

2.5 Going beyond Benefits and arguments for being more ambitious than regulatory compliance

This document is part of the *International Chemicals Management Toolkit for the Toy Supply Chain* developed by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in collaboration with the Baltic Environmental Forum (BEF) within the framework of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) project ID: 9771 on Global Best Practices on Emerging Chemical Policy Issues of Concern under the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM).

Going beyond regulatory compliance, either by choosing to comply with the strictest requirements in case of several target markets or by exceeding regulatory requirements in general, can be a competitive advantage on the market and can help reduce risks to your business.

Going beyond regulatory requirements

While legal compliance is the very basis for placing any product on the market, it is recommended that companies take a proactive and precautionary approach to ensure the best possible protection from chemicals of concern, in particular where vulnerable groups (such as children) might be at risk. Adopting such an approach can have numerous advantages from a business and risk perspective. Companies going beyond legislation also contribute to advancing sustainable development and addressing the global issue of chemical pollution.

Advantages of going beyond regulatory requirements

- ✓ **Being the frontrunner.** You not only set an example but strengthen your brand by taking responsibility and preventing potential risks for children and the environment. [Awareness among consumers and retailers](#) on the issue of chemicals of concern is growing and the need for more sustainable business practices increases worldwide.
- ✓ **Being prepared for stricter regulation.** Regulations on chemicals are being strengthened globally. If you adapt your production ahead of regulatory revisions, it can give you an advantage over your competitors. You will not have to dedicate significant human and financial resources to reformulate your products (in a short time) when new regulations are implemented.
- ✓ **Ensuring advanced toy safety regarding chemicals.** If regulatory requirements on a chemical in toys exist in one country, an authority has considered the use of this particular chemical to pose a potential risk to children. If you apply the most stringent standards, you are acting in a preventive way and thereby [protecting the health of children](#).

- ✓ **Staying attractive for investors.** Investors have long term strategies and aim for financial stability.
They prefer to [invest into companies which substitute](#) (potential) chemicals of concern with safer alternatives as it reduces the financial risks associated with product recalls or the cost of future legislation connected with chemicals of concern.
- ✓ **Avoiding environmental pollution.** Toys are produced in large amounts and often have a rather short lifespan due to the rough conditions of use. They are therefore disposed of quickly and contribute to the generation of waste and environmental pollution. By adopting more sustainable policies on chemicals management, including [avoiding hazardous chemicals](#) and [choosing more sustainable materials](#), you will ensure more sustainable products along the entire toy life cycle.

Avoiding double standards

Double standards mean that the same product is manufactured in different (chemical) qualities for markets with different requirements. Sometimes, this means that countries with less stringent legislation get products which are more hazardous for human health and the environment.

Manufacturers should always strive for protecting humans and the environment from harmful effects of chemicals. Therefore, manufacturing products according to two different quality standards leading to an unequal level of protection should be avoided. This can also help to save costs as you save time if you do not need to communicate and coordinate different suppliers and manufacturing processes.

Examples for being more ambitious in going beyond regulatory compliance

- Apply stricter concentration limits for chemicals than allowed in legislation.
- Apply restrictions not only to one chemical but also to members of “its group”, i.e. chemicals which are structurally similar and are likely to have similar hazards. For example could a ban for BPA be extended to any bisphenols to prevent that suppliers implement a regrettable substitution.
- Avoid the use of chemicals which are not (yet) regulated but of which there is sufficient evidence that they are hazardous to (children’s) health.
- Restrict the use of chemicals in products for which legislation requires compliance with migration limits; this would ensure that no emission would occur rather than one that is limited to the migration rate.
- Clearly indicate on a toy label that the content of a particular CoC in the toy cannot be prevented (e.g. if it is an electronic toy, there may be several heavy metals contained).