



Photo: UNDP Belarus

# Eliminating polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs)

## What are PCBs?

**Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs)** were widely used in electrical transformers and industrial applications but pose serious health and environmental risks. Their production and use have been controlled under the **Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) since 2004**.

## What is the Stockholm Convention?

PCBs are one of the original twelve POPs listed under Annex A of the Stockholm Convention. The Stockholm Convention prohibits any new production and use of PCBs. Part II of Annex A to the Stockholm Convention also requires each Party to:

- Eliminate the use of PCBs in equipment (containing greater than 50 ppm) by 2025; and
- Environmentally sound waste manage/dispose of liquids containing PCBs and equipment contaminated with PCBs having a PCB content above 50 ppm, in accordance with paragraph 1 of Article 6 and part II of Annex A of the Convention, as soon as possible and no later than 2028.

## UNDP's work on PCBs

UNDP provides technical support to developing countries that are either undertaking their first PCB management projects or countries that have completed their first PCB management project but would like to undertake additional replacement and disposal and/or management, decontamination and disposal of contaminated equipment and oils.

UNDP's support to countries on PCB management and disposal projects includes the following interventions:

- Strengthen the legal framework and improve enforcement capacity;
- Undertake additional PCB inventories to identify remaining PCBs;
- Improve PCB management practices (such as handling, storage, transport and destruction);
- Ensure safe disposal of PCBs in partnership with holders of PCB stocks; and
- Implement public awareness campaigns and communication strategies

## Our PCB portfolio



**32 PCB projects**  
approved and under  
implementation in **25 countries**



**41,934 tonnes of PCBs**  
aimed to be safely eliminated  
by **2028** with UNDP support



UNDP  
supports  
25 countries  
toward PCB  
elimination

The table below summarizes UNDP's extensive results and experiences with PCBs.

Country	Project	Status	Expected closing date	GEF Grant (USD) <sup>1</sup>	Quantities at CEO end (tonnes)	Quantities of PCBs disposed (tonnes)
Argentina	PCB Management	Closed	N/A	3,400,000	2,000	4,591
	Management of POPs, Mercury and other Hazardous Chemicals in Argentina	Implementation	September 2026	8,930,250	5,000	N/A
Belarus	GEF-6 Belarus POPs Legacy and Sustainable Chemicals	Closed	N/A	4,123,560	2,370	1,186
Brazil	PCB Management	Closed	N/A	4,700,000	1,000	11,000
	Environmentally sound destruction of PCBs in Brazil	Implementation	April 2027	9,660,000	15,000	N/A
Colombia	PCB Management in Colombia	Closed	N/A	3,400,000	600	1,373
	Strengthening national capacity to manage industrial POPs	Implementation	July 2027	5,187,000	480	N/A
Comoros	ISLANDS Programme Indian Ocean Child Project	Implementation	February 2028	4,000,000	13.5	N/A
Costa Rica	Integrated Management of PCBs in Costa Rica	Closed	N/A	1,930,000	1,350	1,302
	Strengthening the national capacity for the management of POPs	Implementation	December 2028	4,000,000	30	N/A

<sup>1</sup> This amount reflects the entire GEF grant approved for the project. In some cases, multi-POPs projects have been approved where PCBs represents one of the chemicals being addressed.

Country	Project	Status	Expected closing date	GEF Grant (USD)	Quantities at CEO end (tonnes)	Quantities of PCBs disposed (tonnes)
Ecuador	Management of PCBs in Ecuador	Closed	N/A	2,000,000	750	137
Ethiopia	Capacity Building for PCB Management	Implementation	January 2025	1,990,000	150	120
Eswatini	Global Programme on PCBs	Newly approved	December 2031	825,000	120	N/A
The Gambia	PCB & U-POPs management	Implementation	May 2025	819,955	75	N/A
Ghana	Ghana PCB Management	Closed	N/A	2,945,700	160	50.54
Honduras	Strengthening National Management Capacities and reduction releases of POPs in Honduras	Closed	N/A	110	102	N/A
	Environmentally Sound Management of POPs	Implementation	March 2025	60	N/A	137
Jordan	Environmentally Sound Management for PCBs	Closed	N/A	950,000	140	105
Kazakhstan	PCB Management Plan for Kazakhstan	Closed	N/A	3,300,000	600	230
Kyrgyzstan	PCB management	Closed	N/A	950,000	50	0
Latvia	Sound Disposal of PCBs	Closed	N/A	999,600	280	595
Maldives	Eliminating POPs through SMC	Implementation	February 2025	2,600,000	24	N/A
Mexico	PCB Management Plan in Mexico	Closed	N/A	4,630,000	3,215	6,004
	Stage II PCB Management Plan in Mexico	Implementation	December 2025	4,800,000	5,000	N/A
Montenegro	Sound Management of PCB	Closed	N/A	3,500,000	900	553
Morocco	Safe PCB Management Programme in Morocco	Closed	N/A	2,198,000	711	1,088
Nigeria	Nigeria PCB project	Implementation	January 2025	6,930,000	200	N/A
Panama	Environmentally sound management of hazardous wastes containing POPs and Mercury	Implementation	December 2027	2,730,000	200	N/A
Peru	Peru PCBs, Hg and Toxic Chemicals	Implementation	December 2027	4,725,000	600	N/A
Rwanda	PCB Management Project	Closed	N/A	886,700	500	55.2
	Supporting a Green Economy Decoupling Hazardous Waste Generation from Economic Growth	Implementation	May 2027	3,606,825	122	N/A
Uruguay	PCB Management	Closed	N/A	954,550	123.5	125

*In Cali, Colombia, the Lito SAS industrial waste management facility is helping protect people and the environment by safely dismantling old electrical equipment that may contain toxic PCBs. These chemicals, once widely used in transformers, pose serious health and environmental risks if not properly managed.*

*At Lito SAS, workers carefully take apart transformers and other industrial equipment, recovering valuable materials like copper and aluminum for reuse. A key part of the process happens in a small laboratory, where technicians test materials for PCB contamination, ensuring that harmful substances are not released during recycling.*

*With support from the Global Environment Facility (GEF), UNDP helped safely eliminate over 1,000 tonnes of contaminated materials in Colombia, supporting its goal to phase out PCBs by 2028. (Photos: GEF)*



## Where are we now?

While there has been progress in addressing PCB contamination, most countries have been unable to meet the commitment under the Stockholm Convention to identify and label equipment containing PCBs and to remove them from use by 2025.

The key challenges include:

- data inconsistencies;
- lack of expertise and disposal facilities at the national level;
- co-financing from the private sector in some cases;
- complicated procurement processes; and
- the management of risk during implementation.

Many countries have found significant data inconsistencies and gaps in conducting detailed PCB inventory and assessments.

In addition, many of the electric transformers identified with PCB contamination (higher than 50 ppm of PCB) are still in operation, often in the absence of, or due to lax, national policy and regulatory standards and enforcement regarding testing, inventory development and periodic reporting.

UNDP will accelerate its efforts and continue to provide technical and capacity building support to countries to meet their 2028 obligation under the Stockholm Convention.



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UNDP is supporting countries in managing chemicals and reducing waste for a safer, healthier future. Scan to learn more about **UNDP's Chemicals and Waste Hub**.

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