

Midterm Workshop of the UN Environment/GEF project 'Continuing Regional Support for the POPs Global Monitoring Plan under the Stockholm Convention' in the Asia Region

8-10 August 2018
Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

Concept Note

A) Operational Details

- Subject: Midterm Workshop of the UN Environment/GEF project 'Continuing Regional Support for the POPs Global Monitoring Plan under the Stockholm Convention' in the Asia Region.
- Dates and time: Wednesday, 8 August 2018 – Friday, 10 August 2018.
- Venue: TBD
- Hosting institution: Institute of Chemistry and Chemical Technology, Mongolian Academy of Sciences
- Participants: Two coordinators per participating country, BRS Secretariat, UN Environment, GMP2 Expert laboratories, WHO, GMP regional coordinator, POPsEA Japan
- Contact persons: Ms. Enkhtuul Surenjav (enkhtuuls@yahoo.com) at Mongolian Academy of Sciences and Ms. Jacqueline Alvarez at Chemicals and Health Branch (Jacqueline.alvarez@un.org; chemicals.science@un.org).
- B) Objectives
 - Strengthening communication among core partners on the progress of the POPs Global Monitoring Plan in the Asia Region
 - Discussing on the needs, opportunities and challenges beyond the 2nd phase POPs Global Monitoring Plan
 - Development of the national reports and sustainable plans

C) Background

Article 16 of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) requests parties to evaluate the effectiveness of the Convention four years after the date of entry into force of the Convention and periodically thereafter, including a Global Monitoring Plan (GMP) which records the presence of POPs in the environment and in humans. Based on this, UN Environment implemented the 1st phase POPs Global Monitoring Plan from 2009-2012 with financial assistance from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) in parallel in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Pacific Islands Region, and is implementing four GEF-funded MSP POPs Global Monitoring Plan follow-up projects in the Africa, Asian, Pacific and Latin America and the Caribbean Region (GEF IDs 4886, 4894, 4881, and 6978) from 2016 to 2020. The objectives of the GMP are to identify changes of POPs concentrations with time and assess POPs regional and global transport.

The 1st phase POPs Global Monitoring Plan was launched upon the request of the fourth Conference of Parties (COP) which emphasized that capacity-building for POPs monitoring programmes for most countries in the region remains the top priority recommendation and provided some detailed recommendations in this regard in 2009. These projects enabled provision of quality data on human exposure and environmental concentration of the 12 POPs originally included for the effectiveness evaluation.

Since then, the Conference of Parties also agreed upon the essential modalities for the environmental monitoring component of the subsequent evaluations. The COP4 included nine new chemicals in the POPs list (decision SC-4/10-18; Annexes A, B, and C). Later, COP5 listed endosulfan in Annex A (decision SC-5/3), COP-6 listed hexabromocyclododecane (HBCD) into Annex A (decision SC-6/13). COP7 listed Pentachlorophenol and its salts, and esters and Polychlorinated naphthalenes into Annex A and C (decision SC-7/13-14), and COP8 listed Decabromodiphenyl ether (commercial mixture, c-decaBDE) and Short-chain chlorinated paraffins (SCCPs) into Annex A.

In decision SC-6/23, the COP requested the Secretariat “to continue to support training and capacity-building activities to assist countries in implementing the global monitoring plan for subsequent effectiveness evaluations and to work with partners and other relevant organizations to undertake implementation activities”. Based on this, the 2nd phase Global Monitoring Plan is implemented in parallel in the Africa, Asian, Pacific and Latin America and the Caribbean Region (GEF IDs 4886, 4894, 4881, and 6978) from 2016 to 2020. UN Environment is the executing agency for the Africa, Asia and Pacific Regions. The Stockholm Convention Regional Centre (SCRC) in Uruguay is jointly the executing the project for Latin America and the Caribbean region with UN Environment. The projects are implemented in close cooperation with, among others, the Secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions (BRS Secretariat), the World Health Organization (WHO), UNITAR, and six expert laboratories (VU University, MTM Oerebro, CSIC, CVUA, and RECETOX, LATU).

The POPs Global Monitoring Plan is for its first time being implemented in Asia. The project focused on the 23 POPs listed in the Stockholm Convention as to COP 6 in core matrix human milk to examine human exposure, water and core matrix of national interest to examine environmental exposure, and ambient air to examine long-range transport. By mid-2018, about half of the sampling activities will be completed and further arrangement is needed including the analysis of samples, as well as national and regional plans for POPs monitoring in the long run. Meanwhile, with new POPs adopted by the Stockholm Convention COP7 and COP8, future steps on fulfilling the obligations of the monitoring of POPs for the effectiveness evaluation also needs to be discussed. The midterm workshop aims to strengthen collaboration among project partners that supporting the execution of the projects in the Asia Region and to address future needs, opportunities and challenges.