

# Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal

## 1. Introduction

The **Basel Convention** is an international treaty designed to **reduce the movement of hazardous waste** between nations, particularly from developed to less developed countries, and to ensure **environmentally sound management (ESM)** of such wastes.

- **Adopted:** 22 March 1989 (Basel, Switzerland)
- **Entered into force:** 5 May 1992
- **Parties:** 190 countries (as of 2024)
- **Secretariat:** Geneva, Switzerland
- **Key Principle:** Prior Informed Consent (PIC) for waste shipments

## 2. Objectives

- ✓ Minimize hazardous waste generation
- ✓ Reduce transboundary movements of such wastes
- ✓ Prevent illegal dumping in developing countries
- ✓ Promote environmentally sound disposal
- ✓ Support cleaner production technologies

## 3. Scope & Definitions

### A. Regulated Wastes

- Toxic, poisonous, explosive, or corrosive substances
- Medical & pharmaceutical wastes
- Electronic waste (e-waste)
- Plastic waste amendments (2021 update)

### B. Key Definitions

- **Transboundary Movement:** Any waste crossing national borders
- **Environmentally Sound Management (ESM):** Safe disposal methods

- **Illegal Traffic:** Waste shipments without proper consent

## 4. Key Provisions

### A. Prior Informed Consent (PIC) Procedure

- Exporters must obtain **written consent** from importing & transit countries
- Requires **detailed waste documentation**

### B. Ban Amendment (1995)

- Prohibits **all hazardous waste exports** from OECD to non-OECD countries

### C. Plastic Waste Amendments (2021)

- Adds **mixed/contaminated plastic waste** to controlled items

### D. Partnership Programs

- **BRS Conventions:** Synergy with Rotterdam & Stockholm Conventions
- **PACE Initiative:** Addresses e-waste challenges

## 5. Implementation Mechanisms

Tool	Purpose
National Reports	Track waste generation & disposal methods
Training Programs	Build capacity for ESM in developing nations
Technical Guidelines	Provide disposal standards (e.g., for mercury waste)
Basel Convention COP	Decision-making meetings (e.g., <b>COP16 in 2025</b> )

## 6. Challenges

- **Illegal Waste Trafficking:** Estimated **15% of global e-waste** is illegally traded

- **Enforcement Gaps:** Weak monitoring in some regions
- **New Waste Streams:** Solar panels, lithium batteries, and wind turbine blades
- **Loopholes:** False declarations as "recyclable materials"

## 7. Impact & Achievements

- ✓ **Reduced hazardous waste dumping** in Africa & Asia
- ✓ **Standardized global waste tracking** systems
- ✓ **Promoted recycling innovations** (e.g., urban mining for e-waste)
- ✓ **Inspired national laws** (e.g., EU Waste Shipment Regulation)

## Schematic Diagram: Basel Convention Workflow

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## 8. Future Directions

- **Strengthening e-waste controls**
- **Addressing waste colonialism**

- Digital tracking systems for waste shipments
- Circular economy integration

## 9. Conclusion

The Basel Convention remains **critical in combating toxic waste dumping** while balancing environmental protection and sustainable development. Its evolving policies address new challenges like **plastic pollution and clean energy waste**.

**Key Observance: International E-Waste Day (October 14)** highlights Basel Convention priorities.