

Development of a National Program for the Elimination of Asbestos-Related Diseases in the Philippines

Inception Report

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BACKGROUND

In 1992, the Occupational Safety and Health Center, Department of Labor and Employment (OSHC-DOLE) conducted a medical survey wherein examination was done on 86 workers from 4 companies that use asbestos manufacturing various products. Out of 86 workers exposed to asbestos, 12 manifested changes suggestive of asbestosis (Asbestos in the Philippines: Country Report, 2004)

In another study by Diaz (2000), a total of 1,542 ex-workers from the Subic Naval Base in Zambales were examined for the presence of asbestos-related disease as part of the Lung Center of the Philippines' Asbestos Screening Program (1992 to 1996). Out of this number, 593 who were shown to have abnormalities on chest x-ray returned for interview, physical examination and pulmonary function tests. Only 587 of the 593 subjects had evaluable results (Diaz, Asbestos-Related Diseases in the Philippines: The Lung Center of the Philippines Asbestos Screening program, 2009). Overall, for those with complete work-ups, 387 out of the 587 or 65.93% showed asbestosis and up to 519 out of the 587 or 88.41% was diagnosed with either parenchymal or pleural disease consistent with previous asbestos exposure. From 2001 to the present, at least four individuals positive for asbestosis among the original screened population were diagnosed with lung cancer; two by post-mortem lung biopsy and two from surgical biopsies. No mesothelioma cases were seen.

According to the Employees' Compensation Commission, from 1997 up the 2007, there were 16 individuals out of the screened population who submitted disability claims to the Social Security System stating asbestosis as the nature of their illness; two with asbestos-related pleural disease and one was a death claim (Diaz, Asbestos-Related Diseases in the Philippines: The Lung Center of the Philippines Asbestos Screening program, 2009).

It was reported that as of 2011, there are 9 confirmed cases of asbestosis and mesothelioma according to the Employees' Compensation Commission and Lung Center of the Philippines. (Benedictos, 2011)

These findings serve as bases for the development of a comprehensive National Program to Eliminate Asbestos-Related Diseases (NPEAD) in the Philippines. It aims to: i. build up political commitment for developing the NPEAD; ii. generate data/information for the National Asbestos Profile (NAP) including current and past uses of the various forms of asbestos as well as cases of asbestos-related diseases (ARDs); iii. review relevant existing policy, rules and regulations on asbestos and recommend amendments, as may be necessary to ensure the implementation of the PNPEAD; iv. upgrade manpower capability in the early recognition and identification of ARDs; v. develop a sufficient level (or increase the level) of awareness of health risks posed by asbestos hazards. In order to meet these objectives the following activities will

be undertaken: i. development of an institutional framework for the NPEAD; ii. development of a National Asbestos Profile (NAP); and iii. review and develop relevant legislations, regulations and guidelines pertaining to the management of asbestos.

The institutional framework for the NPEAD, led by the Department of Health, shall consist of representatives from the Inter-agency Committee on Environmental Health (IACEH) and private institutions and non-government organizations. This emphasizes the importance of partnerships between government and non-government organizations to: i. formulate mandates relevant to the elimination of asbestos-related diseases in the country; and ii. supervise the development, implementation and evaluation of the NPEAD.

The NAP is intended to provide baseline information regarding the magnitude of asbestos-related diseases and the volume of asbestos and asbestos-containing materials imported and produced in the country. This document will be developed in consultation with the members of the Technical Working Group (TWG). In addition to the NAP, relevant legislations and regulations will be reviewed and recommendations will be made by the TWG based on the findings of the review.

METHODOLOGY

Framework for the study

A. Data Collection

Prior to data collection, intensive review of literature and records will be done to determine data availability and potential sources of information. After the review of literature, the roster of key agencies will be finalized through a consultative meeting with the Technical Working Group (TWG) composed of the Inter-Agency Committee on Environmental Health (IACEH) members and the Association of Chrysotile Industries in the Philippines (ACIP).

Key Agencies:

The key agencies identified are IACEH members, namely:

1. Department of Health (DOH) bureaus- National Center for Disease Prevention and Control (NCDPC); Environmental and Occupational Health Office (EOHO)

2. Department of Labour and Employment (DOLE) bureaus and attached agencies- Bureau of Working Conditions (BWC); Employees' Compensation Commission (ECC); Occupational Safety and Health Center (OSHC)
3. Department of Environmental and Natural Resources (DENR)- Environment Management Bureau (EMB)

Non-IACEH members identified as key agencies will include other government agencies and private institutions such as:

1. Department of Trade and Industry (DTI)
2. Bureau of Customs (BOC) – Department of Finance (DOF)
3. National Statistics Office (NSO)
4. Government Insurance System (GISIS)
5. Social Security System (SSS)
6. Association of Chrysolite Industries in the Philippines (ACIP)
7. Philippine Cancer Society
8. Lung Center of the Philippines (LCP)
9. World Health Organization (WHO)

Requests for data collection through agency visit will be made and with the necessary approval, secondary data gathering will be done. Key informant interviews will be performed when data validation is needed to ensure a comprehensive National Asbestos Profile (NAP).

Technical Working Group discussions would be facilitated as current policies and programs for the elimination of ARDs are reviewed and an institutional framework for the National Program for the Elimination of Asbestos- Related Diseases (ARDs) is made.

Research tools that will be developed for the project will include records review checklists, topic guides for key informant interviews, and annotated bibliography formats for systematic literature review. The key outputs will be the National Asbestos Profile (NAP) and an institutional framework for the National Program for the Elimination of Asbestos- Related Diseases (NPEAD).

Data collection, validation, processing and analysis will be completed on November 2012. The final report will be submitted to DOH on December 2012. *

B. Brief Description of Data Needed

The contents of the NAP will be based on the list outlined by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and World Health Organization (WHO). It will include baseline information on the magnitude of asbestos-related diseases in the country, the amount of asbestos utilized and the population groups at risk for developing debilitating illnesses due to repeated exposure to asbestos.

In order to establish the baseline information, relevant data will be gathered such as existing policies and regulations for asbestos and its forms; statistics on annual importation, consumption and manufacture of asbestos and asbestos-containing products; list of industries in the country where there is exposure to asbestos; occupational health data such as the number of workers at high risk of developing asbestos-related diseases and the number of workers who already developed asbestos-related diseases; burden of disease, prevalence and incidence of asbestos-related diseases; system of inspection of workplaces where asbestos is manufactured; enforcement of the occupational exposure limits and also major epidemiological studies on asbestos-related diseases in the country.

C. Scope and Limitation

The study will focus on asbestos-related diseases - the statistics, current country situation and existing policies for its control and limitation. Available secondary data on asbestos importation and consumption, prevalence of asbestos-related diseases and other statistics will be gathered from key agencies. However, limitation of data collection would be to central offices located within the National Capital Region.

Operational terms were established to identify specific and uniform data collection across agencies.

Data Collection Plan

Date of Data Request/Collection	Government Agencies/Organizations	Data Needed
October 1(M)	<p>Bureau of Customs (BOC) Enforcement Group 2/F, IEG Bldg. BOC, Port Area, Manila Telephone: (632) 527-3864</p> <p>Philippine Cancer Society (National Cancer Registry) 310 San Rafael St., San Miguel, Manila, Philippines Tel. no. (632) 734.2126 or 733.3486 Fax no. (632) 735.2707</p>	<p>Import of asbestos per year (total and per major uses and forms) Import of asbestos-containing materials</p> <p>Prevalence of asbestosis – national data, a breakdown by industries Incidence of Lung Cancer among workers exposed to asbestos Incidence of mesothelioma</p>
October 2(T)	<p>Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) Financial Center, Pasay City Metro Manila 479-3645</p> <p>Employees' Compensation Commission ECC Building, 355 Sen. Gil Puyat Ave. Extension, Makati City Trunkline: 899-4251</p>	<p>Total number of workers eligible for compensation for ARDs, such as asbestosis, lung cancer and mesothelioma (per year) and the number of individuals compensated yearly</p> <p>Total number of workers eligible for compensation for ARDs, such as asbestosis, lung cancer and mesothelioma (per year) and the number of individuals compensated yearly</p>
October 3(W)	<p>Lung Center of the Philippines Quezon Avenue, Quezon City 1104 924-6101 to 20</p> <p>Social Security System SSS Main Bldg, East Ave., Diliman, Q.C. Trunkline: 920-6401</p>	<p>Researches and relevant statistics regarding Asbestos-related diseases</p> <p>Total number of workers eligible for compensation for ARDs, such as asbestosis, lung cancer and mesothelioma (per year) and the number of individuals compensated yearly</p>
October 8(M)	<p>National Statistics Office Sollicare Building Ramon Magsaysay Boulevard Sta. Mesa, Manila 1008</p>	<p>Import and consumption of asbestos per year (total and per major uses and forms) Import of asbestos-containing materials Domestic production of asbestos-containing materials</p>

Data Collection Plan (continued)

Date of Data Request/Collection	Government Agencies/Organizations	Data Needed
October 9(T)	<p>Environmental Management Bureau</p> <p>DENR Compound, Visayas Avenue Diliman, Quezon City Tel. No : 920-2253</p>	<p>Current regulations on the different forms of asbestos</p> <p>Import and consumption of asbestos per year (total and per major uses and forms)</p> <p>Import of asbestos-containing materials</p> <p>Domestic production of asbestos-containing materials</p> <p>Full list of industries importing asbestos and asbestos-containing materials</p>
October 10(W)	<p>Occupational Safety and Health Center</p> <p>North Ave. cor. Agham Road, Diliman Quezon City Philippines 1104 Telephone Numbers: +(632) 928-6690</p>	<p>Estimated total number of workers exposed to asbestos in the country</p> <p>Full list of industries where exposure to asbestos is present in the country and list of industries with the largest number of workers potentially exposed to asbestos Industries with high risk of exposure (exceeding exposure limits) and estimated total number of workers at high risk</p> <p>Industries with high risk of exposure (exceeding exposure limits) and estimated total number of workers at high risk</p> <p>Prevalence of asbestosis – national data, a breakdown by industries</p> <p>Incidence of Lung Cancer among workers exposed to asbestos</p> <p>Incidence of mesothelioma</p> <p>Total number of workers eligible for compensation for ARDs, such as asbestosis, lung cancer and mesothelioma (per year) and the number of individuals compensated yearly</p> <p>National enforceable occupational exposure limits for chrysotile asbestos</p> <p>The system for inspection and enforcement of the exposure limits</p> <p>Estimated economic losses due to asbestos-related diseases</p>

Data Collection Plan (continued)

Date of Data Request/Collection	Government Agencies/Organizations	Data Needed
October 15(M)	<p>Department of Health (DOH)</p> <p>San Lazaro Compound, Tayuman, Sta. Cruz, Manila, Philippines 1003 Telephone: (632) 743-8301 to 23</p>	<p>Prevalence of asbestosis – national data, a breakdown by industries</p> <p>Incidence of mesothelioma</p> <p>The system for inspection and enforcement of the exposure limits</p>
October 16(T)	<p>Association of Chrysolite Industries in the Philippines (ACIP)</p> <p>c/o Eterton Multi-Resources Corp. 168 San Francisco St. Mandaluyong City</p>	<p>Domestic production of asbestos-containing materials</p> <p>Estimated total number of workers exposed to asbestos in the country</p> <p>Full list of industries where exposure to asbestos is present in the country and list of industries with the largest number of workers potentially exposed to asbestos</p> <p>Estimates on the percentage of house stock and vehicle fleet containing asbestos</p>
October 17(W)	<p>Department of Trade and Industry</p> <p>385 Industry and Investments Bldg., Sen. Gil Puyat Ave., Makati City, Philippines 1200 Telephone: (+632) 751.0384 Fax: (+632) 895.6487</p>	<p>Estimated economic losses due to asbestos-related diseases</p>

Project Workplan

Activities	Duration	Month												
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
Hiring and training of project research assistants (RAs)	1 mo.	■												
Data gathering, review of data and consultative meetings with stakeholders	2 mos.		■	■										
Data analysis	1 mo.				■									
Preparation of the draft National Asbestos Profile	1 mo.					■	■							
Presentation of the National Profile to stakeholders	1 day													
Finalization of the National Profile and submission to the DOH	1 mo.									■				

Data Collection Timeline

Agency	Week 1							Week 2							Week 3							Week 4						
	M	T	W	Th	F	S	S	M	T	W	Th	F	S	S	M	T	W	Th	F	S	S	M	T	W	Th	F	S	S
NSO																												
LCP																												
BOC																												
DOLE- BWC																												
DOLE- OSHC																												
DENR- EMB																												
GSIS																												
DOLE- ECC																												
ACIP																												
SSS																												
DOH																												
WHO																												
DTI																												
Phil. Cancer Registry																												

Summary Profile of the Core Working Group Members

Name of Member	Area/s of Specialization	Agency/Office	Designation	Contact Details
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Prof. Elma B. Torres	Occupational Health Environmental Health	Health, Safety and Environmental Management Consultancy Services, Inc.	Director	09178155220 elmatorres10@yahoo.com

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