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# GUIDELINES ON ACTIONS TO MINIMISE THE USE OF AGROCHEMICALS

Principle 2 of the UEBT Standard promotes sustainable use of biodiversity. One important aspect of this is minimising the use of synthetic agrochemicals and the negative impact derived from their use in cultivation and wild collection areas<sup>1</sup>. Criterion 2.4 in the standard focuses on these practices.

## What about practices when applying agrochemicals?

Criterion 2.4 covers other aspects such as how to handle (store and dispose) agrochemicals, containers and equipment used for application to not contaminate natural resources and the environment, information that should be recorded when agrochemicals are applied, and trainings for personnel who handle agrochemicals.

**The focus of this factsheet is on minimising the use of agrochemicals.**

## REFERENCE

<sup>1</sup> **Cultivation or wild collection areas:** Area that encompasses the cultivation or wild collection site, but also includes areas that are adjacent and, in the vicinity, to the extent that these areas may be positively or negatively affected by cultivation or wild collection activities.

**Cultivation or wild collection site:** Terrestrial or aquatic area where cultivation or wild collection of natural raw material is taking place.

## A DEEPER LOOK AT CRITERION 2.4 AND THE USE OF AGROCHEMICALS IN THE UEBT STANDARD

Let us look at some of the indicators for 2.4 that address the use of agrochemicals and explore some additional guidance:

**2.4.1 Critical** Cultivation, wild collection and related activities do not use any of the agrochemicals banned by UEBT or prohibited in the countries where cultivation or wild collection activities take place.



### Tips and guidance

- Consult the UEBT list of banned agrochemicals available in the following locations:
  - the [UEBT website](#)
  - the ISEAL [Integrated Pest Management \(IPM\) Coalition Database](#)
  - the ISEAL IPM Coalition's App via the Apple store and Google play.
- Make sure to not use agrochemicals in this list for farming, wild collection and first stage processing activities (e.g., storage and drying).
- Follow updates to the UEBT list of banned agrochemicals and adjust use of agrochemicals accordingly.



## What agrochemicals are banned?

The UEBT list of banned agrochemicals is based on the FAO/WHO *Guidelines on Highly Hazardous Pesticides*, 2016<sup>1</sup>.

According to the guidelines, Highly Hazardous Pesticides fall into categories such as those:

- Listed in classes 1a and 1b in the World Health Organisation's Recommended Classification of Pesticides by Hazard
- Containing active ingredients classified as Repr. Tox 1 or Carc. 1 or Muta 1 or Carc. 2 and Repr. 2 according to the Globally Harmonized System (GHS) of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals as indicated in the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS)
- Listed in Annex A or B of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POP) or recommended for inclusion in these annexes by the POPs Review Committee (POPRC)<sup>2</sup>
- Listed in Annex III of the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade (PIC) or recommended for inclusion in this annex by the Chemical Review Committee (CRC)<sup>3</sup>
- Listed in the Montreal Protocol on substances that deplete the ozone layer<sup>4</sup>

## REFERENCES

<sup>1</sup> *International Code of Conduct on Pesticide Management, Guidelines on Highly Hazardous Pesticides, FAO/WHO, 2016*

<sup>2</sup> *Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, 2001*

<sup>3</sup> *Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, 1989*

<sup>4</sup> *Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade, 2004*

**2.4.2 Critical** Appropriate mitigation practices are followed if cultivation, wild collection and related activities use agrochemicals considered to be of restricted use by UEBT.



### Tips and guidance

- Consult the [UEBT list of banned agrochemicals](#)
- Make sure to follow the recommended risk mitigation practices when using agrochemicals in this list under risk mitigation for farming, wild collection and first stage processing activities (e.g. storage and drying).
- Follow updates to the UEBT list of banned agrochemicals and adjust use of agrochemicals and risk mitigation measures accordingly.
- Use the UEBT agrochemicals register to keep track of the agrochemical's applications.

**2.4.3 Critical Stepwise** (For cultivation) Monitoring of pest management is conducted, and the results are used to define the integrated pest management practices in cultivation sites.



### Tips and guidance

- Ensure regular monitoring (at least annually) of aspects that are relevant for pest management such as:
  - occurrence of weeds, pests, and natural enemies
  - health of cultivated species, its diseases and its built-in compensation abilities
  - soil conditions relevant for pest management (e.g., soil composition)
  - application of pest control treatments
  - site-specific natural antagonists, biological, physical and other non-synthetic methods/substances to combat pests
  - economically important pests for each cultivated species in cultivation area, even if not observed in the field
  - climatic conditions relevant for pest management
- Gather information that is relevant to inform the definition and update of Integrated Pest Management practices.
- Use the UEBT agrochemicals register to gather the information about the aspects that are monitored.

**2.4.4 Critical Stepwise** (For cultivation) Integrated pest management includes practices suitable to the cultivated species and cultivation conditions that prevent the occurrence of pests and enhance the use of biological control.

**2.4.5 Critical Stepwise** (For cultivation) Practices are adopted to reduce the use of herbicides, following a pre-established, annually monitored plan.

**2.4.6 Critical Stepwise** (For cultivation) Practices are adopted to minimise the use of synthetic fertilisers and enhance the use of alternatives.

## For example

Finding alternatives based on the local context and the switch to organic options.

A company using synthetic agrochemicals realizes that the practices recommended by UEBT and others to reduce risks of cross-contamination for the environment are not feasible for the local context. In particular, a vegetative buffer zone cannot be created because the area faces water scarcity and such a buffer zone would drain additional water.

Therefore, the company proposes alternatives such as application methods and equipment that minimise the spill-over, the creation of buffer zones that do not require intense use of water and similar. In addition to making the changes outlined above, the company will need to also carry out systemic monitoring of the reasons for application, their relevance and the circumstances that prompt them. This additional step will allow the company to understand and find ways to tackle the root causes of the need to apply agrochemicals.



## Tips and guidance

- Define and implement IPM practices that are suitable to control pests under tolerable levels and reduce the use of synthetic pesticides given the crops, farming and habitat conditions and the result of the monitoring.
- IPM practices include:
  - creation or maintenance of ecological infrastructures, flowering strips or field margins, set aside areas and similar that function as reservoirs for pest antagonists (e.g. natural enemies)
  - other relevant practices on varieties selection, crop patterns definition, soil management and adaptation to climatological condition (ref. **2.1, 2.2, 2.3**)
  - regular cleaning of machinery and equipment to prevent the spreading of harmful organisms
  - preference for the use of physical and other non-synthetic methods/substances (e.g. neem and other natural extracts and organic pesticides) to synthetic pesticides for pest control
  - alternating or mixing different crops and different varieties within crops to disrupt pest cycles with genetic variety
- Define and implement plans to minimise the use of herbicides that last a maximum period of three years in the case of perennial woody species, and six years in the case of perennial, biennial and annual herbaceous species.
- Include practices that are suitable to control dangerous weeds at tolerable levels and reduce the use of synthetic herbicides given the crops, the farming and habitats conditions.
- Practices to reduce the use of herbicides include:
  - cultivation practices suitable to cultivated species and cultivation conditions that prevent the occurrence of weeds and enhance the use of biological control (ref. **2.1, 2.2, 2.3**)
  - preference for the use of physical and other non-synthetic methods and substances (e.g. manual removal of weeds, organic herbicides) for weed control
- Define and implement practices that are suitable to improve soil fertility and to minimise the use of synthetic fertilisers given the crops, farming and habitats conditions.
- Practices to reduce the use of fertilisers include:
  - analysis and natural management of soil conditions (e.g. crop rotation, cover cropping, intercropping, etc.)
  - preference for organic fertilisers and by-products available at farm level
- Use of synthetic agrochemicals as last option, if all other natural/biological solutions have not provided results and the issues are still significant.
- Use synthetic agrochemicals according to the following practices:
  - **a** preference for low-toxicity chemical and selective chemicals
  - **b** use of chemicals sold by authorized vendors, in original and sealed packaging
  - **c** rotation of used chemicals to reduce resistance (e.g. alternating the chemical family of a pesticide)
  - **d** no calendar or preventive applications, application only at the impacted areas (spot application) and never in non-farmed areas
  - **e** applications according to threshold levels, application intervals and conditions as advised by research institutes or field experience
  - **f** handling according to the label, Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS), or as recommended by an official national organisation or a competent technician. If the MSDS has no information on re-entry levels, minimum restricted entry interval is 48 hours for WHO class II products and 12 hours for other products
  - **g** regular calibration and maintenance of equipment for application
  - **h** creation of buffer zones to limit cross contamination
- Use the UEBT agrochemicals register to keep track of the practices implemented.
- Use the UEBT BAP Tool template to report information on the progress in containing pests, reducing the use of synthetic pesticides and their negative impact.



## Roles and responsibilities

Actions to minimise the use of synthetic agrochemicals can be carried out by:

- **Producers:** People or organisations directly involved in the cultivation or wild collection of natural raw material, including farmers, smallholders, farm managers, farmer associations, cooperatives.
- **Suppliers:** People and organisations in the supply chain that provide natural raw material for further processing or manufacturing.

Companies buying and processing ingredients from producers or suppliers at source can support these actions by ensuring resources for monitoring<sup>1</sup> practices implementation and situation of pests, weeds, soil fertility, providing training, covering costs associated with the improvements needed, among other supportive actions.

<sup>1</sup> In case of small farmers or farmers' groups, the information can be gathered at the level of the group.

For more guidance and training, please contact UEBT at [biodiversity@uebt.org](mailto:biodiversity@uebt.org)

To access the UEBT list of prohibited agrochemicals, see: [www.ethicalbiotrade.org/resource-pages/uebt-list-prohibited-agrochemicals](http://www.ethicalbiotrade.org/resource-pages/uebt-list-prohibited-agrochemicals)



**Picture references** Calendula *Calendula officinalis*, Lavender *Lavandula angustifolia*, Brazilian cricket common to Brazil's Pantanal © Judson Castro



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