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UNEP/GEF projects “Implementation of the POPs Global Monitoring Plan under the Stockholm Convention” in the Asia Region and “Continuing Regional Support for the POPs Global Monitoring Plan under the Stockholm Convention” in the Africa, Pacific and Latin America and Caribbean Regions

Paper 3: Related Chemicals Initiatives for Possible Synergies

1. Background information

In support of the implementation of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs), in particular Article 16 on effectiveness evaluation and Global Monitoring Plan (GMP) for obtaining comparable monitoring data on the presence of POPs in the environment and in humans, UN Environment Chemicals and Health Branch implements projects on capacity building for sampling and analysis of POPs in different media in developing countries, and generation of comparable data on the presence of POPs (GMP1 and GMP2 projects) in 42 countries in Africa, Asia, Pacific Islands and Latin America and Caribbean regions from 2016 to 2020, with financial support from the Global Environment Facility and other sources.

While capacity building activities helped countries to acquire the vital elements to participate in global monitoring of POPs under the Stockholm Convention, deficiencies in broader framework of sound management of chemicals at national level in developing countries challenge the countries to be sustainably resourceful to continue to contribute effectively.

Various initiatives are already in place to strengthen national policy frameworks for the sound management of POPs and other chemicals of concerns. For example, supports on the establishment and update of the Stockholm Convention National Implementation Plans assist developing countries to review national policies and identify priority actions. Initiatives such as Special Programme, SAICM Quick Start Programme (QSP) etc. complement further efforts to enhance policy framework for sound management of chemicals in developing countries. The outcomes and lessons learnt in terms of sustainability from projects such as SAICM QSP should contribute to the deliberations.

Opportunities exist to further strengthen technical, political and financing conditions for enhanced synergy between POPs monitoring and the broader objective of the elimination of POPs. Strengthened capacity for the interpretation of POPs monitoring results to inform policy review and priority setting at national level contributes to the efforts towards achieving the goal of elimination of POPs. This also serves as an intervention for the strengthening of science-policy interface, where the generation of data on POPs contributes to informed decision making. The policies could in-turn provide provisions to strengthen the supporting mechanisms for POPs monitoring. This also contributes to the discussion on sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020, and the SDG Target 3.13, strengthen the capacity of all countries for early warning, risk reduction and management of national and global health risks.

2. Special Programme

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The Special Programme, also known as the Chemicals and Waste Management Programme, provides support to developing countries and countries with economies in transition to enhance their sustainable institutional capacity to develop, adopt, monitor and enforce policy, legislation and regulation for effective frameworks for the implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, the Minamata Convention and the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM).

The special programme will fund activities that fall outside the mandates of GEF. The duration of a special programme project is about 2-3 years, with financial support around USD 50,000.

Funding for the Special Programme is provided through voluntary contributions. Contributions are encouraged from all signatories and Parties to the MEAs, private sector and other stakeholders. Significant contributions have been pledged to the Special Programme from the European Union and the Governments of Sweden, the United States of America, Germany, Finland, Norway, the Netherlands, Austria, Belgium and Denmark.

Three rounds of Special Programme projects have been processed since its inception in 2015. The fourth round of applications opened on 29 November 2019. It welcomes proposals of projects that identify national institutional capacity, weaknesses, gaps and needs facilitate and enable the implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, the Minamata Convention and SAICM.

3. SAICM Quick Start Programme

The Quick Start Programme (QSP) was established in 2006 for the implementation of SAICM. The objective of the Quick Start Programme is to support activities to enable initial capacity building and implementation in developing countries, least developed countries, small island developing States and countries with economies in transition. It facilitates environmentally sound chemicals management, building upon the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building. Additionally, the QSP helps to identify and pave the way for activities that can be assisted by the private sector, including industry, and civil society organizations and intergovernmental organizations, through bilateral and multilateral cooperation. Additionally, the Programme seeks to enhance synergies with processes initiated under relevant chemicals and wastes multilateral environmental agreements. While aimed primarily at the country level, the QSP allows for, and encourages, regional and multi-country approaches.

Over the 14 application rounds, the QSP Trust Fund has approved and funded 184 projects covering 108 different countries. These include 54 Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and/or Small Island Developing States (SIDS). The duration of a QSP project is about 1.5 years, with financial support around USD 25,000.

3.1 Capacity building

The QSP Trust Fund has supported activities on, among others, identification of capacity needs for sound chemicals management, and development and strengthening of national institutions, plans and activities

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to implement the Strategic Approach, building upon work conducted to implement international chemicals-related agreements and initiatives. Several countries have received financial support from QSP to participate in the capacity building activities under the GEF GMP1 projects.

3.2 Stakeholder Engagement and Coordination

Many of the QSP projects have helped enhanced coordination and active participation by diverse stakeholder through the establishment of national coordination committees. For instance, in Rwanda, a national committee existed since 2002 but was not functioning; the QSP project, 'Institutional capacity building for implementing of the Stockholm Convention on POPs and awareness raising on POPs issues', managed to 're-activate' this committee and indeed reported very active members with a number of concrete results including coordinated and successful funding applications and passing of new laws. The project ended in 2010 and as of 2015, the National Coordinating Committee still existed and met regularly, along with a technical level SAICM working group.

3.3 Awareness raising and knowledge building

Many of the QSP projects have played an important role in increasing political and public awareness including understanding of the risks of chemicals, the importance of sound management of chemicals and the tools available to manage risks. For example, under the QSP project, the Government of Serbia and UNDP launched 'The fight to know' campaign to exercise the consumer right to information about substances of high concern in products. The campaign resulted in the removal of products containing non-allowed concentrations of phthalates (>0.1%) from the market. Further production and distribution of these products was also banned. Similarly, in Thailand, through the QSP project an electronic Distance Learning Tool on risk assessment and risk management of chemicals was developed. The tool aims to expand and strengthen the network of scientists in developing countries who are responsible for conducting national risk assessments. The tool can be accessed at <http://www.chemDLT.com>.

4. Stockholm Convention National Implementation Plans

Article 7 of the Stockholm Convention requests Parties to submit their National Implementation Plans (NIP) within two years of the date on which the Convention enters into force and to review and update, as appropriate, on a periodic basis and in a manner to be specified by a decision of the Conference of the Parties.

UNEP supports developing countries and countries with economies in transition with targeted technical assistance in developing and updating their NIPs. Each of the NIP update project supported by UNEP includes a **global support component** to provide technical expertise and tools to facilitate the updating of the NIPs and information exchange. The execution of the Global support component is led by Chemicals and Health Branch aiming of enhancing communication and sharing information among Parties

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to compare and harmonize data and identify lessons learned and good practices. Expected outputs and planned activities under the global component, included within the on-going NIP update projects are:

1.1 Capacity building and technical assistance provided to countries to develop NIPs while building sustainable foundations for its future implementation:

- Organise training on project coordination and lessons learned and good practices from previous projects;
- Organise regional discussions and information exchange on POPs on the basis of updated NIPs.

1.2 Knowledge management services provided:

- Update/revise/enhance database of experts on POPs management;
- Incorporate inventory data into the SSC clearinghouse;
- Identify and disseminate lessons learned.

To date the following outputs were delivered under the global component:

1. A regional and global assessment to compile the available POPs quantitative data existent within the NIP and national reports;
2. Development of an information exchange system including organizing thematic webinars and workshops on POPs inventories;
3. Enhancement of the Stockholm Convention clearinghouse (in close collaboration with the BRS Secretariat) and facilitation of national reporting, by mapping of the available POPs quantitative data from NIPs and national reports;
4. Development of experts and laboratories databases;
5. Development and dissemination of lessons learned ([“From NIPs to Implementation: Lessons learned report”](#)).

The global component represents an important instrument to enhancing the interconnection between POPs monitoring and NIPs. Towards achieving the goal of POPs elimination, POPs monitoring data informs the assessment of POPs baseline situation and plays a crucial role in priority setting at national level within the NIP development/update process. In-turn, NIPs as strategic implementation planning documents under the Stockholm Convention trigger opportunities and funding to strengthen the supporting mechanisms for POPs monitoring.

A first step in interconnecting the POPs monitoring with NIPs has already been taken within the framework of the global component. The document “From NIPs to Implementation: Lessons learned report” includes an initial assessment of the technical expertise in monitoring and analysing POPs and other chemicals at the level of countries supported by UNEP in developing/updating the NIP, as well as lessons learned and good practices on the matter. The majority of the questioned countries (90% of the 22 countries replying) highlighted a need to develop analytical capacity for industrial chemicals and for the unintentional produced POPs. Despite existent capacity for monitoring pesticides, 55% of the countries indicated a need for strengthening existing capacities for monitoring and analysing pesticides since today more than 1000

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active ingredients are on the market with the challenge of illegal pesticides. The assessment also revealed that are countries still lacking capacity for addressing the basic POPs, while most developing countries lack laboratory capacity for the new industrial POPs. A major challenge is to capacitate national experts in POPs analysis and build laboratory capacity nationally, to apply and further develop their expertise. In terms of the relevance of monitoring activities, questioned countries ranked first the contaminated sites monitoring, followed by human biomonitoring, monitoring on environment (including biota) and monitoring of articles, products and wastes.

Several options could be initially considered to support countries to make use of POPs monitoring results in planning of national actions for POPs elimination:

- Development of guidance and toolkit to support interpretation of POPs monitoring results;
- Enhancing awareness on the ways to use of POPs monitoring data by streamlining the NIP development and update guidance documents¹;
- Strengthen the contribution of POPs monitoring activities for the evaluation of national implementation of the Stockholm Convention;
- Enhance awareness for the development of evidence-based policies for POPs elimination.

¹ The 2017 updated version of the “Guidance for Developing a National Implementation Plan for the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants”, in its Annex I includes the Assessment of the different POPs. Annex 11 of the guidance entitled “Notes on Socio-economic Assessment” links aspects of the Global Monitoring Plan with socio-economic aspects, such as impact on human health and economic aspects of human life. Chapter 10 of the guidance recommends elements for consideration in the outline of NIPs and requests countries to develop an action plan including respective activities and strategies on Effectiveness Evaluation (Article 16).