Preparations for SAICM IP4 and ICCM5
Proposal for virtual meetings and online consultations
10 June 2020

I. Purpose

With restrictions due to COVID-19 and the postponement of IP4 and ICCM5, the co-chairs of the intersessional process have proposed to establish a number of Virtual Working Groups (VWG) to support the work of the intersessional process to advance in its deliberations.

The purpose of the proposed Virtual Working Groups is to enhance dialogue and ensure momentum towards results at ICCM5.

This document lays out a proposal to establish the VWGs and convene virtual meetings and online consultations to support the work of the intersessional process. In particular, the document presents the proposed process and timelines for selection of the Co-Chairs of the VWGs, the nomination of members to the VWGs and the format for running the VWGs. This document also presents proposed technical briefings and regional consultations.

The co-chairs of the intersessional process have also prepared a scenario note for the intersessional period, which goes hand in hand with this document. The co-chairs have set out a proposed timeline in the Annex to the scenario note.

II. Key considerations for convening virtual meetings and online consultations

- Considering the current restrictions due to Covid-19, there is a need to convene virtual meetings and online consultations to advance the work towards the results at ICCM5;
- The virtual meetings are NOT foreseen to be a platform for negotiations;
- The ICCM5 Bureau met virtually for the first time on 13 May 2020 and the Technical Working Group on Targets and Indicators met virtually 4 times in delivering on its mandate for IP4;
- UNEP has also convened a number of virtual meetings, including meetings of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to the United Nations Environment Programme;
- Participation of SAICM stakeholders across different time zones may pose the biggest challenge to ensure full and effective participation;
There is a need to ensure inclusivity and providing equal opportunity to all stakeholders to participate, thus ensuring ownership of the process and the recommendations through the virtual meetings;

The Bureau will provide guidance on the establishment of these VWGs;

Recognition of the need to ensure broad participation of all stakeholders at the virtual meetings although some sectors, such as health and labour, might face some difficulties in participating due to their priorities in addressing the Covid-19 crisis;

Some stakeholders may not have the capacity to participate due to technological issues. The SAICM secretariat will explore options to connect them and written inputs may be a way to assure those with connection problems that they are able to contribute to the discussions;

Mandates will be established for the VWGs under the guidance of the Bureau;

VWGs will work in transparency making information available on the SAICM web-site in a timely manner;

Selection of representatives for VWGs should be done by considering the capacity of stakeholders to participate in virtual working groups and any potential hosting platform;

The secretariat will avoid organizing parallel virtual sessions;

Information should be available in the UN languages in order to facilitate participation from all regions, as relevant;

Leadership from the Bureau members is vital to make the virtual meetings successful by encouraging their regions and stakeholders to participate in an open and genuine manner.

III. Proposed virtual meetings and online consultations of the virtual working groups, technical briefings, and regional meetings

(a) Virtual meetings and online consultations of the Virtual Working Groups (VWG)

Process for selection of the VWG co-facilitators
- The Bureau may wish to consider proposing co-facilitators the Virtual Working Groups.
- The co-facilitators will be invited to report on progress to the Bureau as appropriate.

Process for nominating members for the VWG
- The Bureau members will nominate participants from their regional, sectoral or stakeholder groups for each of the VWGs.
- It is proposed to have two nominations per region and per sector/stakeholder group participating in the Bureau. Due consideration should be given to sub-regional, sectoral and gender in providing the nominations to the secretariat;
- The secretariat will compile the list of nominations for each VWG and presents this to Bureau;
- Following confirmation from the Bureau on the membership of the VWG, invitations are sent to the nominees with schedule of virtual meetings and online consultations;
- Kick-off VWGs in late July.

Format
- SAICM multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral participation, based on nominations from the Bureau;
- Participation will also be open to observers;
- Virtual of 35 – 40 people per session (max 100), with the possibility of break-out groups in multiple and parallel sessions;
- Initial 2-3 sessions / rest of the consultation will be through written inputs/email;
- 3 hours per session, with a break;
- 2 co-facilitators supported by a lead SAICM Secretariat member plus one IT technical support member;
- Platform to be used: Microsoft Teams
  - Microsoft Team Live Event if a Plenary session is needed (large audience i.e. more than 100 participants); and
  - Microsoft Teams for break-out groups;
- Online documentation tools to be used is the SAICM web-site and OneDrive with shared point interphase options as appropriate;
- Video connection would be desirable.

The agenda for running the VWGs will be designed by the co-facilitators once selected and guided by the mandates set out from the Bureau. It is advisable that the agenda would include the relevant links to the break-out group sessions where participants will join.

Proposed mandates for the VWGs will be developed under the guidance of the Bureau and made available on the SAICM web-site.

(b) Technical briefings

The secretariat will coordinate the planning for the technical briefings under the guidance of the Bureau. The co-chairs of the intersessional process have proposed a list of technical briefings within their scenario note. The technical briefings will be scheduled in July and August 2020. The secretariat will prepare a schedule for the briefings and make it available to stakeholders.

The agenda for the technical briefings will be developed by the leader of the topic and the SAICM secretariat. They will be recorded and posted on the SAICM web-site together with the presentations.

Further technical briefings may be held in 2021, under the guidance of the Bureau.

Format
- Open participation;
- Virtual of max 100 people per session;
- For each technical briefing, 2 – 3 sessions the same day and covering different time zones;
- 2 hours per session without a break;
- Topic leader supported by a SAICM Secretariat member plus one IT technical support member;
- Platform to be used: Microsoft Teams, using Microsoft Team Live Event;
- Online documentation tools to be used is the SAICM web-site and, if needed, e.g. OneDrive with shared point interphase options.

(c) Possibility of virtual regional meetings

In addition to face-to-face regional meetings in 2021, virtual regional meetings can be organized in the run up to ICCM5 when requested by the regions. The secretariat is available to support the regions in setting up the on-line platform.

Format
- Regional SAICM multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral participation;
- Virtual of max 100 people per session;
- 3 hours per session, with a break;
- SAICM Regional Bureau members supported by a SAICM Secretariat member plus one IT technical support member;
- Platform to be used: Microsoft Teams
  o Microsoft Team Live Event if a Plenary session is needed (large audience i.e. more than 100 participants); and
  o Microsoft Teams for break-out groups;
- Online documentation tools to be used e.g. OneDrive with shared point interphase options.