

Annex

**IFCS Forum V
Plenary Information/ Discussion Session on Tools and Approaches for
Applying Precaution in the Context of Chemicals Safety**

Information Request for background Paper

Structured Questionnaire

Background Information

Country: MALDIVES

Ministry/Agency/Institute/Organization: Maldives Food and Drug Authority,
Ministry of Health, Maldives.

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Please provide any links or additional supporting materials that provide additional information on particular policies, tools, or activities

National chemical policy or management .

1. How is the concept of precaution explicitly or implicitly (in terms of decision making under conditions of uncertainty) incorporated in national chemicals policy or management in your country/organization?

Please check all that apply.

In the country constitution?

In legislation

In agency/ministry/organization policy?

In specific guidance documents for risk assessment or risk management?

Applied in specific cases but no particular policy?

Not applied at all?

Please provide greater detail(1 para)

It is in the Strategic Plan of the Maldives Food and Drug Authority to regulate chemicals (imported, produced and exported) on its health based issues. It has been decided to form a technical committee to decide on the uncertainties and new chemicals and their impacts etc arising and issues relating to it. This committee comprises of intersectional members (Defense, Customs, Agriculture, fisheries, environment and health)

Tools and approaches for applying precaution:

2. **What are some of the key tools and approaches used by your country/ organization applying precaution (or making decisions in circumstances of uncertainty) in the context of chemical safety**
- List of hazard classification by WHO
 - Other standard references
 - IPCS (International Programme on Chemical Safety) Environmental Health Criteria's references on specific chemicals.
 - Approaches: enquiries to other experienced nations for advise and discussion with the public.
- a. **Is there a defined approach to applying precaution or decision making under uncertainty?**
- Yes
- No

If yes, can you outline the elements of that approach or provide references to it?

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- b. **Is precaution integrated in other decision making process, tools and approaches such as;**

Please check all that apply.

- Data collection?
- Prioritization of substances for risk management actions.
- Uncertainty characterization?
- Socio-economic analysis (e.g., socio impact, proportionality/cost-benefit assessment, trade concern)?
- Risk assessment and risk management options?
- Screening, comparisons of alternatives, informed substitution?
- Stakeholders and public involvement?
- Other

For those boxes checked, please briefly provide greater details or links to additional information.

Socio Economic Analysis: in this we meet with the relevant and concerned parties and discuss the benefits and its cost and explain the impacts to them. Decisions are made multipartedly, after discussion and consent from all sectors involved.

Stakeholder and Public Involvement: Most decisions are made after discussion with the relevant sectors and public involved in the industry. This is beneficial in decision making as it involves the experience from users, monitoring agencies, and regulation bodies.

c. How are gaps in knowledge addressed?

Please check all that apply.

Through conservative risk assessment assumptions

Through safety factors

Through modeling techniques

Through an assumption that lack of information is an indication of potential harm

Through requesting additional information

Gaps are not addressed.

For those boxes checked, please briefly provide greater details or links to additional information.

Gaps in knowledge are addressed through requesting additional researching facilities are limited, we put the questions to other countries like India, and other standards and other standards and references are used to determine the potential risks.

3. Please provide details of a particular case (or example) where precaution was applied (or decisions made in the face of uncertainty) in the context of chemicals management?

a) What stimulated/initiated the precaution process/action?

A new chemical (not in the approved list of chemicals) being imported.

Please check all that apply.

Government concern over hazards and/or exposures

Stakeholder concerns over the particular threat

International policy requirements/pressures

Negative impacts/experience(s) from not acting on a previous chemical risk

Other

For those boxes checked, please briefly provide greater details or links to additional information

It is in the strategic plan of Maldives Food and Drug Authority to prevent harmful exposure to chemicals, so when a new chemical is submitted for approval, it is held until all relevant sectors are communicated and agreed upon approval in quantities, measures etc.

b) What process was used to make the decision? (please briefly describe the process or tools used to make the decision)

Going through the lists, standards, safety data sheets, and references.

Enquiries to other countries for their experience.

Meeting with the technical people and stakeholders.

Research possibilities and feasibility.

c) Were there positive or negative impacts of this process/action?
Please check all that apply.

| Positive | Negative |
|--|--|
| Ecological or health benefits | <u>Ecological or health impacts</u> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| <u>Economic benefit</u> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Economic impacts |
| Improved government/ industry image | Substitutes/alternatives did not work |
| <u>Improved government/ public morale</u> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Negative public relation |
| Improvements to scientific tools/decision processes | Other |
| Other? | |

For those boxes checked, please briefly provide greater details or links to additional information.

Economic benefit

People utilizing, importing and handling chemicals are satisfied with the procedure as it involves them and decisions reflect their opinions.

Improved government/ public morale

Public and the government sectors work together and agree upon decisions made in finalizing decisions and have each others trust and know how decisions are taken.

Ecological or health impacts

These issues although addressed to some extent to health and environmental issues, must be analyzed to be well established to Maldivian population, environment and health.

d. Were there any unintended consequences from this process/action? **NO**

Positive Please describe

Negative Please describe

4. Are there any particular cases in your country/organization where precaution was not applied (decisions not made in the face of uncertain chemical risks) resulting in adverse impacts?

Yes No

If yes, briefly describe and how decisions-making have been modified as a result.

5. Does your government have processes in place to re-examine decisions made based on precaution or made in the face of uncertainty as additional data are available?

Yes No

If yes, briefly describe the process and how this process may be used to modify decisions, decision-making process, or tools.

Although there is no such standard procedure, if a person from the public puts up a complaint, it is reconsidered and discussed.

Lessons Learned from applying precaution in chemicals management

6. What are some of the biggest challenges to your country's (organization's) application of precaution in the context of chemicals management or in chemicals management decision-making in the face of uncertainty?

Please check all that apply.

- Scientific capacity
- Lack of scientific information
- Legal Challenge
- Technical Challenge
- Financial challenge
- Trade challenges
- Other?

For those checked boxes, please briefly indicate what were the implications of these barriers and how have they been addressed or if not addressed, how could they be addressed?

Scientific Capacity: Maldives, one of the developing countries and with limited resources and human resource and testing facilities need to develop this and see the feasibility of conducting such researches and studies.

Lack of scientific information: needs to develop human resource for this.

Technical challenges: Needs to develop human capacity to be accountable for inquiries from public and other sectors.

Are these challenges also applicable to decision-making and actions regarding established risks?

Yes No

Financial challenges: needs to find ways of funding capacity building programs and strategies.

Next steps

7. What are the most important needs of your country or organization for more effectively applying precautions(or making decisions in the face of uncertainty) and overcoming barriers in chemicals management decision-making?

Please check all that apply.

- Data on chemical toxicity/risks
- Tools for prioritization
- Tools for risk assessment processes
- Decision- making tool/ frameworks
- Technical assistance in assessment processes
- Technical assistance in management processes
- Financial support for implementation
- International dialogue
- Information sharing to facilitate understanding of the issues
- Other

For those boxes checked, please briefly provide greater detail or links to additional information.

All of the above needs are required as decisions making process need to be strengthened and based on impacts to Maldives. Moreover more people are to be trained in all areas regarding the issue of chemicals and their health and environmental impacts.

8. Briefly describe your perceptions as to some of the concerns regarding application of precaution in the context of chemicals safety?

Please briefly provide details or links to additional information

Precaution must be applied to uncertain situations as impacts once done cannot be changed, will cause harm to the population causing long term effects, and costs to recover from such effects and consequences would be more than costs rendered due to prevention and precaution.

