



# Recommendation of the Council on a Comprehensive Waste Management Policy

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## 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.

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