Phthalates and Bisphenols in Argentina

Executive summary

TALLER ECOLOGISTA

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por un futuro saludable y libre de tóxicos

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Short summary

Bisphenols and phthalates are two groups of endocrine-disrupting substances. Argentina is a producer, importer, and exporter of plastic raw materials. Several of these raw materials are associated with the use of bisphenols and phthalates. Certain substances from these two groups are regulated in the country, with limits established on their concentration in specific plastic products or outright prohibitions. For example, regarding phthalates, a maximum limit of 0.1% by mass is established for six of them in flexible parts of toys and childcare products. Bisphenol A (BPA) is currently on the positive list of monomers, other starting substances, and polymers authorized for the manufacture of plastic containers and equipment in contact with food, allowing its use with restrictions, and prohibiting it in the raw materials of baby bottles. It is worth noting that the Directorate of Chemical Substances does not analyze the traceability of products containing bisphenol and phthalates. Regarding customs controls, these consist of the submission of a technical report on the merchandise, and the customs service only verifies the submission and accuracy of the documentation, which is all that the legislation stipulates. A new bisphenol is about to be added to the list that already includes BPA, which is used in other countries as a replacement for bisphenol A. It is important that the regrettable historical pattern of substitution be avoided with this new substance, making its immediate prohibition essential. Argentina lacks a comprehensive, proactive policy based on the precautionary and preventive principles to address public health risks associated with phthalates and bisphenols. Existing regulations are reactive, sector-specific, and limited.

Methodology

To gather information on the production, import, export, use, and regulation of phthalates and bisphenols in Argentina, the following national government agencies were consulted via the Online Procedures Portal[1]:

- National Administration of Drugs, Food and Medical Technology (ANMAT)[2],
- National Institute of Industrial Technology (INTI),
- Ministry of Health,
- Undersecretariat of the Environment,
- Argentine Tax Collection and Control Agency (ARCA),
- General Directorate of Customs,
- Ministry of Economy (Secretariat of Industry and Commerce).

Databases and public documents from

- the Senate and the House of Representatives,
- the Superintendency of Occupational Risks (Ministry of Human Capital),
- the Argentine Chamber of the Plastics Industry (CAIP).

Inquiries were sent to the Chamber of the Paint Industry (CIP), and in-person meetings were held with the Chamber of the Chemical and Petrochemical Industry (CIQyP).

National and international scientific and technical literature on the presence and effects of these substances was analyzed.

1 - https://tramitesadistancia.gob.ar/#/inicio
2 - Note: All acronyms correspond to the Spanish names of the institutions.

Production and use of plastic raw materials in the country

According to the CAIP[3] Statistical Yearbook, in 2021 the total apparent consumption of plastic raw materials in Argentina reached 1,697,342 tons, comprised of 1,255,000 tons of local production, of which 805,108 tons were imported (for an amount of USD 1,602,866,583) and 362,766 tons were exported (for an amount of USD 574,655,721).

Polymers of particular relevance for phthalates and bisphenols

Polyvinyl chloride (PVC): Main carrier of phthalates, used as plasticizers to make cables, curtains, toys, footwear, flooring, and medical devices more flexible.

Polycarbonate: Main carrier of Bisphenol A (BPA), used as a monomer. Used in reusable bottles, containers, medical devices, lenses, and electronics.

Polyester and epoxy resins: May incorporate bisphenols in internal coatings of cans, adhesives, and composite materials.

Acrylonitrile Butadiene Styrene (ABS): May contain traces of phthalates in formulations that require flexibility.

Probability of Uses and/or Production of Bisphenols and Phthalates in the Country

At least one domestic manufacturer of Phthalic Anhydride (the main basic component of phthalates) has been detected, leading to the inference that this company uses it to manufacture them or sells it to other producers.

Likewise, the local manufacture of epoxy paints and epoxy resins allows us to suppose the existence of a manufacturer or importer of Bisphenol A for its subsequent polymerization and the creation of the epoxy structure.

Therefore, it is necessary to investigate the public agencies with jurisdiction over this matter to confirm or refute these well-founded presumptions.

3 - https://www.studocu.com/es-ar/document/universidad-nacional-del-litoral/quimica-general/579844152-anuario-estadistico-caip-2021/69899025

Potential Risks Due to the Lack of Publicly Accessible Data on Phthalates and Bisphenols

No specific official public information on the production, import, and/or export of phthalates and bisphenols as individual chemical substances has been found.

Therefore, environmental public information on this data was requested from the relevant public agencies, and as of the closing date of this report, and despite repeated requests, no response has been received. For this reason, this report lacks this official data.

The unavailability of this data creates a barrier to assessing population exposure, designing substitution policies and monitoring regulatory compliance.

Regulations on Phthalates and Bisphenols and Regulatory Controls

Phthalates

In Argentina, the use of phthalates in certain childcare articles and toys intended to be put in the mouth by children under three years of age is regulated by Resolution No. 583/2008[4] of the Ministry of Health (MSN) and its amendments. It establishes a maximum limit of 0.1% by mass for flexible parts, applicable to six compounds: DEHP (CAS 117-81-7), DBP (CAS 84-74-2), BBP (CAS 85-68-7), DINP (CAS 28553-12-0 and CAS 68515-48-0), DIDP (CAS 26761-40-0 and CAS 68515-49-1), and DNOP (CAS 117-84-0). In practice, for this agency, this limit is equivalent to an effective ban, since lower concentrations do not fulfill significant technological functions as plasticizers.

MERCOSUR/GMC Resolution No. 39/19[5], which contains the "MERCOSUR Technical Regulation on the Positive List of Additives for the Manufacture of Plastic Materials and Polymeric Coatings Intended to Come into Contact with Food," establishes the specific migration limits[6] (LME) and group migration limits (LME(T)) for bis(2-ethylhexyl) phthalate (=DEHP):

LME = 1.5 mg/kg.
LME(T) = 60 mg/kg.

This Resolution establishes the list of chemical substances authorized for the manufacture of plastic materials and polymeric coatings intended to come into contact with food, the respective composition limits, specific migration and use restrictions, as well as defining the calculation method and the use of correction factors.

Pursuant to Provision 6433/2015[7] (Incorporation into the National Legal System of MERCOSUR GMC Resolution No. 62/14 "MERCOSUR Technical Regulation on lists of substances that cannot be used in Personal Hygiene Products, Cosmetics and Perfumes"), the following substances are prohibited and/or restricted:

- Dibutyl phthalate (CAS No. 84-74-2), except in nail products for adult use at concentrations up to 15%. Prohibited in children's products.
- Bis(2-ethylhexyl) phthalate (CAS No. 117-81-7)
- Bis(2-methoxyethyl) phthalate (CAS No. 117-82-8)
- n-Pentylisopentyl phthalate (CAS No. 776297-69-9)

4 - https://www.argentina.gob.ar/normativa/nacional/resoluci%C3%B3n-583-2008-141403/actualizacion
5 - https://servicios.infoleg.gob.ar/infolegInternet/anexos/350000-354999/353058/resconj23-1.pdf
6 - LME: specific migration limit (maximum transferred amount allowed) in foods or their simulants. LME (T): group-specific migration limit (maximum transferred amount allowed) in foods or their simulants, expressed as the total of the indicated groups or substances.
7 - https://www.saij.gob.ar/62-internacional-reglamento-tecnico-mercosur-sobre-lista-sustancias-pueden-ser-utilizadas-

- Phthalate of Di-n-pentyl (CAS No. 131-18-0)
- Diisopentyl phthalate (CAS No. 605-50-5)
- Butylbenzyl phthalate (CAS No. 85-68-7), in infant products. In adult products, prohibited at concentrations greater than or equal to 1%.

Bisphenols

According to the Department of Chemical Interaction and Safety (IySQ) of INTI, it is the responsibility of health authorities (SENASA, provincial health ministries, INAL, among others) to verify declarations of bisphenol formulations, ensuring their inclusion in the current Positive Lists. These Lists contain the substances that can be added to different types of materials that will come into contact with food. These substances are those found in the Positive Lists of the following resolutions: MERCOSUR/GMC Resolution No. 39/19[8], mentioned above, and MERCOSUR/GMC Resolution No. 02/12[9] (Technical Regulation on the positive list of monomers, other starting substances, and polymers authorized for the manufacture of plastic containers and equipment in contact with food). Bisphenols are only mentioned in this latter Resolution No. 02/12. The following are the bisphenols and their corresponding migration and/or composition limits:

BPA CAS No.: 90-05-07; LME = 0.05 mg/kg

This resolution also adds the following for BPA: It is not authorized for polymers used in the manufacture of baby bottles or similar articles intended for feeding infants and children up to 3 years of age.

BPB CAS No.: 77-40-7; LC[10] = 1 mg/kg in PT or LME = ND (LD = 0.01 mg/kg)
BPS CAS No.: 80-09-1: LME = 0.05 mg/kg

Regarding baby bottles, the manufacture, import, and sale of baby bottles containing bisphenol A (2,2-bis(4-hydroxyphenyl)propane) has been prohibited throughout the national territory since April 2012, according to Provision 1207/2012[11].

According to ANMAT[12], within the framework of the Food Commission of Working Subgroup No. 3 (SGT 3) of MERCOSUR, work is underway to update GMC Resolution No. 02/12, in order to remove Bisphenol A from the positive list.

BPA Labeling

Article 184 bis of the CAA, incorporated by Joint Resolution SAGyP-Secretariat of Quality in Health No. 25/2023, establishes identification and labeling requirements for containers and utensils in contact with food[13]. Fully in force since September 2025, childcare products[14] must be labelled: “Bisphenol A Free”.

8 - https://servicios.infoleg.gob.ar/infolegInternet/anexos/350000-354999/353058/resconj23-1.pdf
9 - https://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/mrc112771.pdf y su modificatoria: https://normas.mercosur.int/simfiles/normativas/86818_RES_019-2021_ES_Modificacion%20Res.%20GMC%20N%C2%BA%2002-12.doc
10 - LC: composition limit (maximum allowable residual amount) of the substance in the finished material or object. PT: material or finished object. ND: not detectable. LD: detection limit of the analysis method.
11 - https://www.argentina.gob.ar/normativa/nacional/disposici%C3%B3n-1207-2012-194516/texto
12 - Respuesta de ANMAT, a la consulta de Taller Ecologista sobre regulaciones de bisfenoles y ftalatos, con fecha 01/08/2025.
13 - https://www.argentina.gob.ar/sites/default/files/capitulo_iv_envasesactualiz_2024-08.pdf
14 - The CAA does not give a definition of childcare, nor does it make specific reference to the age range it includes, to label a product.

Specific Regulations for BPA and Phthalates in Cellulosic Materials

Article 186 bis[15] of the Argentine Food Code (CAA), incorporated by Joint Resolution RESFC-2019-1-APN-SRYGS#MSYDS No. 1/2019, incorporates GMC Resolution No. 40/15: "MERCOSUR Technical Regulation on Cellulosic Materials in Contact with Food." These limits aim to minimize the transfer of chemical substances from the packaging to the food.

Part II establishes specific maximum migration limits for cellulosic materials with recycled fibers in contact with aqueous or fatty foods: Bisphenol A: 0.6 mg/kg, DEHP: 1.5 mg/kg, DBP: 0.3 mg/kg, DIBP: 0.3 mg/kg, Sum of DBP + DIBP: ≤ 0.3 mg/kg.

Current controls at ARCA-Customs: Resolution No. 583/2008 requires the submission of a technical report from INTI (National Institute of Industrial Technology) for the release of goods into the country, without additional physical or analytical inspection by customs. The customs service only verifies the formal presentation and the correspondence of the required technical documentation.

Procedure for non-compliant products: If non-compliance is verified, the goods are subject to seizure and confiscation. Depending on the circumstances, they may be destroyed in accordance with Article 436 of the Customs Code (Law No. 22.415).

Transparency and Traceability of Chemical Substances in Plastics

Phthalates

Resolution MSN No. 2/201[17] establishes the certification procedure to verify compliance with Resolution 583/2008. The evaluation is the responsibility of certification bodies, based on tests from laboratories accredited by the Argentine Accreditation Body (OAA). INTI-Plastics was designated as the national reference laboratory to quantify the six regulated phthalates, guaranteeing metrological traceability and technical reliability.

Bisphenol A

INTI-Plastics routinely performs BPA migration tests into food simulants in polycarbonates and epoxy coatings (cans for preserves/beverages). At the request of companies, it also determines the BPA content in materials that do not use it (e.g., certain PVCs), when the market requires verification of absence: BPA-free.

15 - https://alimentosargentinos.magyp.gob.ar/contenido/marco/CAA/Capitulo_04.htm
16 - https://servicios.infoleg.gob.ar/infolegInternet/anexos/15000-19999/16536/Ley22415_S5_TituloII.htm
17 - https://www.argentina.gob.ar/normativa/nacional/resoluci%C3%B3n-2-2011-177933/texto

Studies and known impacts of phthalates and bisphenols in Argentina

“Endocrine disruptors present in medical supplies. Phthalates and precocious puberty.” (2024)[18]

This study basically refers to Di(2-ethylhexyl) phthalate (DEHP), revealing forms of exposure and health impacts of this substance.

Thermal printing paper as a source of BPA contamination (2022)[19]

The Superintendency of Occupational Risks (SRT) (2019)[20]. It is a report referring to exposure to plastics, where Bisphenol A (BPA) is mentioned, indicating that its action is as an endocrine disruptor on estrogen receptors.

BPA in umbilical cord (2018)[21]

Presence and concentration of BPA in the urine of pregnant women (2014)[22]

Groups and locations with particularly high exposure to phthalates and bisphenols

No studies have been found conducted in Argentina on workers with high exposure to phthalates and bisphenols, but there are work environments and activities where these substances are present. For example, a potential for exposure has been detected based on reports showing the presence of these substances in materials that come into contact with the following groups of workers:

waste pickers and workers in recycling plants[23], workers in the plastics industry[24], and retail personnel who handle thermal paper[25].

Official Government Position (October 2025) on the Elimination of Bisphenols and Phthalates

In October 2025, in response to a formal inquiry of Taller Ecologista regarding potential regulations to prohibit or restrict phthalates and bisphenols, the National Directorate of Technical Regulations (Ministry of Economy) categorically stated that **“no work has been done on regulating the use of these substances”** beyond current regulations for toys and contact with food and personal hygiene products, cosmetics and perfumes. There are no specific regulations regarding women’s exposure in the home, such as to cleaning products, disinfectants, or air fresheners containing phthalates as solvents or fragrance fixatives.

18 - https://www.fmed.uba.ar/sites/default/files/2024-07/MONOGRAFIA%20GUARNACCIA%20AGUSTINA.pdf
19 - https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11356-022-19561-9
20 - https://www.argentina.gob.ar/sites/default/files/guia_de_actuacion_y_diagnostico_-_exposicion_a_plasticos_0.pdf
21 - https://www.hospitalitaliano.org.ar/multimedia/archivos/noticias_archivos/46/beca/46_ProyectoAmbienteFetalyBisfenolA.pdf
22 - https://toxicologia.org.ar/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Acta-2014-v22-suplemento.alta-OK.pdf
23 - https://ipen.org/sites/default/files/documents/ipen-recycled-plastic-pellets-v1_2c-es.pdf
24 - https://www.argentina.gob.ar/sites/default/files/guia_de_actuacion_y_diagnostico_-_exposicion_a_plasticos_0.pdf
25 - https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11356-022-19561-9

Key challenges to phasing out phthalates and bisphenols

- Political will and legislative prioritization
- Influence of economic interests from the plastics industry and related sectors
- Lack of public information and local data
- Absence of traceability systems and consumer information
- Limited media coverage

Recommendations and Project Proposals to Support National Regulation

To promote stricter, more comprehensive, and more effective national regulation of phthalates and bisphenols, the following strategic lines of action are suggested, organized into thematic areas:

- Strengthening technical and scientific collaboration and evidence generation
- Public communication and awareness strategies
- Legislative and regulatory advocacy
- Transparency, traceability, and access to information

Other relevant information

Imminent introduction of a new bisphenol

MERCOSUR/GMC Resolution No. 28/24[26], amending GMC Resolution No. 02/12 (Positive List of Monomers and Starting Substances for Food Contact Packaging), is soon to be incorporated into national law. This amendment formally incorporates tetramethylbisphenol F diglycidyl ether (TMBPF-DGE), CAS: 113693-69-9 and incorporates the following group-specific migration limits (LSM(T)): 0.2 mg/kg for the sum of TMBPF-DGE, TMBPF-DGE.H2 O and TMBPF-DGE.2H2 O and LSM(T): 0.5 mg/kg for the sum of TMBPF-DGE. HCl, TMBPF-DGE.2HCl and TMBPF-DGE.Hcl.H2 O. These limits apply only to dispersions of macromolecular substances in water used in the lining of beverage cans.

Context and technical justification

It is crucial to ensure that the toxicological evaluation of TMBPF-DGE is thorough, independent, and transparent before allowing widespread use, to avoid repeating the historical pattern of regrettable substitution observed with other BPA analogues (BPS, BPF), which were later found to present similar or greater risks than the original substance.

26 - https://normas.mercosur.int/public/normativas/4857

Conclusions

Argentina needs to develop its own technical capabilities for assessing the risks of chemical substances and not depend exclusively on regulatory decisions made in other international contexts.

No specific public information was found on the production, import, or export of phthalates and bisphenols as individual chemical substances. However, it is presumed that there are manufacturers and exporters of these substances, so it is necessary to continue searching for this information in official agencies.

This lack of specific traceability constitutes a fundamental barrier to assessing population exposure, designing substitution policies, and monitoring regulatory compliance.

Argentina lacks a comprehensive, proactive policy based on the precautionary and preventive principles to address public health risks associated with phthalates and bisphenols. Existing regulations are reactive, sector-specific, and limited.

November 2025

Appendix:
Country situation report Ftalatos y Bisfenoles en Argentina:
Diagnóstico Integral y Desafíos Regulatorios