

Basel Convention Technical Guidelines

INTRODUCTION

The Parties to the Basel Convention are convinced that States should take the necessary measures to ensure that the management of hazardous wastes, including their transboundary movement and disposal is consistent with the protection of human health and environment whatever the place of generation, treatment, storage, recovery or final disposal. The Convention defines "environmentally sound management" of wastes subject to its control as taking all practicable steps to ensure that these wastes are managed in a manner which will protect human health and the environment against the adverse effects which may result from such wastes. In this regard, the Convention stipulates that technical guidelines for the environmentally sound management of the waste falling under its scope shall be decided by the Contracting Parties.

The Technical Working Group of the Basel Convention, a subsidiary body to the Conference of the Parties, has been established to prepare, as its main task, the technical guidelines referred to above. As of today, the Technical Working Group has completed the following tasks:

- 1) Preparation of the [Framework Document](#) to be used as a guideline in the preparation of the Technical Guidelines for the Environmentally Sound Management of Wastes subject to the Basel Convention, adopted by the second meeting of the Conference of the Parties.
- 2) Preparation of a Guidance Document on Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes Destined for Recovery Operations. The Guidance Document is meant to assist countries in their efforts to ensure, as far as practicable, the environmentally sound management of wastes subject to the Basel Convention within their national territory.
- 3) Preparation of a set of four Technical Guidelines on Priority Waste Streams (namely: Hazardous Waste from the Production and Use of Organic Solvents ([Y6](#)); Waste Oils from Petroleum Origins and Sources ([Y8](#)); Wastes Collected from Households ([Y46](#))) adopted at the second meeting of the Conference of the Parties and [Technical Guidelines on the Identification and Management of Used Tyres](#) adopted at the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties.
- 4) Preparation of a set of three Technical Guidelines on disposal operations (namely: Specially Engineered Landfill ([D5](#)), Incineration on Land ([D10](#)), and Used Oil Re-refining or other Re-uses of Previously Used Oil ([R9](#))), adopted at the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties. At the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, Technical Guidelines on Physico-chemical and Biological Treatment ([D8, D9](#)) was adopted.

CONSIDERATION OF THE FRAMEWORK DOCUMENT AND ACCOMPANYING TECHNICAL GUIDELINES

The Technical Working Group of the Basel Convention has developed in the Technical Guidelines, the elements for assisting States, in particular developing countries, in activities to be carried out within the framework of the environmentally sound management of the hazardous wastes they generate. The Technical Guidelines are principally meant to provide guidance to countries which are building their capacity to manage waste in an environmentally and efficient way and in their development of detailed procedures, waste management plans or strategies. The Technical Guidelines should be considered in conjunction with the [Framework Document](#).

The Technical Guidelines conform to the provisions of the Basel Convention. In particular, they respond to the obligations to Parties to ensure and achieve environmentally sound management of wastes, and to take the appropriate measures to, *inter alia*:

Article 4-2 (a): Ensure that the generation of hazardous wastes and other wastes within it is reduced to a minimum, taking into account social, technological and economic aspects;

Article 4-2 (b): Ensure the availability of adequate disposal facilities, for the environmentally sound management of hazardous wastes and other wastes, that shall be located, to the extent possible, within it, whatever the place of their disposal;

Article 4-2 (c): Ensure that persons involved in the management of hazardous wastes or other wastes within it take such steps as are necessary to prevent pollution due to hazardous wastes and other wastes arising from such management and, if such pollution occurs, to minimize the consequences thereof for human health and the environment;

Article 4-2 (d): Ensure that the transboundary movement of hazardous wastes and other wastes is reduced to the minimum consistent with the environmentally sound and efficient management of such wastes, and is conducted in a manner which will protect human health and the environment against the adverse effects which may result from such movement.

CONTENT OF THE TECHNICAL GUIDELINES

Technical guidelines for disposal or recovery operations shall have the following elements as appropriate:

- (a) Preamble;
- (b) A description of the purpose, scope and definition of the operation and a description of technologies as well as a description of the efficiency of the operation;
- (c) A description of environmental hazards;
- (d) The identification of the suitability of wastes for the operation;
- (e) The identification of opportunities for waste avoidance;
- (f) The identification of opportunities for recovery;
- (g) A description of criteria for the sound operation of technology and related safety aspects; to include, as appropriate, for information purposes, examples of national and international standards and regulations;
- (h) The establishment of principles for assessment of the predicted environmental impacts of establishing and operating the facility, site selection parameters, technology options, construction/design and management plan;
- (i) Guidance on monitoring, and when required, appropriate corrective action;

- (j) Guidance on closure plans and aftercare;
- (k) A comment on the economic aspects of the disposal or recovery operation;
- (l) A glossary of terms.

Technical guidelines for the management of specific wastes streams shall have the following elements as appropriate:

- (a) Preamble;
- (b) A preamble describing the waste and industry that generates the waste;
- (c) A description of environmental hazards;
- (d) The identification of opportunities for waste avoidance;
- (e) The identification of opportunities for recovery;
- (f) A description of treatment and disposal technologies;
- (g) A comment on the economic aspects of suitable waste management options;
- (h) A description of criteria for the sound operation of technology and related safety aspects;
- (i) A glossary of terms.

INTERNATIONAL PIONEER WORK

The Technical Working Group of the Basel Convention has launched pioneer work in regard to better defining or clarifying what constitutes environmentally sound management of hazardous wastes. The Technical Guidelines provide for the foundation upon which countries can operate at a standard that is not less environmentally sound than that required by the Basel Convention. The experts participating in the work of the Technical Working Group come from all regions of the world, from Contracting Parties to the Basel Convention and non-Contracting Parties, their work, therefore, represents the world community's perception of what is required to aim at, and hopefully achieve, the environmentally sound management of hazardous wastes. The work of the Technical Working Group should therefore permeate the activities or efforts of governments and international / regional organizations concerned or involved in the management of hazardous wastes.