



PROHIBITING LEAD IN PAINTS: NATIONAL ASPECTS

Implementing institution: Scientific and Practical Centre of Hygiene (SPCH) of the Ministry of Health of Belarus

Overview

The project was implemented in the framework of United Nations Environment Programme/WHO activities on prohibiting lead in paints, and International Lead Poisoning Prevention Week.

Objective

The project set out to develop and agree with stakeholders the legal requirements for prohibiting lead paints in Belarus, including the establishment of a legal limit of 90 parts per million (ppm) lead in paints.

Activities

- Strengthening national capacities among all stakeholders, in particular in the public health sector
- Developing a consolidated position with industry, and raising awareness and sharing knowledge with manufacturers on non-lead alternatives
- Educating children and parents about lead in paints, its health impacts and how to avoid it
- Analysing the prevalence of lead paints in the country

Engagement of partners/stakeholders

Representatives of all interested parties were involved in the project through discussions at all stages, from planning to final decision-making. They included public health professionals and scientists; representatives of the Ministry of Health, National Technical Committee for Standardization; representatives of the manufacturers JSC “Lakokraska” (Lida), PUE “MAV”, JSC “Minsk paint and varnish plant”, Mogilev chemical plant “Zarya”, JV “Color” (Kobrin), and IOOO “Condor”; and representatives of nongovernmental organizations.



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Outcomes

- An analysis of the paint and varnish products manufactured in Belarus (assessment of formulations) revealed that 75% of oil paints for domestic use contain lead.
- Consensus with manufacturers was achieved, legal arrangements were agreed, transition needs were evaluated and a transition period to prohibit lead in paints was decided.
- Three seminars, two webinars and 48 consultations were organized to strengthen the capacities of national specialists and stakeholders.
- A round table was held with paint and varnish manufacturers to discuss methods for determining of lead in paints and lead alternatives, and two seminars and a training were hosted by the SPCH.
- Awareness was raised among specialists, consumers and the public about the negative impact of lead on human health through talks and exhibitions (including at children's institutions), as well as reports from Belarusian State Medical University, SPCH, etc.

Acknowledgements

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Key achievements

- Belarus's position on the Technical Regulation "On the safety of paints and varnishes" of the Eurasian Economic Commission was considered, and a step-by-step implementation process was agreed and accepted by all stakeholders.
- The needs of governmental institutions and industry were discussed and positions were agreed, and support was demonstrated among the high-level decision-makers involved in the development and enforcement of legislation.

Lessons learned

- Given the many problems that manufactures face in terms of reformulating paints and varnishes, representatives of industry should be involved in discussions from the project planning phase.
- Capacity-building, the involvement of public health professionals at the enforcement stage, and the education of parents, children and consumers are all very important for achieving the progress envisioned in long-term perspectives.

Key messages and steps forward

Legislation implementation requires additional activities from all stakeholders at all levels, including the following.

- Manufacturers – ensuring reformulation, monitoring and control, including through additional laboratory/analytical capacities
- The governmental sector – ensuring inspections of paints, strengthening analytical capacities including for evaluation of effectiveness of legal measures (human biomonitoring), revising the methodological basis, and filling gaps in institutional and other arrangements
- The regional level – coordinating efforts with other countries of the Eurasian Economic Union, increasing capacities for negotiation, and increasing national expertise in support of the national position
- Nongovernmental organizations – continuing to educate customers to ensure informed choices, especially among vulnerable population groups