



UNEP DTIE OzonAction Programme under the Multilateral Fund



Warsaw/Nairobi, 8 November 2000 – Policymakers from ten Eastern and Central European countries convened at the first ever Regional Policy Development Workshop to assist methyl bromide phase out in Eastern and Central Europe. The workshop took place from 25-27 October 2000 to identify the key policy measures and national action plans necessary to replace the ozone-depleting pesticide methyl bromide.

"This workshop marks an historic moment - the first international meeting on methyl bromide phase out held in Eastern and Central Europe", said Mr. Zbigniew Kamienski, Director of the Department of Environment Protection on behalf of Poland's Minister of Environment. "We hope that Poland and other countries in the region will benefit at this workshop from sharing experiences on phasing out methyl bromide and developing appropriate policy measures, training and awareness- raising activities at the regional and national level to promote adoption of alternatives".

Organized jointly by the UNEP DTIE OzonAction Programme, the Government of Poland and the Research Institute for Vegetable Crops, the main objective of the workshop was to raise awareness about the importance of establishing strong national policies to meet the methyl bromide phase-out requirements under the Montreal Protocol. This activity is part of a UNEP project funded by the Global Environment Facility entitled "Initiating the Early Phase Out Methyl Bromide Through Awareness-Raising, Demonstration and Training Activities".

Workshop participants came from National Ozone Units, Ministries of Agriculture, extension agencies from Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, Georgia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Poland and Slovakia. In addition, UNEP, UNIDO, Italy, United Kingdom, United States and non-governmental organizations participated to share their expertise in phasing out methyl bromide.

Recognizing its threat to the ozone layer, the Parties to the Montreal Protocol agreed in 1997 to a global phase-out schedule for methyl bromide. This schedule requires that industrialized countries reduce methyl bromide consumption by 25% in 1999, 50% in 2001, 70% in 2003 and phase out by 2005 (except for quarantine and pre-shipment uses). Policy and training measures will play an important role in achieving a smooth and timely phase out of methyl bromide and in ensuring that methyl bromide users receive the necessary assistance to make a smooth transition to safe and effective alternatives.

The workshop featured presentations by policy and training experts from Europe and the United States who have been involved in regulating methyl bromide or other pesticides. Countries also shared experiences and lessons learned in developing policy approaches to replace methyl bromide. Many participating countries expressed their commitment to phase out methyl bromide faster than required by the Montreal Protocol, following the example set by the European Community.

Agreed activities leading to policy development at the national level were: 1). Developing national licensing systems to control imports/exports, 2). Modifying existing regulations on methyl bromide phase out to conform with European Union regulations 3). National training of trainers activities to implement alternatives, 4). awareness-raising programmes 5). Economic incentives to promote a shift towards alternatives, 6). reviewing alternatives for quarantine and pre-shipment uses and 7). Consulting with key methyl bromide users and other stakeholders to develop a methyl bromide phase-out plan.

Agreed activities leading to policy development at the regional level were: 1). Regional demonstration project on methyl bromide alternatives for tomatoes, peppers and strawberries, 2). Regional training workshops on alternatives for soil and post- harvest uses and 3). information exchange to share experiences on alternatives.

Background Information

Methyl bromide is an ozone-depleting fumigant used in horticulture and agriculture on such crops as tomatoes and strawberries, for pest control in structures and stored commodities and for quarantine and pre-shipment treatments. In Eastern and Central Europe, methyl bromide is used to fumigate soil in greenhouses and in the open-field prior to growing crops such as peppers, strawberries, tomatoes and tobacco. A smaller amount is used to protect stored products such as grains and other commodities. UNEP's Methyl Bromide Technical Options Committee has identified alternatives for the vast majority of current uses and many of these are already used successfully around the world.

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About the UNEP DTIE OzonAction Programme

This activity is part of the information exchange services provided by UNEP to developing countries to help them meet their methyl bromide phase-out obligations under the Montreal Protocol. The OzonAction Programme is implementing a range of technical and policy assistance activities to support the methyl bromide phase out and the transition to alternatives. UNEP provides other clearinghouse services (Training & Networking of ODS Officers) as well as assistance with the development of national ODS phase-out strategies (Country Programmes) and Institutional Strengthening support.

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