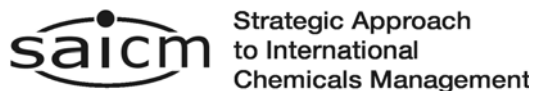




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Implementation of the Strategic Approach to International

Chemicals Management: financial and technical resources for implementation

**Report of the Quick Start Programme Executive Board to the
International Conference on Chemicals Management at its
second session**

Note by the secretariat

1. The annex to the present note sets out the introduction and executive summary of the report of the Quick Start Programme Executive Board to the International Conference on Chemicals Management at its second session, in accordance with paragraph 24 of the Overarching Policy Strategy of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management.
2. The present document is being made available in the six official United Nations languages. The full report, in English only, is available in document SAICM/ICCM.2/INF/30.

* SAICM/ICCM.2/1.

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Annex

Report of the Quick Start Programme Executive Board to the International Conference on Chemicals Management at its second session

Introduction

1. In its resolution I/4,¹ adopted at its first session, the International Conference on Chemicals Management established the Quick Start Programme, which aims “to support initial enabling capacity-building and implementation activities in developing countries, least developed countries, small island developing States and countries with economies in transition.” In the resolution, the Conference also called for the Programme to include a trust fund, the Quick Start Programme Trust Fund, administered by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and multilateral, bilateral and other forms of cooperation. It invited Governments in a position to do so, regional economic integration organizations, intergovernmental organizations, the private sector, including industry, foundations, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders, to contribute to the Quick Start Programme.
2. Resolution I/4 established the Quick Start Programme Executive Board, consisting of two government representatives from each of the United Nations regions and all bilateral and multilateral donors and other contributors to the Programme. The Board reviews progress under the Programme on the basis of reports from the Quick Start Programme Trust Fund Implementation Committee and other Programme participants, and provides operational guidance on the implementation of the strategic priorities of the Programme. Resolution I/4 provides that the Executive Board shall report to the Conference at its second and third sessions on the implementation of the Programme and on the operations of the Quick Start Programme Trust Fund.
3. The present document is the first report of the Executive Board to the Conference. It aims to contribute to the fulfilment of a number of the functions of the Conference set out in paragraph 24 of the Overarching Policy Strategy of the Strategic Approach. The report of the Board will support the general functions of the Conference “to receive reports from all relevant stakeholders on progress in implementation of the Strategic Approach and to disseminate information as appropriate” (paragraph 24 (a)), “to evaluate the implementation of the Strategic Approach with a view to reviewing progress against the 2020 target and taking strategic decisions, programming, prioritizing and updating the approach as necessary” (paragraph 24 (b)), “to report on progress in implementation of the Strategic Approach to stakeholders” (paragraph 24 (d)), “to promote the strengthening of national chemicals management capacities” (paragraph 24 (g)) and “to promote the participation of all stakeholders in the implementation of the Strategic Approach” (paragraph 24 (m)).
4. Paragraph 19 of the Overarching Policy Strategy provides that the Strategic Approach should include “the mobilization of additional national and international financial resources, including through the Quick Start Programme ... to accelerate the strengthening of capabilities and capacities for the implementation of the Strategic Approach objectives.” In that regard, the Board’s report on the Programme will also assist the Conference to fulfil its functions “to work to ensure that the necessary financial and technical resources are available for implementation” (paragraph 24 (h)) and “to evaluate the performance of the financing of the Strategic Approach” (paragraph 24 (i)).
5. Preparation of the present report was first addressed during the third meeting of the Board on 8 and 9 May 2008. Based on the guidance of the Board, the secretariat developed initial drafts that were reviewed during two teleconferences held on 26 September and 25 November 2008. The report was completed in December 2008 so that it could be translated and made available sufficiently ahead of the second session of the Conference. As a consequence, it reflects information available as of November 2008, in particular in relation to the level of contributions and the status of trust fund projects. Supplementary information will be provided in documents SAICM/ICCM.2/5/Add.1 and SAICM/ICCM.2/INF/8, which will be issued shortly before the second session of the Conference.

1 Resolution I/4 is reproduced in annex I to [document SAICM/ICCM.2/INF/30].

I. Executive summary

6. Arrangements for the establishment of the Quick Start Programme and its Trust Fund were initiated by the Strategic Approach secretariat in May 2006. Between September 2006 and August 2008 there were five rounds of applications for grants from the Programme.² Operation and administration of the Programme has been kept under review and guided by the Executive Board, which has held three annual meetings, and the Trust Fund Implementation Committee, which has held six meetings.³

7. The Executive Board provides operational guidance on the Programme, including on eligibility for assistance from the Trust Fund, administrative matters and recognition of Programme contributions. The Board has also adopted a business plan for the Programme. Following each round of applications to the Trust Fund, the Implementation Committee reviews and appraises proposals that have been screened by the secretariat for completeness and eligibility. In addition, the Implementation Committee provides guidance on the process for applying to the Trust Fund, including in relation to application forms and guidelines, and on project implementation arrangements, including the monitoring and evaluation of projects. The Committee monitors the implementation of Programme projects financed by the Trust Fund and reports to the Executive Board on their status.

8. Since 2006, the Trust Fund has received pledges for an approximate total of \$16,244,000 from 21 donors. Over the five application rounds that have taken place to date, the Trust Fund Implementation Committee has approved projects with a total value of \$14,020,252. As of November 2008, the Trust Fund's approximate balance, including pledges not yet paid and the 5 per cent administration fee charged by UNEP as trustee, was approximately \$1,321,735. As of May 2008 five Governments, one industry association and seven intergovernmental organizations had declared non-Trust Fund programme contributions to the Programme using the official declaration form and procedure established by the Executive Board. Such contributions consist of financial and in-kind contributions to bilateral chemicals management programmes, projects and activities supporting the Programme objective and strategic priorities in developing countries and countries with economies in transition. As of May 2008 declared financial and quantified in-kind contributions had reached a total of \$23,690,400. Additional unquantified in-kind contributions were also provided in the form of staff time and other resources for programmes and project implementation.

9. Over the five rounds of applications to the Trust Fund, the secretariat received 169 project proposals. The Trust Fund Implementation Committee approved 74 projects with total funding of approximately \$14,020,252, which will be implemented by 60 Governments and seven civil society organizations and involve activities in 73 countries, including 34 least developed countries and Small Island Developing States. In addition, 44 projects were recommended for further development and resubmission. As of November 2008, 32 projects were being implemented, 14 will begin following the conclusion of agreements for initial project management arrangements, and 18, including 17 approved in October 2008, are awaiting the confirmation of conditional approvals and the preparation of final legal instruments before they can be further processed.

10. Following initial delays in the completion of administrative and legal arrangements in 2007, first- and second-round projects are now being implemented, with some close to completion. As of November 2008, all first-round projects had started and were progressing in line with their work plans and objectives. Out of 21 projects approved in the second round 19 had commenced, while two remained on hold pending the conclusion of agreements between executing agency and applicants or further coordination and preparation at the national level.

11. The implementation of projects approved in the third and fourth rounds has been delayed by the introduction in 2008 of new legal instrument templates by UNEP. Those templates were finalized in August 2008, however, and agreements for third- and fourth-round projects are now being finalized. In October 2008 the Implementation Committee approved or conditionally approved new projects submitted during the fifth round. Following the confirmation of conditional approvals agreements will be signed with applicants and project executing agencies in order to begin implementation in 2009.

² The present report does not include information on the sixth round of applications, scheduled to close on 27 February 2009. Information on the sixth round will be presented in document SAICM/ICCM.2/5/Add.1.

³ The present report does not include information on the fourth meeting of the Board, which is scheduled for 23 and 24 April 2009, nor on the seventh meeting of the Trust Fund Implementation Committee, which is scheduled for 16 and 17 April 2009.

12. The secretariat's support role for the Quick Start Programme includes the provision of secretariat services for meetings of the Executive Board and the Trust Fund Implementation Committee, the provision of administrative support to the Trust Fund, the screening of project proposals for completeness and eligibility and the provision of guidance to stakeholders in the initiation of project proposals. While the European Commission is currently providing financial support for one position within the secretariat, the continuation of the position depends on further donor contributions to cover costs in succeeding years. In the light of the continuously increasing volume of projects and the corresponding increase in the workload of the secretariat, the secretariat will propose, for consideration at the second session of the Conference, that additional staff resources be provided to support Programme operations.

13. In April 2007, the Executive Board adopted a business plan that set out a resource mobilization strategy to help ensure the sustainability of the Programme, including through the replenishment of its trust fund on a steady and equitable basis by as broad a donor group as possible. The Executive Board decided that the fundraising target for the Trust Fund was to achieve average annual growth of 5 to 10 per cent over the approximately \$6 million that came in 2006. Performance against fundraising and delivery targets has been positive. Other business plan strategies and targets, including in particular increasing and broadening the donor base, have been more challenging.

14. Since the establishment of the Quick Start Programme the Executive Board, the Implementation Committee, the Strategic Approach secretariat and stakeholders have gathered experience and views on a number of policy and operational issues. The Executive Board has provided operational guidance, including through the adoption of the Quick Start Programme business plan, on various matters including the recognition of non-trust fund Programme contributions and the eligibility of applicants for funding from the trust fund. The Board has also discussed policy matters such as the scope of enabling activities. The Trust Fund Implementation Committee has provided operational guidance on the process for applying for project funding and on project implementation, including by developing application materials and guidance documents, overseeing project implementation and setting standards for independent monitoring and evaluation.

15. Over the course of regional meetings and consultations, many stakeholders have welcomed the Programme and made positive comments regarding its adequacy. Some called for more resources to be made available, for an increase in the funding available per project and per country and for the consideration of extending the duration of the Programme. Some donor Governments have said that more equitable burden sharing is a pre-condition for maintaining their contributions to the Programme. They have also observed that relying on a limited number of major donors makes the Programme vulnerable to funding fluctuations and shortfalls.

16. The Executive Board has agreed to make recommendations to the Conference for consideration at its second session, including on arrangements for meetings of the Executive Board, secretariat staff resources needed to service the Programme, the donor base and financial stability of the Trust Fund and lessons learned during the initial phase of the programme.
