

## National Chemical Inventory of Korea

### Korea Existing Chemicals Inventory (KECI)

#### Overview of the KECI:

The Korea Existing Chemicals Inventory (KECI) is a comprehensive inventory that includes chemical substances that have been manufactured, imported, or used in South Korea prior to February 2, 1991. The KECI is jointly managed by South Korea's Ministry of Environment (MoE) and the Ministry of Labor, and it serves as the foundation for chemical regulation under the Act on Registration and Evaluation of Chemicals (K-REACH).

#### Key Components of the KECI:

##### 1. Inventory Structure:

- The KECI is divided into three primary parts:
  - **Annex 1:** Contains **37,106 substances** that were identified and listed before February 2, 1991.
  - **Annex 2:** Includes **7,492 substances** that were added after 1991 following hazard evaluation under the Korea Toxic Chemicals Control Act (TCCA).
  - **Annex 3:** Newly added, this section identifies substances recognized as existing chemicals under specific legal conditions.

##### 2. Inclusion of New Chemicals:

- New chemicals that are not listed in the KECI are subject to K-REACH's new chemical registration process. The registration involves a rigorous review and hazard assessment by the MoE before these chemicals can be produced or imported into South Korea.
- The process to include a new chemical in the KECI involves its registration as a new substance and typically takes several years, including a review and assessment period before the chemical is officially listed.

##### 3. Import and Production Regulations:

- Once a chemical is listed in the KECI, it can be freely imported or manufactured in South Korea without needing additional new chemical notification under K-REACH. However, compliance with all relevant safety and environmental regulations remains essential.
- If a chemical is not listed in the KECI, it must undergo a registration process, which includes hazard evaluation and potential restrictions on its use, depending on its risk profile.

#### 4. **Registration of Chemicals under K-REACH:**

- Under K-REACH, once a chemical substance is registered and included in the Korea Existing Chemicals Inventory (KECI), the right to manufacture or import that substance is generally reserved for the entity that completed the registration. This means that only the companies that have registered the chemical under K-REACH are authorized to manufacture or import it.
- If other companies wish to manufacture or import the same substance, they would need to either conduct their own registration or rely on the original registrant's data, often through a shared or joint registration process. This process can involve forming a consortium or obtaining rights to use the registration data from the original registrant, ensuring that all legal and regulatory obligations are met before any new production or importation can occur.

#### Chemicals Subject to Registration:

##### 1. **Priority Existing Chemicals (PECs):**

- These are chemicals that have been identified as high priority due to their potential risk to human health and the environment. PECs must be registered before they can be manufactured, imported, or used in South Korea.

##### 2. **Chemicals Above Certain Tonnage Thresholds:**

- Existing substances that are manufactured or imported in quantities above 1 ton per year are required to be registered, with deadlines based on the tonnage band:
  - 1000+ tons per year: Deadline was December 31, 2021
  - 100-1000 tons per year: Deadline is December 31, 2024
  - 10-100 tons per year: Deadline is December 31, 2027
  - 1-10 tons per year: Deadline is December 31, 2030

#### Exemptions and Special Cases:

- **Substances with Low Risk:** Some substances may be exempted from registration if they are considered to have extremely low risk. These substances may still be listed in the KECI but will not require full registration under K-REACH.

- **Small Quantity Substances:** Chemicals used in very small quantities (below certain thresholds) or for specific purposes such as research and development may also have different registration requirements

#### **Accessing the KECI:**

- The KECI is accessible online through the [National Institute of Environmental Research \(NIER\) and the Ministry of Climate, Energy and Environment's portals](#). Companies can search the inventory to verify the status of chemical substances, ensuring compliance with South Korean regulations.
- For substances not publicly listed, companies may need to submit an official inquiry to determine whether the substance is part of a confidential list.