOMMENDS that Member countries develop and implement, where appropriate, comprehensive waste management policies which fully satisfy the objectives of environmental protection and rational use of energy and resources while taking account of economic constraints and differences in local conditions, and that they apply in so doing the principles concerning a comprehensive waste management policy contained in this Recommendation and its Annex, which is an integral part of this Recommendation.

II. RECOMMENDS that these comprehensive waste management policies be developed and implemented in such a way that they aim at the protection of the entire environment and not of one of its constituent sectors, by taking care that measures to protect one sector do not result in transferring environmental problems to another sector.

III. RECOMMENDS that Member countries collaborate and work closely together to ensure that specific measures taken in implementation of such comprehensive waste management policies do not have a detrimental effect on other countries and in particular do not lead to distortions in international trade.

IV. INSTRUCTS the Environment Committee to pursue, taking account of the work undertaken by other OECD bodies and other international organisations, a programme of work designed to elaborate further these principles concerning a comprehensive waste management policy, make them more specific as appropriate, and facilitate their practical implementation, by promoting co-operation among Member countries.

ANNEX

PRINCIPLES CONCERNING A COMPREHENSIVE WASTE MANAGEMENT POLICY

1. Definition

For the purposes of this Recommendation a "comprehensive waste management policy" means a coherent system of measures concerning the design, manufacture and use of products as well as the

reclamation and disposal of waste, and aiming at the most efficient and economic reduction of the nuisances and costs generated by waste.

2. Protection of the Environment

Member countries should ensure that the necessity to protect human and natural environment is duly taken into account at every stage of the production-consumption-disposal chain, including the transformation operations designed for reclamation or recycling, especially as concerns toxic and hazardous waste.

3. Reduction at Source

Member countries should examine and, where appropriate, encourage measures aiming at avoiding or reducing the generation of waste, when beneficial on a social cost basis. These measures should concern waste generated at both the production level and the consumption level. Such measures might, in particular, concern:

- The design and marketing of products including the rational use of packaging and, where appropriate, the extension of product life;
- Changes in manufacturing processes;
- The re-use of products, packaging in particular (where appropriate through standardization);
- The use of alternative products;
- The information to, and education of, the public on the waste generating effects of different ways of consumption.

4. Reclamation and Recycling

Member countries should develop and implement appropriate measures with a view to promoting recycling in all cases where waste reclamation and upgrading is beneficial on a social cost basis taking account of the possibility of using waste for land reclamation or fertilisation, the possibility of using waste as a source of raw materials or energy, and the possibility of reclaiming part of the energy value incorporated in the products.

The advisability of implementing such measures should also be assessed in view of possible pollution transfer to which they may give rise, and the associated energy costs.

5. Policy Instruments and Cost Allocation

It is noted that the application of the Polluter-Pays Principle should encourage waste prevention and recycling by allowing market forces to work on a more rational basis. However, Member countries might, where appropriate, use specific policy instruments to stimulate the implementation of measures aiming at waste prevention and recycling as defined under points 3 and 4 above, provided these instruments are in conformity with the Recommendation of the Council on Guiding Principles concerning International Economic Aspects of Environmental Policies [C(72)128] and the subsequent Recommendation of the Council on the Implementation of the Polluter-Pays Principle [C(74)223].

6. Access to Information

Member countries should develop and implement appropriate measures so that competent authorities can receive all necessary information to ensure that waste disposal or reclamation is realised in the most economic and judicious way with regard to environmental protection. Such measures should also apply to approved disposal firms, as concerns waste for which they take disposal responsibility on behalf of third parties.

In application of such measures the necessary information might also concern the products manufactured or imported, to the extent to which these products generate waste which can be harmful to the environment.

7. Administrative Arrangements

In application of the principles defined hereabove Member countries should, where jurisdiction permits, adopt administrative arrangements designed to organise waste management on as rational a basis as possible. Such arrangements could concern, in particular:

- The inventory of types and quantities of wastes to be disposed of;
- The organisation of waste collection in order to facilitate reclamation (for example by presorting, special collection schemes, "waste markets");
- The setting up of disposal centres whose operations cover a sufficiently large geographical area to ensure that these operations are carried out under economically acceptable conditions;
- The promotion of research and development on disposal methods and low waste technology, including as appropriate financial aid to research and demonstration plants;
- The encouragement to the setting up of market for recycled products;
- The organisation of information systems and campaigns, for both the industrialist and the public, to reduce wastage, encourage waste reclamation, and promote the use of products made of recovered materials.

Such arrangements might, *inter alia*, result in certain waste management responsibilities being entrusted to bodies whose competence extends beyond traditional administrative limits; they might also include the possibility of solving waste management problems by international co-operation.

Adherents*

OECD Members

Australia
Austria
Belgium
Canada
Chile
Czech Republic
Denmark
Estonia
Finland
France
Germany
Greece
Hungary
Iceland
Ireland
Israel
Italy
Japan
Korea
Latvia
Luxembourg
Mexico
Netherlands
New Zealand
Norway
Poland
Portugal
Slovak Republic
Slovenia
Spain
Sweden
Switzerland
Turkey
United Kingdom
United States

Non-Members

* Additional information and statements are available in the Compendium of OECD Legal Instruments:
<http://legalinstruments.oecd.org>

About the OECD

The OECD is a unique forum where governments work together to address the economic, social and environmental challenges of globalisation. The OECD is also at the forefront of efforts to understand and to help governments respond to new developments and concerns, such as corporate governance, the information economy and the challenges of an ageing population. The Organisation provides a setting where governments can compare policy experiences, seek answers to common problems, identify good practice and work to co-ordinate domestic and international policies.

The OECD Member countries are: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Chile, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Korea, Latvia, Luxembourg, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States. The European Union takes part in the work of the OECD.

OECD Legal Instruments

Since the creation of the OECD in 1961, around 450 substantive legal instruments have been developed within its framework. These include OECD Acts (i.e. the Decisions and Recommendations adopted by the OECD Council in accordance with the OECD Convention) and other legal instruments developed within the OECD framework (e.g. Declarations, international agreements).

All substantive OECD legal instruments, whether in force or abrogated, are listed in the online Compendium of OECD Legal Instruments. They are presented in five categories:

- **Decisions:** OECD legal instruments which are legally binding on all Members except those which abstain at the time of adoption. While they are not international treaties, they entail the same kind of legal obligations. Adherents are obliged to implement Decisions and must take the measures necessary for such implementation.
- **Recommendations:** OECD legal instruments which are not legally binding but practice accords them great moral force as representing the political will of Adherents. There is an expectation that Adherents will do their utmost to fully implement a Recommendation. Thus, Members which do not intend to do so usually abstain when a Recommendation is adopted, although this is not required in legal terms.
- **Declarations:** OECD legal instruments which are prepared within the Organisation, generally within a subsidiary body. They usually set general principles or long-term goals, have a solemn character and are usually adopted at Ministerial meetings of the Council or of committees of the Organisation.
- **International Agreements:** OECD legal instruments negotiated and concluded within the framework of the Organisation. They are legally binding on the Parties.
- **Arrangement, Understanding and Others:** several ad hoc substantive legal instruments have been developed within the OECD framework over time, such as the Arrangement on Officially Supported Export Credits, the International Understanding on Maritime Transport Principles and the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Recommendations.