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**International cooperation and coordination:
other international organizations and bodies**

**Activities of the Special Programme to support institutional
strengthening at the national level for implementation of the
Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, the Minamata
Convention and the Strategic Approach to International
Chemicals Management**

Note by the secretariat

1. The annex to the present note sets out a report on the activities of the Special Programme to support institutional strengthening at the national level for implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, the Minamata Convention and the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management. The report was submitted by the United Nations Environment Programme, which serves as the secretariat of the Special Programme. It is presented as received, without formal editing.
2. The present revised note includes an update on the fifth meeting of the Executive Board of the Special Programme, held in Bangkok on 6 and 7 October 2019 (annex, paras. 35–40), which was not available at the time of issue of the earlier version of the note, on 29 August 2019.

* UNEP/MC/COP.3/1.

Annex

Activities of the Special Programme to support institutional strengthening at the national level for implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, the Minamata Convention, and the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management

I. Introduction

1. With the view to addressing the increased need for sustainable, predictable, adequate and accessible financing for the chemicals and waste agenda, the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) proposed the establishment of an integrated approach to financing the sound management of chemicals and waste to the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme at its twenty-seventh session, in February 2013.
2. The Governing Council, in its decision 27/12¹, section VIII, welcomed the integrated approach to address the financing of the sound management of chemicals and wastes, and underscored that the three components of the integrated approach: mainstreaming, industry involvement and dedicated external finance were mutually reinforcing and were all important for the financing of sound management of chemicals and wastes.
3. Furthermore, the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEA), in its resolution 1/5², section II, also welcomed the integrated approach to the financing of chemicals and waste management and adopted the terms of reference for a special programme, to be funded by voluntary contributions, to support institutional strengthening³ at the national level to enhance the implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, the Minamata Convention on Mercury and the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM).
4. The Special Programme was subsequently established and is part of subprogramme 5, on chemicals, waste and air quality, within the UNEP programme of work.
5. The objective of the Special Programme is to support country-driven institutional strengthening at the national level, in the context of the integrated approach to address the financing of the sound management of chemicals and wastes, taking into account the national development strategies, plans and priorities of each country, to increase sustainable public institutional capacity for the sound management of chemicals and wastes throughout their life cycle. The Special Programme is one of two complementary elements of dedicated external financing under the integrated approach, with the Global Environment Facility (GEF) being the further element.
6. The terms of reference of the Special Programme stipulate eligibility for support from the Programme as follows:
 - (a) Support from the Special Programme will be available for developing countries, taking into account the special needs of least developed countries and small island developing states, and for countries with economies in transition, with priority given to those with least capacity;
 - (b) Applicants will be eligible if they are party to any one of the relevant conventions or have demonstrated that they are in the process of preparing for ratification of any one of the conventions; and
 - (c) Applications are to include identification of the associated domestic measures to be taken to ensure that the national institutional capacity supported by the Special Programme is sustainable in the long term.

¹ Available at <https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/12221/Governing%20Council%20Decision%2027-2.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

² Available at <http://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/17285/K1402364.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y>

³ For the purposes of the Special Programme, institutional strengthening is defined as enhancing the sustainable institutional capacity of Governments to develop, adopt, monitor and enforce policy, legislation and regulation, as well as to gain access to financial and other resources for effective frameworks for the implementation of the Instruments for the sound management of chemicals and wastes throughout their life cycle.

7. The terms of reference also stipulate the following operational arrangements:
- (a) The Special Programme will receive applications directly from national Governments;
 - (b) Applications should be outlined within the context of an overall country approach to strengthening institutional capacity;
 - (c) Applications should contain proposed measures and performance targets and information relating to long-term sustainability;
 - (d) Cumulative allocations to a country should be decided by the Executive Board, based on the contributions received and the needs expressed in the applications submitted. Of that total, an amount not exceeding 13 per cent may be retained for administrative purposes;
 - (e) Beneficiary countries will contribute resources equal to the value of at least 25 per cent of the total allocation. The Executive Board may reduce that percentage, commensurate with consideration of the specific national circumstances, capacity constraints, gaps and needs of the applicant; and
 - (f) Beneficiary countries are to submit annual reports on progress achieved; a final report and financial audit, including a full accounting of funds used and an evaluation of outcomes, as well as evidence of whether performance targets have been met, are to be submitted upon completion of each project.
8. Furthermore, the terms of reference provide information regarding the duration of the Special Programme, which will be open to receive voluntary contributions and applications for support for seven years from the date it is established⁴. On the basis of a satisfactory review and evaluation, and subject to a recommendation from the Executive Board to the United Nations Environment Assembly, the Special Programme may be eligible for a one-time extension, not to exceed an additional five years. Special Programme funds may be disbursed for a maximum of 10 years from the date the Programme is established, or eight years from the date it is extended, if applicable, at which point the Programme will complete its operations and close.
9. The present document provides information on activities of the Special Programme to date.

II. Governance of the Special Programme

10. The Executive Board is the decision-making body overseeing the Special Programme with the support of the Secretariat. The term of its representatives is in a two-year rotation. The composition of the Executive Board reflects a balance between donors and recipients as follows:
- (a) Four representatives of recipient countries, reflecting equitable, geographical representation, drawn from the following United Nations regions: Africa, Asia-Pacific, Central and Eastern Europe, and Latin America and the Caribbean
 - (b) One representative from a least developed country or a small island developing State on a rotational basis;
 - (c) Five donor representatives, which are not also recipient countries.
11. The countries that are serving on the Executive Board during its 2018-2020 term are:
- (a) Zimbabwe representing Africa,
 - (b) India representing Asia and Pacific,
 - (c) North Macedonia representing Central and Eastern Europe,
 - (d) Cuba representing Latin America and the Caribbean,
 - (e) Bahrain representing small island developing States.
12. The donor representatives on the Executive Board are: the European Union, Germany, The Netherlands, Sweden and the United States of America.
13. At their first meeting held in January 2019 in Geneva, Switzerland, the Group elected Mr. Clarence Matewe (Zimbabwe), representing recipient countries, and Ms. Sofia Tingstorp (Sweden), representing donor countries, as co-chairs of the Executive Board.

⁴ The Special Programme was established in September 2015, at the same time as the establishment of the Special Programme Trust Fund.

III. Meetings of the Executive Board

A. First meeting of the Executive Board

14. At its first meeting, held from 2 to 3 February 2016 in Geneva Switzerland⁵, the Executive Board reached an agreement on the Rules of Procedure for the operations of the Executive Board of the Special Programme, the application guidelines, and application forms.
15. The Executive Board also agreed to launch the first round of applications in April 2016.

B. Second meeting of the Executive Board

16. The first round of applications for funding from the Special Programme was launched on 4 April 2016. The deadline for the submission of applications to the Secretariat was 4 July 2016. Following the application deadline, the Secretariat received 54 applications from 45 countries.
17. The second meeting of the Executive Board was held from 11 to 13 October 2016 in Bangkok, Thailand⁶. The meeting was attended by 10 of the 10 Executive Board members and represented quorum for decision making in accordance with Rule 17 of the rules of procedure for the Executive Board of the Special Programme.
18. The main objective of the meeting was to review the 42 eligible and complete applications submitted for the first and pilot round of applications.
19. The Executive Board approved projects for the first and pilot round of applications, as outlined in table 1 of the appendix, amounting to US\$ 1.75 million, taking into consideration, regional balance and the special needs of least developed countries and small island developing States.
20. The Board agreed that the second round of applications would be launched in February 2017.

C. Third meeting of the Executive Board

21. The second round of applications for funding from the Special Programme was launched on 22 February 2017. The deadline for the submission of applications to the Secretariat was 20 June 2017. Following the application deadline, the Secretariat received 43 applications from 37 countries.
22. The third meeting of the Executive Board was held from 2 to 3 December 2017 in Nairobi, Kenya⁷. The meeting was attended by 8 of the 10 Executive Board members and represented quorum for decision making in accordance with Rule 17 of the rules of procedure for the Executive Board of the Special Programme.
23. The Executive Board reviewed each of the applications submitted and approved 17 projects, as outlined in table 2 of the appendix, amounting to US\$ 5,096,735, taking into consideration regional balance and the special needs of least developed countries and small island developing States.
24. It was also decided that projects that were not approved during the second round would be invited to resubmit their application to the third and subsequent rounds of applications.
25. In addition, a communications strategy and a resource mobilization strategy were considered and endorsed by the Executive Board during its third meeting. The Executive Board noted that such strategies would allow the Special Programme to attract well-developed applications and donors in a competitive environment.
26. Furthermore, the Executive Board agreed that the third round of applications would be launched in early 2018.

⁵ The report of the first meeting of the Executive Board is available at https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/22904/Special%20Programme%201st%20ExecutiveBoard_meeting_Report.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

⁶ The report of the second meeting of the Executive Board is available at http://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/17014/2nd_EBMR_Oct2016_advance_copy.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

⁷ The report of the third meeting of the Executive Board is available at <https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/27357/boardRep.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

D. Fourth meeting of the Executive Board

27. The third round of applications for funding from the Special Programme was launched on 23 February 2018. The deadline for the submission of applications to the Secretariat was 21 June 2018. Following the application deadline, the Secretariat received 37 applications, from 34 countries.
28. The fourth meeting of the Executive Board was held from 29 to January 2019 in Geneva, Switzerland⁸. The meeting was attended by 9 of the 10 Executive Board members and represented quorum for decision making in accordance with Rule 17 of the rules of procedure for the Executive Board of the Special Programme.
29. The Executive Board approved 18 projects amounting to US\$ 4,703,849. The approved projects were selected taking into account the project's merits, regional balance and priority to countries with least capacity, taking into account the special needs of least developing countries and small island developing States, as outlined in table 3 of the appendix.
30. It was also decided that projects that were not approved during the third round would be invited to resubmit their application to the fourth and subsequent rounds of applications.
31. In addition, the Executive Board requested the Secretariat to initiate the midterm evaluation for the Special Programme internal UNEP project in early April 2019.
32. With regards to resource mobilization, the Executive Board requested the Secretariat to develop a focused action plan that outlines activities and necessary resources to showcase the Special Programme's priorities over the next two years.
33. Furthermore, the Executive Board approved the proposed branding and visual identity of the Special Programme and welcomed the proposed activities that will be implemented under Phase II of the communications strategy.
34. The Board also welcomed the proposed improvements to the Special Programme project database to include a search engine that facilitates the retrieval of information and the development of the application guidelines and e-learning modules and hoped that they will facilitate the application process and contribute to the improvement of the quality of the applications submitted.

E. Fifth meeting of the Executive Board

35. The fifth meeting of the Executive Board of the Special Programme was held from 6 to 7 October 2019 in Bangkok, Thailand, taking place back to back with the third meeting of the SAICM Intersessional Process.
36. At the meeting the Board members endorsed the revised documents of the application package for the fourth round of applications for funding from the Special Programme and the e-learning platform. The Board also agreed to make the guidance and guidelines available in five of the UN languages.
37. Furthermore, the Board requested the Secretariat to launch the fourth round of applications in the margins of the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention on Mercury. The launch will take place at a side event scheduled for Friday, 29 November 2019.
38. The Board also reflected positively on the findings of the midterm evaluation of the Special Programme and approved the proposed timeline for the finalization of the report of the midterm evaluation, which is expected to take place in January 2020.
39. With regards to resource mobilization, the Executive Board endorsed the resource mobilization action plan as presented by the Secretariat. In addition, the Board requested that representative from the private sector are invited the next meeting of the Board to discuss how to strengthen private sector engagement in the context of the Special Programme and the integrated approach to financing of chemicals and waste.
40. Furthermore, the Executive Board approved the proposed Request for Proposals for targeted communications presented with the view to facilitating the implementation of the second Phase of the Special Programme Communications Strategy.

⁸ The report of the fourth meeting of the Executive Board is available at <https://www.unenvironment.org/events/working-group-meeting/fourth-meeting-executive-board-special-programme>

IV. Status of the Special Programme Trust Fund

41. The generous contributions of donors to the Special Programme trust fund and its operations continue to be greatly appreciated by the recipient countries.

42. An update of donor contributions since the establishment of the Special Programme Trust Fund in September 2015 is shown in table 1 below. In addition, some donors provided financial resources for the operations of the Special Programme (for example, convening of the Executive Board meetings, outreach and communications) and the Special Programme Secretariat. Three new positions (P3 Programme Officer, P2 Associate Programme Officer and G4 Programme Assistant) within the Secretariat were filled in 2017 and 2018.

Table 1

Contributions and pledges received 2015 – 2019 (all amounts in US\$ as of 30 June 2019)

<i>Donor</i>	<i>Total amount pledged*/contributed</i>
<i>European Union</i>	11 676 996
<i>European Union (top-up)*</i>	7 954 660
<i>Sweden*</i>	3 087 033
<i>United States</i>	1 250 000
<i>Norway</i>	863 098
<i>Germany</i>	815 551
<i>Finland</i>	219 954
<i>The Netherlands</i>	248 006
<i>Austria</i>	65 923
<i>Denmark</i>	31 764
<i>Belgium</i>	39 955
Total contributions and pledges*	26 252 940

*Pledge amounts will be adjusted with the exchange rate on the day of receipt

43. In line with the Special Programme terms of reference, all signatories and parties to the conventions and other Governments with the capacity to do so, as well as from the private sector, including industry, foundations and non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders, are encouraged to contribute to the Special Programme Trust Fund.

IV. Status of the Implementation of Special Programme Funded Projects

A. First and pilot round of applications

44. At its second meeting, the Executive Board approved seven projects in Argentina, Benin, the Dominican Republic, Iraq, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tanzania, and Ukraine following the first and pilot round of applications for funding from the Special Programme.

45. An overview of the projects and updates on their status of implementation and lessons learned is presented below.

Argentina

46. As a regional leader in the development and implementation of multilateral environmental agreements on chemicals and waste, Argentina aspires to replicate the situation locally. Under current institutional arrangements, efficient coordination to manage chemicals and waste falls short of the government's expectations. Argentina is a Party to the Basel, Rotterdam, and Stockholm conventions, in addition to the Minamata Convention. However, the provisions of each convention are managed independently, resulting in an overall lack of systematic and comprehensive mechanisms to establish cooperation, coordination and information exchange.

47. With funding from UN Environment's Special Programme on Institutional Strengthening for Chemicals and Waste Management, a new directorate was created in 2017 to ensure that there is adequate personnel and infrastructure to implement the legal and technical commitments arising from

the relevant conventions related to chemicals and waste management to which Argentina is a Party. The Directorate of Chemicals and Waste is tasked with promoting cooperation and coordination between the stakeholders, as well as developing a training plan, evaluating Argentina's participation in the multilateral environmental agreements and the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM), and designing strategies to combat new and emerging challenges. With a newly consolidated structure, Argentina will be able to build its capacity to manage chemicals and waste in a cost-effective and efficient manner.

48. In addition to the Special Programme, the project is also supported by the United Nations Development Programme Country Office, the Basel Convention Regional Centre for Training and Technology Transfer for South America, and Argentina's General Directorate of Environmental Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship.

49. As of October 2018, the project achieved several positive results. The Directorate of Substances and Chemical Products was successfully established in March 2018 and has so far been working in with two main action lines: fulfilling international commitments by identifying weaknesses for achieving operativity for Basel, Stockholm, Rotterdam and Minamata Conventions; fostering involvement of other Ministries with clear roles and responsibilities; and designing and systematizing processes. Through this work, the Directorate achieved a sound management of chemicals by strengthening national capacities, developing relevant legislation and public policies aiming towards a correct and comprehensive management of hazardous substances and special waste.

50. In addition, the Special Programme project funded by UN Environment also earned the support of several governmental and non-governmental actors such as industrial associations, civil society organizations, scientific-academic organizations as well as the Ministries of Production, International Affairs, Work and Health, amongst others.

51. The Directorate identified the following challenges: limited access to information related to chemicals production, stock and commerce amongst private and public actors, lack of motivation for certain stakeholders to participate in national and international goals, a weak image of chemicals in the public agenda and general public interest.

52. With this in mind, the Special Programme has set up its work agenda for the next steps. It has designed actions to generate new mechanisms to systematize information and develop new, cost-effective and efficient mechanisms to further streamline interdisciplinary and interjurisdictional cooperation of all relevant partners and stakeholders. Furthermore, it has established the framework necessary to gain access to financial and other resources for the implementation of instruments available to the Conventions parties.

Benin

53. Benin is eager to put behind it a past of chemical mismanagement. Numerous cases of toxic poisoning and pesticide-related deaths have been reported since the 1990s. At its peak, a study carried out from January 2001 to July 2003 by PAN UK in cooperation with PAN Africa and the Benin Organization for the Promotion of Organic Agriculture (OBEPAB), reported 347 cases of toxic poisoning due to pesticides, of which 53 resulted in death. Benin has since become a Party to the Basel, Rotterdam, Stockholm, and Minamata Conventions and has worked to protect both its people and the environment. However, as one of the world's least developed countries, Benin faces multiple challenges. Inadequate institutional capacity, technological barriers, and economic problems continue to threaten Benin's ability to manage chemicals, in particular pesticides, and waste.

54. Funded by the Special Programme Trust Fund in its inaugural round of applications, a project to support legal and institutional capacity was launched in 2017 to strengthen Benin's will and ability to address these issues. Benin is working to establish a database on chemical substances and systematic control procedure of chemicals and waste, update its chemicals' monitoring system, and increase public and stakeholder awareness of chemical-related risks. Furthermore, the government is working to develop regulatory measures on imported chemicals, strengthen national legislative frameworks on waste management, and establish national budget provisions for the implementation of chemical management policies. These actions will help Benin implement its obligations towards chemicals-related multilateral environmental agreements and strengthen its ability to address the pressing challenge it faces in managing chemical pesticides.

55. As of October 2018, a deep scanning of actual legislative, regulatory and institutional framework has been carried out. The outputs of the work allowed for the elaboration of a draft law specifically related to chemicals and their wastes. The draft law is on the way to being submitted to parliamentarians for their validation and endorsement.

Dominican Republic

56. The Dominican Republic has one of the most dynamic and diverse manufacturing sectors in the Caribbean, which implies the use of hazardous chemicals. As a Party to the Basel, Stockholm, Rotterdam, and Minamata Conventions the Dominican Republic aims to raise awareness of the dangers and risks of chemicals on human health and the environment and establish guidelines on how to address them. Although the country has a set of regulations that constitute the environmental regulatory framework for chemicals management, it does not have policies or regulations to reduce the use of hazardous chemicals in the productive sectors. Since 2010, the country has been implementing its National Policy on Sustainable Consumption and Production, which targets specific areas of action to reduce pollution, create efficient production systems and reduce resource consumption.

57. For example, in the Cibao region of the Dominican Republic, the widespread use of pesticides and other chemicals to combat pests and diseases that attack agricultural crops have contributed to environmental degradation and the incidence of chemical-related diseases. In the same region, Barrick Gold, a Canadian gold mining company, uses a massive amount of chemicals in its operations.

58. Furthermore, a study conducted in 2004 estimated that large quantities of products and substances were stored in the town of Bajos de Haina, in the southern province of San Cristobal. This included 9.8 tonnes of formaldehyde, 1.2 tonnes of lead, 416 tonnes of ammonia and 18.5 tonnes of sulphuric acid. According to the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, these chemicals primarily originated from industrial processes such as manufacturing, pharmaceuticals, oil refinery, and the production of metal and electrical components.

59. Based on the outcomes of the study and the enforcement of Law 64-00 on Environment and Natural Resources, which was adopted in 2000, a series of measures were developed to improve environmental compliance by industries located in industrial areas of Bajos de Haina, as well as in other areas of the country. Over the following 13 years, these measures yielded positive results. For example, the amount of pollutants released in the town of Bajos de Haina decreased by 60 per cent as compared to the 2004 estimate. Much remains to be done, however, including to expand knowledge on chemical management, improve the management of hazardous wastes, and develop a national plan for the management of chemicals-related emergencies and accidents.

60. Through the support provided by UN Environment's Special Programme on Institutional Strengthening for Chemicals and Waste Management, the Dominican Republic aims to build on existing measures to strengthen its institutional capacity to implement the Basel, Rotterdam, Stockholm, and Minamata Conventions, and the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM). The national project will develop a SAICM National Implementation Plan within an Integrated National Programme for the Management of Chemical Substances. Priority issues include establishing a system of chemical import registration, regulating the transport of chemicals and chemical waste, exchanging information on management between ministries, developing a risk management programme on chemicals and hazardous waste, and developing interagency coordination mechanisms to respond to a chemical emergency as well as emergency response training.

61. These activities will enable the Dominican Republic to implement the provisions of relevant multilateral environmental agreements, as well as continuing to build the country's institutional capacity for managing safer chemical use.

62. Since the establishment of the project, the Dominican Republic has achieved the following milestones, as of October 2018:

(a) Development a registration database for the import of chemicals and their products, led by the Department of Hazardous Substances. This included the preparation of operating procedures on the use of the database and holding a training workshop to facilitate the use of the import register by relevant stakeholders.

(b) Drafting a set of technical regulations on the Transportation of Chemical Substances and Hazardous Materials, including the identification of areas where the regulations can be applied.

(c) Establishing mechanisms for inter-institutional coordination in response to chemical emergencies in collaboration with the Dominican Republic Emergency Operations Centre. This included carrying out awareness raising activities with the view to developing a structure for a coordinated response to emergencies and the establishment of a working committee for the National System of Chemical Emergencies. In addition, a training workshop, focusing on the use of incident control management systems for emergency response, was also hosted.

Iraq

63. Despite decades of war and conflict that have weakened its management institutions, Iraq is looking to the future and has made chemical and waste management a national priority. Iraq is now Party to the Basel, Rotterdam, and Stockholm Conventions, and is in the process of ratifying the Minamata Convention, signalling its commitment to prioritizing the integrated management of chemicals and waste, and protecting human health.

64. Iraq's project on the institutional strengthening of chemicals and waste management was selected in the first round for funding from the UN Environment's Special Programme. This project is a first for the country in the field of chemicals and waste, and aims to assess Iraq's waste management policies, structures, and coordination mechanisms to enhance their effectiveness. Iraq's weakened institutional frameworks have been major barriers in the past for the sound management of chemicals and waste. The project's objectives include increasing the number of management regulations, performing a technical review of the gaps in the implementation of policies, strategies, and national programmes for the sound management of chemicals and waste, and increasing the number of staff trained in this capacity.

65. The three areas that the project will focus on are: 1) the assessment of gaps, weaknesses, and needs in legislative frameworks; 2) strengthening institutional capacity to implement policies; and 3) implementing sustainable structures for policy implementation. The project demonstrates a clear commitment to building strong institutions to protect the environment and human health. In addition to Special Programme funding, the project will receive substantial government financing and technical support from UN Environment's West Asia Office. The project will likewise focus on intergovernmental coordination, as well as partnerships with national, regional, and international organizations. The emphasis on multilateral cooperation will ensure that Iraq's ability to soundly manage chemicals and waste will continue to grow beyond the project's duration.

66. As of October 2018, Iraq had held its Special Programme inception workshop in August of the prior year, with partners from the Ministry of Health and Environment, UN Environment's West Asia Office and international experts, to address the country's needs in the field of the sound management of chemicals and waste. During the workshop, research was undertaken into the implementation of two of the project's proposed activities, specifically, the Global Harmonised System (GHS) and e-licensing. In addition, a gaps and needs analysis was conducted to assess current capacity and technological, institutional, financial and legislative frameworks. Furthermore, it was agreed that laws and regulations to support the project needed to be drafted, and that a chemicals management committee should be established in 2018.

Kyrgyz Republic

67. UN Environment's Chemicals and Health Branch UN Environment's Chemicals and Health Branch is providing wide-ranging support to Kyrgyzstan in a bid to help reduce its intensive use of chemicals in agriculture, mining and energy. Kyrgyzstan's national development strategy for its energy and fuel sectors outlines the country's vision to secure economic growth through the energy sector in a way that increases efficiency, facilitates the introduction of technology and secures the needs of future generations.

68. Although a reduction in pesticides supplies occurred following the collapse of the USSR as well as a reduction in purchasing capacity of agricultural enterprises in Kyrgyzstan, farmers' yields had been steadily on the decline, as they shifted to using an excessive amount of synthetic products that harm soil fertility. The project, which is funded by UN Environment's Special Programme on Institutional Strengthening for Chemicals and Waste Management, started in 2017 and is helping the country tighten its legislation on chemicals, improve the exchange of information and national reporting, and boost awareness on the safety of chemicals.

69. The United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), the Independent Ecological Expertise Public Association, and other partners who are also supporting the project are designing training packages for decision-makers, customs officials, and other chemical focal points in Kyrgyzstan. A system for national agencies to report progress towards complying with international conventions on chemicals is also being set up, ensuring that the Central Asian country complies with the treaties in a coherent way.

70. As of October 2018, Kyrgyzstan had established its Special programme Project Coordination Committee and the "Interdepartmental Working Group for Coordinating Mechanisms in Chemicals Management" in April and May 2017 respectively. Relevant stakeholders from these groups attended

the Special Programme inception workshop to introducing them to the goals and initial results of the project. Since the inception workshop, several other milestones have been achieved, specifically:

(a) A training workshop on "Synergy of international agreements in the field of chemical safety" was held for the benefit of Basel, Rotterdam, Stockholm, and Minamata Convention National Focal Points as well as the SAICM National Focal Point, and other relevant stakeholders. Training materials were developed in preparation for this workshop which is expected to contribute to the sustainability of the project outputs.

(b) A review and analysis of existing legislation related to chemicals and waste was carried out to identify gaps and shortcomings in national legislation and updating them such that they take into account the lifecycle management approach to product development and use. Based on the results of this work, a draft action plan was developed to strengthen and improve the national legislative framework of the Kyrgyz Republic.

(c) A memorandum with the Door Media foundation was signed to facilitate the implementation of an awareness raising campaign for relevant stakeholders and the public on issues related to chemical safety in Kyrgyzstan.

Tanzania

71. Agricultural and industrial workers are often part of the informal labour market and work in substandard conditions. These workers tend to be put at severe risk of acute poisoning and chronic illness from exposure to pesticides and industrial chemicals. Despite the fact that the government of Tanzania has made significant efforts to address the critical challenge of managing chemicals and waste, the level of awareness among the population of the adverse effects of chemicals remains low. Furthermore, the country has been expanding its oil and gas sectors in recent years, which has resulted in the accumulation of more chemicals in the air and on land from increased emissions. With limited capacity to monitor key chemicals, the country has had restricted ability to develop suitable strategies for combatting the adverse impacts that chemicals and waste can have on human and environmental health.

72. Today, Tanzania is on the threshold of a singular effort to reverse the situation. Bolstered by support from UN Environment's Special Programme on Institutional Strengthening for Chemicals and Waste Management, a national, multi-sectoral project launched in 2017 addresses the country's health and environmental concerns resulting from the sound management of chemicals and waste. The project is multisectoral, and aims to raise Tanzania's institutional capacity to develop, monitor and enforce policy for the sound management of chemicals and waste throughout their lifecycle. The project's steps to address these issues include: (i) formulating a national strategy on chemicals and waste management; (ii) developing regulations for controlling and managing mercury; (iii) training regulatory authorities, agriculture extension officers, and municipal councils; (iv) creating a national database on chemicals and waste; and (v) enhancing institutional and stakeholder cooperation.

73. While Tanzania continues to build capacity to address current and future issues, this project is expected to strengthen the country's ability to protect its people and environment from the adverse impacts of chemicals and waste.

74. Since the establishment of the project, the Tanzania has been active in achieving the objectives of the project. As of October 2018, the milestones that have been accomplished include:

(a) As part of a first group of activities, a training workshop on chemicals and waste in the oil and gas sector has been conducted, and training materials have been prepared. Fifty-two technical officers from various regulatory authorities were trained in the first session. At least 30 officials from local government authorities which deals with issuing of trade licenses for chemical dealers were trained as part of a second training round, held in mid-October 2018.

(b) Collection of information from relevant institutions, including government institutions, the private sector, universities and research institutions, non-governmental organizations, etc. is ongoing, while the primary review of capacity needs assessment has been completed.

(c) Draft regulations on the control and management of mercury releases has been prepared. Stakeholders consultations to obtain comments on the draft regulations are planned.

(d) A database framework, including information required to populate the database, user requirements, administrators and main stakeholders who will have access to the database have been identified. Developing of a web-based database on chemicals and waste is ongoing.

Ukraine

75. UN Environment's Chemicals and Health branch is helping Ukraine crack down on the illegal trafficking of counterfeit pesticides. As is often the case with counterfeit goods, imitation pesticides – which may pose even more risks to people and the environment than certified ones – are cheap to make and lucrative. Of the 100,000 tonnes of the chemicals consumed in Ukraine each year, 25 per cent are estimated to be illicit, whether produced locally or imported.

76. Ukraine is party to the Basel, Rotterdam, and Stockholm Conventions hosted by UN Environment. The project titled 'Strengthening the Enforcement of the Rotterdam Convention in Ukraine and Building Capacity to Counteract Illegal Trafficking of Chemicals' was launched in 2017 and is helping the country fulfil several of its obligations, including those towards the Rotterdam Convention. UN Environment's Special Programme on Institutional Strengthening for Chemicals and Waste Management is providing financial support to Ukraine in developing and enforcing a national policy to inform other countries on whether shipments of listed hazardous chemicals would be accepted, in line with the Convention's principle of prior informed consent. Capacity building is also reinforced with a view to tackling illegal pesticide trafficking as it relates to the work on illegal international traffic, which is one of the five themes of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management, whose Secretariat is hosted by UN Environment.

77. Strategies for detecting and preventing illicit pesticides include custom risk analyses, applying the "Know Your Customer" principle, and capacity building for authorities and other stakeholders. However, most of these approaches are yet to be introduced in Ukraine. Political instability and an economic downturn have weakened the management of chemicals in the country. The project is led by the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of Ukraine, and supported by the International Centre for Environmental Conflictology and Safety, among others.

78. Since the establishment of the project, Ukraine has been active in achieving the objectives of the project. The milestones that have been accomplished, as of October 2018, include:

- (a) Holding the Special Programme inception workshop for the benefit or relevant stakeholders to present the project activities and to discuss the current status of implementation of the Rotterdam Convention in Ukraine as well as the issue of illegal pesticides.
- (b) Establishing and holding the first meeting of the working group on the Rotterdam convention. The group discussed gaps in implementation of the Rotterdam Convention in Ukraine and practical measures to address them, particularly setting up an inter-sectoral working group.
- (c) Holding a training of trainers' workshop on the Rotterdam Convention and Illegal Trafficking of Pesticides. The main objectives of the meeting were a) to discuss key issues of implementation of the Rotterdam Convention in Ukraine, and the trans-border transportation of illegal pesticides; b) to provide training on methodological approaches to teaching the afore-mentioned topics; and c) to agree on the project's next steps.
- (d) Developing a communication strategy on institutional strengthening and capacity building campaign to set up three centers of assistance to support farmers who suffered from the use of counterfeit pesticides.
- (e) A training workshop on the prevention of illegal trafficking of pesticides was held in the city of Uzhgorod on 24 – 25 May 2018. The main purpose of the seminar was to analyze the current situation with countering illegal pesticides and illegal trafficking of chemicals across borders. Participants also discussed the existing gaps in communication between the counterparts and international experience in terms of successful fight against the mentioned violations.

B. Second round of applications

79. At its third meeting, the Executive Board approved seventeen projects in Afghanistan, Belarus, Brazil, China, Ecuador, North Macedonia, Gambia, The, Ghana, India, Kenya, Kiribati, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, Republic of Moldova, Serbia, Uganda and Viet Nam.

80. An overview of the projects and updates on their status of implementation and lessons learned can be found on the Special Programme website⁹.

⁹ Available at <https://www.unenvironment.org/explore-topics/chemicals-waste/what-we-do/special-programme/special-programme-projects-database>

C. Third round of applications

81. At its fourth meeting, the Executive Board approved eighteen projects in Albania, Angola, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Cambodia, Ethiopia, El Salvador, Eswatini, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Kazakhstan, Micronesia (Federated States of), Nauru, Pakistan, Palau, Palestine (State of), South Africa, Tajikistan, Tunisia and Vanuatu.
82. An overview of the project objectives can be found on the Special Programme website¹⁰.

¹⁰ Available at <https://www.unenvironment.org/explore-topics/chemicals-waste/what-we-do/special-programme/special-programme-projects-database>.

Appendix

Table 1

List of projects approved by the Executive Board at its second meeting

<i>Country</i>	<i>Project Title</i>
<i>Argentina</i>	Strengthening national capacity for the sound management of chemicals and waste
<i>Benin</i>	Legal and institutional strengthening for the sound management of chemicals in Benin
<i>Dominican Republic</i>	Strengthening institutional capacity for the implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, the Minamata Convention and SAICM in Dominican Republic
<i>Iraq</i>	Develop and strengthen the institutional structure for the management of chemicals and waste in Iraq
<i>Kyrgyz Republic</i>	Strengthening capacities for national implementation of chemicals and waste related international agreements
<i>Tanzania</i>	Strengthening institutional capacity for sound management of chemicals and waste in the United Republic of Tanzania
<i>Ukraine</i>	Strengthening the enforcement of the Rotterdam Convention in Ukraine, and building capacity to counteract illegal trafficking of chemical

Table 2

List of projects approved by the Executive Board at its third meeting

<i>Country</i>	<i>Project Title</i>
<i>Afghanistan</i>	Enhancing the sustainable institutional capacity to regulate toxic chemicals
<i>Belarus</i>	Establish a sustainable national infrastructure to join and support the implementation of the Rotterdam Convention in the Republic of Belarus
<i>Brazil</i>	Strengthening Institutional Capacity for the Sound management of Chemicals through the Establishment of necessary structure to implement the national legislation on industrial Chemicals
<i>China</i>	China-Strengthening institutional capacity for the implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam, Stockholm and Minamata Conventions and SAICM
<i>Ecuador</i>	Strengthening of the national control system for the management of dangerous materials in Ecuador
<i>North Macedonia</i>	Strengthening Institutional capacities for mainstreaming quadruple synergy schemes in implementation of the National Action Plans (NAPs) for implementation of SAICM and Inclusion of Minamata convention
<i>Gambia, The</i>	Institutional Capacity Building for the Implementation of the Multilateral Environmental Agreements in The Gambia
<i>Ghana</i>	Strengthening Institutional Capacity for the Sustainable Sound Management of Chemicals and Waste throughout their Life-cycle and the Effective Implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam, Stockholm and Minamata Conventions and the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) in Ghana
<i>India</i>	Institutional Capacity Building for Sustainable Management of Chemical and Wastes with Special Focus on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs)
<i>Kenya</i>	Support to chemicals and wastes MEAs and SAICM implementation in Kenya
<i>Kiribati</i>	Strengthening legal systems, institutions and data collection infrastructure in Kiribati
<i>Nigeria</i>	Strengthening of the legal and institutional infrastructures for sound management of chemicals (SMC) in Nigeria
<i>Papua New Guinea</i>	Strengthening the institutional framework and national capacity of key stakeholders in Papua New Guinea in wastes and chemical management
<i>Republic of Moldova</i>	Improving sustainable institutional and regulatory framework for chemicals and waste management throughout their lifecycle in the Republic of Moldova
<i>Serbia</i>	Strengthening the synergies between the Basel, Rotterdam, Stockholm and Minamata Conventions at the national level in the Republic of Serbia

<i>Country</i>	<i>Project Title</i>
<i>Uganda</i>	Strengthening national institution capacity in sound management of chemicals and waste in Uganda
<i>Viet Nam</i>	Strengthening national capacity in sound chemical and waste management for the implementation of the Stockholm, Basel, Rotterdam, Minamata Conventions, SAICM in Viet Nam

Table 3

List of projects approved by the Executive Board at its fourth meeting

<i>Country</i>	<i>Project Title</i>
<i>Albania</i>	Strengthening sound chemicals and waste management in Albania, demonstrating improvement of Health Care Waste (HCW) management.
<i>Angola</i>	Strengthening Angola's National Chemicals and Waste Management Programme by establishing sustainable, integrated, and coherent national structure with emphasis on Private Sector participation
<i>Bolivia (Plurinational State of)</i>	Special Program for the Strengthening of National Capacities for Chemical Substances and Hazardous Waste Management in the Plurinational State of Bolivia
<i>Cambodia</i>	Institutional strengthening in Cambodia for efficient and coordinated implementation of the chemicals and waste management international agreements
<i>Ethiopia</i>	Enhancing Ethiopia's Institutional Capacity for Sound Management of Hazardous Wastes and POPs Chemicals and Improving Reporting Obligation under Basel and Stockholm Conventions
<i>El Salvador</i>	Institutional strengthening for El Salvador in the implementation of the Basel, Stockholm, Minamata and Rotterdam Conventions and the Strategic Approach for the Management of Chemical Products at the International Level
<i>Eswatini</i>	Institutional Capacity development and strengthening for the Sound Management of Chemicals and Waste in the Kingdom of Eswatini
<i>Iran (Islamic Republic of)</i>	The Implementation of Cleaner Production Practices to Manage Chemicals and Waste in Oil Refinery
<i>Kazakhstan</i>	Strengthening the National Capacity of the Republic of Kazakhstan to Regulate Chemicals Through Ensuring Compliance with Obligations Under International Multilateral Environmental Agreements
<i>Micronesia (Federated States of)</i>	Strengthening Institutional Capacity for the Chemicals Management in the FSM
<i>Nauru</i>	Strengthening the national capacity for integrated chemicals and waste management in Nauru
<i>Pakistan</i>	Strengthening of national legislation and capacity building of stakeholders for sound chemicals and hazardous waste management in Pakistan
<i>Palau</i>	Strengthening the national institutional capacity for chemicals and waste management in Palau
<i>Palestine (State of)</i>	Strengthening the institutional capacity of the State of Palestine for sound waste and chemicals management and fostering stakeholder buy-in under the BRS Conventions and supporting process towards ratification of the Minamata Convention
<i>South Africa</i>	Phasing out of lead in paint and the development of an action plan for SAICM emerging contaminants (lead in paint, HHPs, EPPPs, EDCs, & Cd)
<i>Tajikistan</i>	Strengthening institutional capacity for national implementation of the Stockholm and Basel international conventions and building capacity for accessing the Rotterdam Convention in Tajikistan
<i>Tunisia</i>	Institutional strengthening and capacity building project towards achieving Environmental Sound Management (ESM) of hazardous wastes and chemicals at the industrial level as well as enhancing compliance and implementation of chemicals and waste Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) including Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions
<i>Vanuatu</i>	Strengthening the National Institutional Capacity for Chemicals and waste management in Vanuatu