

THE REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT

Many chemicals are the subject of official Mexican quality standards known as NOMs. An early priority for any export plan for chemicals is to verify the specific regulations that apply.

The principal government regulations affecting the chemical sector are those dealing with product standards and labelling, foreign investment, intellectual property and barriers to trade. The chemical industry is also a major target of environmental regulators. That subject is treated in detail in a separate profile.

STANDARDS AND LABELLING

The Government of Mexico regulates the quality and purity of a wide range of products. A large number of regulations apply to chemicals. These standards apply to imported as well as domestically-produced goods, and special certificates are required at the border for many products. Compliance is technically the responsibility of the importer. However, Mexican officials require these certificates before the goods can cross the border, and exporter-provided information is required to get them. So for practical purposes, the onus for compliance falls on the exporter.

Since even minor deficiencies in the documentation may lead to serious delays, the exporter should ensure that all special certificates are in the hands of the Mexican customs broker before the goods leave Canada. Normally, a Canadian customs broker will make arrangements with the Mexican broker well in advance.

Regulations affecting chemical products fall into two categories:

- Official standards, known as *Normas Oficiales Mexicanas (NOMs)*, apply to a wide range of products, including chemicals. They are administered by the *Secretaría de Comercio y Fomento Industrial (Secofi)*, Secretariat of Commerce and Industrial Development. Goods subject to *NOMs* must be accompanied by a certificate of compliance in order to enter Mexico. Many *NOMs* also include special labelling requirements. The list of chemicals subject to *NOMs* is too long to include here, but information can be obtained from *Secofi*.
- Health regulations administered by the *Secretaría de Agricultura, Ganadería y Desarrollo Rural (Sagar)*, Secretariat of Agriculture, Livestock and Rural Development. The *Dirección General de Sanidad Vegetal*, *Sagar's* Vegetable Sanitation Division, publishes an official register of all agricultural chemicals that can be used in Mexico. It includes regulations regarding the crops on which particular chemicals may be used, as well as the frequency and conditions of application.