

Former Soviet Union: Hunting down hundreds of thousands of tons of old but still toxic pesticides

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union hundreds of thousands of tons of toxic pesticides were discarded and forgotten. DDT, lindane and other organochlorine-based pesticides were buried at hundreds of largely unrecorded burial sites or left in thousands of abandoned warehouses throughout the region. The pesticides have been leaching toxins into nearby waterways and soil over the last twenty years. A broad partnership including FAO, Green Cross Switzerland and the Tomsk-based NGO Siberian Environmental Agency, WHO, UNEP, International HCH & Pesticides Association, Milieukontakt International, and Blacksmith Institute for a Pure Earth, are working with a local group of experts in Siberia to uncover these toxic sites for remediation. This lays the base for future remediation of these sites including related disposal.

Location	Tomsk region
Pollutant	Obsolete pesticides (DDT)
Source	Abandoned pesticide warehouses and waste dumps
Population affected	Unknown but likely millions
Health and environmental impacts	Cancer, birth defects, diabetes, immune system impairment
Intervention	Training in identification; risk assessment and management
Outcome	Thousands of tons removed or encapsulated
Co-benefits	Improved human and environmental health, reduced risk of long distance contamination

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