



BizNGO.ORG

FOR SAFER CHEMICALS AND SUSTAINABLE MATERIALS

The Business-NGO Working Group promotes the creation and adoption of safer chemicals and sustainable materials in a way that supports market transitions to a healthy economy, healthy environment, and healthy people.

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Principles for Safer Chemicals

Demand for products made from greener chemicals is growing rapidly. Consumers, investors and governments want chemicals that have low to no toxicity and degrade into innocuous substances in the environment.¹ Leading businesses are seeking to capture these emerging market opportunities by redesigning their products and catalyzing change in their supply chains.

To advance an economy where the production and use of chemicals are healthy for humans, as well as for our global environment and its non-human inhabitants, responsible companies and their supply chains should adopt and implement the following four principles for safer chemicals:

1. Know and disclose product chemistry. Manufacturers will identify the substances associated with and used in a product across its lifecycle and will increase as appropriate the transparency of the chemical constituents in their products, including the public disclosure of chemicals of high concern.² Buyers will request product chemistry data from their suppliers.

2. Assess and avoid hazards. Manufacturers will determine the hazard characteristics of chemical constituents and formulations in their products, use chemicals with inherently low hazard potential, prioritize chemicals of high concern for elimination, minimize exposure when hazards cannot be prevented, and redesign products and processes to avoid the use and/or generation of hazardous chemicals. Buyers will work with their suppliers to achieve this principle.

3. Commit to continuous improvement. Establish corporate governance structures, policies and practices that create a framework for the regular review of product and process chemistry, and that promote the use of chemicals, processes, and products with inherently lower hazard potential.

4. Support public policies and industry standards that: advance the implementation of the above three principles, ensure that comprehensive hazard data are available for chemicals on the market, take action to eliminate or reduce known hazards and promote a greener economy, including support for green chemistry research and education.

These principles are key features of an effective strategy for promoting, developing and using chemicals that are environmentally preferable across their entire lifecycle.

¹ These are two of the 12 Principles of Green Chemistry defined by Paul Anastas and John Warner in: Green Chemistry: Theory and Practice, 1999 (Oxford University Press: New York).

² "Chemicals of high concern" include substances that have the following properties: 1) persistent, bioaccumulative and toxic (PBT); 2) very persistent and very bioaccumulative (vPvB); 3) very persistent and toxic (vPT); 4) very bioaccumulative and toxic (vBT); 5) carcinogenic; 6) mutagenic; 7) reproductive or developmental toxicant; 8) endocrine disruptor; or 9) neurotoxicant. "Toxic" (T) includes both human toxicity and ecotoxicity.

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