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Sommario/riassunto	<p>Biocides are products which control harmful organisms by chemical or biological means. They protect health, improve product performance and prevent spoilage, and are increasingly important to modern life as consumers demand safe, long-lasting and effective products from cosmetics to paints, and from drinking water to swimming pools.; The worldwide market for biocides is approximately 4 billion annually, and it is growing at up to four per cent per annum. The industry is highly segmented and has a wide range of distribution channels. These markets are generally mature although over-the-counter biocides for home use have commercial characteristics similar to other fast-moving consumer goods.; Biocides are one of the most highly regulated and controlled types of chemical product. In the EU, the biocides industry is undergoing a dramatic transformation due to the Biocidal Products Directive. The regulations are tougher than any existing legislation either within Europe or indeed in the rest of the world, and could cost the biocide industry over 490 million to put into action. These costs are too high to maintain the existing range of products and some, particularly those in niche markets, will no longer be viable.; This text describes the regulatory controls and the safety assessment methods for biocides for the EU, the USA and Japan and other key markets within a commercial, political and socio-economic context. It provides a broad</p>

overview of their main uses as preservatives, disinfectants and pest controls. It will help industry regulators and non-specialist readers get a balanced, up-to-date overview of biocides from the commercial and technical to the regulatory and safety aspects.

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