



**Strategic Approach
to International
Chemicals Management**

**Open-ended Working Group of the International Conference
on Chemicals Management**

Third meeting

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Item 4 (e) of the provisional agenda*

**Progress towards the achievement of the 2020 overall
objective of the sound management of chemicals:
financing of the Strategic Approach**

Quick Start Programme and its trust fund

Report of the secretariat

I. Introduction

1. At its first session, the International Conference on Chemicals Management, by its resolution I/4, decided to establish the Quick Start Programme to support initial capacity-building activities for the implementation of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management, building upon the outcomes of the first session of the Conference and the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building.

2. In the same resolution, the Conference called for the establishment of a trust fund and provided that the Quick Start Programme trust fund would be open to receive voluntary contributions from Governments, regional economic integration organizations, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations for a period of five years from the date of its establishment by the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). At its second session, by its resolution II/3, the Conference decided to allow the trust fund to remain open to contributions until the third session of the Conference. At its third session, by its resolution III/1, the Conference decided to extend the term for contributions to the Quick Start Programme trust fund until its fourth session. At its fourth session, it was decided that the secretariat would continue to perform its regular functions, provisionally up to and including 2019, until all Quick Start Programme projects had been finalized.

II. Possible action

3. Participants may wish to review progress made by the Quick Start Programme, taking into consideration the information set out in the present report.

III. Quick Start Programme oversight bodies

4. The International Conference on Chemicals Management is the main governing body of the Quick Start Programme. The Quick Start Programme, through its trust fund, has been recognized by the Conference as a useful tool in supporting the enabling activities of the first phase of implementation of the Strategic Approach globally.

5. By resolution I/4, the Conference established the Executive Board of the Quick Start Programme, consisting of two government representatives of each of the United Nations regions and

* SAICM/OEWG.3/1.

all the bilateral and multilateral donors and other contributors to the Programme. The list of the members of the Quick Start Programme Executive Board for the period 2015–2019 is contained in annex II to the present report.

6. The Executive Board provides operational guidance on the Programme, including on eligibility for financing from the trust fund and administrative matters, and offers advice on other relevant aspects as appropriate. It provides its guidance on the basis of reports from both the Quick Start Programme Trust Fund Implementation Committee and the Strategic Approach secretariat on project implementation, as well as from UNEP, as trustee of the trust fund, on the financial situation of the trust fund. Since the fourth session of the Conference, the Executive Board has met once, via a webinar held on 14 December 2017. The meeting was co-chaired by Tatiana Tugui (Republic of Moldova) and Reginald Hernaus (Netherlands).

7. In addition, by its resolution I/4, the Conference invited representatives of the participating organizations of the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals¹ to form the Quick Start Programme Trust Fund Implementation Committee.

8. Following each round of applications to the trust fund, the Committee reviews and appraises proposals after they have first been screened by the secretariat for completeness and eligibility. It also provides guidance on the process of applying to the trust fund, including on completing application forms and following guidelines, and on project implementation arrangements, including the monitoring and evaluation of projects. The Committee monitors the implementation of trust fund projects and reports to the Executive Board on their status. Over the course of 14 rounds of applications, the Committee has appraised 341 applications and approved 184 projects. Since the fourth session of the Conference, the Committee has met once, in Paris on 5 November 2015.

IV. Quick Start Programme trust fund

A. Financial update

9. Since its establishment, the Quick Start Programme has mobilized over \$50 million. That amount includes approximately \$40 million in cash contributions and over \$10 million in cash and/or in-kind contributions from project implementers and executing agencies. In addition, \$88.5 million in non-trust fund contributions were reported over the period 2006–2017.

10. The contributors to the Quick Start Programme trust fund include the Governments of Australia, Austria, Belgium, Czechia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, India, Madagascar, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, the Republic of Korea, Romania, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America, as well as the European Commission.

11. The business plan for the Quick Start Programme is a working document, adopted by the Executive Board, which sets out a strategic action plan for securing appropriate resources and ensuring that the Programme performs effectively. Moreover, it provides information on the background, status and financial context of the Programme. It was conceived as a living document and a working tool, to be regularly updated and re-evaluated at meetings of the Executive Board. To enable the Board to monitor the effectiveness of the Programme, a set of performance indicators were developed. The secretariat produces annual reports that include data relating to the performance indicators. Several of those indicators relate to securing funding.

B. Closure

12. At the fourth session of the Conference, the trust fund was declared closed to new contributions. Acting on the recommendation of the secretariat, the Conference delegated to the Executive Board the setting of an appropriate date for the full and final closure of the trust fund, noting that it needed to be done before the fifth session of the Conference, which was scheduled to be held in 2020.

¹ The participating organizations of the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals are the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Labour Organization, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research, the World Health Organization, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and the World Bank.

13. At its 11th meeting, the Executive Board agreed that 31 December 2019 would be the final closure date of the trust fund. At the request of the Executive Board, the secretariat conveyed that message to the Executive Director of UNEP.

V. Overview of the trust fund portfolio

Application rounds

14. Since its establishment, there have been 14 rounds of applications to the trust fund. The secretariat has screened project proposals for completeness and eligibility and submitted 341 applications for the appraisal of the trust fund Implementation Committee. Over the course of the 14 rounds, the Committee has approved 184 projects for funding, valued at approximately \$37.8 million and covering 108² countries, including 54 least developed countries and/or small island developing States. Of the 184 approved projects, 163 are led by Governments and 21 by civil society organizations.

15. As at 30 November 2018, the projects approved from all applications rounds had been funded and the secretariat had processed all project funding agreements.

VI. Secretariat support for the Quick Start Programme

16. The secretariat is providing support for the Quick Start Programme and its trust fund as mandated in resolution I/4. The support includes facilitating meetings of the Trust Fund Implementation Committee and the Executive Board; providing administrative support for the Programme and the trust fund; and screening trust fund project proposals for completeness and eligibility.

17. In addition, the secretariat's functions, which are set out in paragraph 28 of the Overarching Policy Strategy, include the provision of guidance to stakeholders in the initiation of project proposals.

18. As of January 2019, the staff members of the Strategic Approach secretariat working on the Quick Start Programme consist of a Programme Officer at the P-3 level who has been on maternity leave and subsequent special leave without pay since mid-August 2018. That staff member is expected to resume her functions on 29 March 2019. A temporary P-2 level staff member recruited in November 2016 recently left the secretariat. In order for the Quick Start Programme to continue receiving the support it needs, UNEP has temporarily assigned a staff member at the P-2 level to work on the Programme.

A. Facilitation of meetings of the Trust Fund Implementation Committee and the Executive Board

19. As at 30 November 2018, the secretariat had convened and serviced 11 meetings of the Executive Board and 18 meetings of the Trust Fund Implementation Committee. In addition, preparations for the 12th meeting of the Executive Board, scheduled for May 2019, have been made, including the development of meeting and information documents, which have been made available eight weeks in advance of the meeting, along with the logistical arrangements for the teleconference. The secretariat coordinates preparation and follow-up for each meeting with the meeting chair or co-chairs. For the Trust Fund Implementation Committee, a summary of each of the proposals is prepared, as well as detailed reports on the status of projects and other issues relating to the administration of the Quick Start Programme.

B. Administrative support to the Quick Start Programme and its trust fund

20. As at January 2019, the secretariat had completed the agreements for all approved projects from the 14 rounds of applications. The delays experienced in processing agreements have all been resolved. The introduction of the Umoja financial management system in June 2015 placed additional pressure on the administrative staff servicing both the Strategic Approach secretariat and the Chemicals and Health Branch of UNEP. Despite those challenges, which have been overcome, the secretariat has processed the remaining approved projects from the twelfth, thirteenth and fourteenth rounds.

² Quick Start Programme projects have been approved in a total of 108 countries, of which 105 are on the list of countries eligible to receive official development assistance that is issued by the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

21. As part of its administrative duties, the secretariat monitors the progress of funded projects. Each project must submit semi-annual narrative and financial reports, midterm and final monitoring and evaluation reports, and final narrative and expenditure reports. The secretariat oversees the timely submission of those reports, assesses the overall performance of the projects and provides guidance to project implementers as needed. If remedial action is required, the secretariat consults the Trust Fund Implementation Committee for guidance.

22. The secretariat also maintains a record of trust fund contributions and facilitates the conclusion of agreements with donors, the transfer and recording of funds, and any necessary reporting to contributors and donors. Those tasks are coordinated with the administrative personnel in the Chemicals and Health Branch and the Treasury Services Unit of the United Nations Office at Nairobi.

C. Screening of trust fund project proposals for completeness and eligibility

23. The secretariat performs the function of screening project proposals for completeness and eligibility, and, as indicated in paragraph 28 of the Overarching Policy Strategy, guidance is provided to stakeholders in the initiation of project proposals. The secretariat assists prospective applicants through correspondence and by responding to requests for clarification. Following each application round, the secretariat informs applicants of the Trust Fund Implementation Committee's decisions and evaluates whether conditionally approved projects have met the conditions for final approval before preparing legal agreements with applicants.

D. Participation in the reviewing of project proposals for 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

24. Following the recommendation made by the Conference during its fourth session, the Quick Start Programme officer represented the Strategic Approach secretariat in the internal task team created to review the project proposals submitted for 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. Where relevant, results and lessons learned from completed and ongoing Quick Start Programme projects in countries were included in the Special Programme submissions. In addition, a comprehensive analysis was conducted to find linkages between Quick Start Programme projects relating to the Strategic Approach and applications of the Special Programme.

E. Development of the Quick Start Programme database

25. In support of the objectives of the Quick Start Programme, the secretariat has developed a database of completed Programme projects in order to share the successes and outcomes of the Programme with Strategic Approach stakeholders. The aim of the database is to collect and share information regarding Quick Start Programme-funded projects online in a transparent and informative manner, thereby strengthening and further supporting the implementation of the Strategic Approach. The database is available on the Strategic Approach website (www.saicm.org).

Annex I

Summary of Quick Start Programme trust fund pledges, 2006–2015

(United States dollars)

<i>Donor</i>	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	<i>Total</i>
Australia	0	57 366	236 639	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	294 005
Austria	131 572	160 400	156 033	73 964	67 294	13 333	0	0	0	0	602 596
Belgium	50 068	0	0	14 430	0	0	0	0	0	0	64 498
Czechia	0	0	66 715	0	12 330	0	0	0	0	0	79 045
European Commission	0	3 108 808	2 495 783	0	0	3 293 173	0	0	0	1 610 570	10 508 334
Finland	254 452	273 597	311 526	280 898	0	286 123	0	275 862	0	0	1 682 458
France	65 789	0	0	80 753	138 888	266 666	507 823	407 608	334 225	0	1 801 752
Germany	0	0	0	217 687	244 897	256 410	241 286	234 681	228 716	203 400	1 627 077
Hungary	0	0	12 936	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	12 936
India	100 000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	100 000
Madagascar	0	5 104	4 541	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9 645
Netherlands	128 205	136 798	155 763	69 992	132 625	72 674	0	0	0	0	696 057
Nigeria	50 000	0	0	50 000	0	0	0	0	0	0	100 000
Norway	485 564	1 102 941	848 506	803 853	846 597	0	0	326 413	129 737	0	4 543 611
Pakistan	0	0	0	0	2 009	0	1 974	0	0	0	3 983
Republic of Korea	0	40 000	0	0	50 000	50 000	50 000	50 000	50 000	0	290 000
Romania	0	0	0	13 605	0	0	0	0	0	0	13 605
Slovenia	26 350	29 213	160 808	25 830	115 935	103 703	0	0	0	0	461 839
South Africa	100 000	0	0	50 000	0	0	0	100 000	0	0	250 000
Spain	131 578	65 597	389 610	389 610	65 703	0	0	0	0	0	1 042 098
Sweden	3 649 000	2 266 049	0	2 048 525	2 189 000	0	0	0	0	0	10 152 574
Switzerland	161 419	133 496	125 330	190 043	100 000	117 233	106 907	163 702	275 300	0	1 373 430
United Kingdom	375 476	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	375 476
United States	200 000	300 000	300 000	300 000	400 000	400 000	350 000	290 000	290 000	0	2 830 000
Total	5 909 473	7 679 369	5 264 190	4 609 190	4 365 278	4 859 315	1 257 990	1 848 266	1 307 978	1 813 970	38 915 019

Annex II

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Donors

France

Finland

Germany

Netherlands

Republic of Korea

South Africa

Sweden (Swedish Chemicals Agency, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency)

Switzerland

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