

# Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) Quick Start Programme (QSP) Trust Fund

## Guidelines for Independent Monitoring and Evaluation

### 0. Background

The International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM) decided in resolution I/4 to invite the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to establish a voluntary, time-limited trust fund to provide seed money to support the objective and strategic priorities of the QSP. The objective of the QSP is 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”.

Governments of developing countries and countries with economies in transition are eligible for support through the QSP trust fund for project between \$50,000 and \$250,000, which are of a maximum duration of 24 months. Proposals may be presented by SAICM participating Governments that have given appropriate formal recognition to SAICM, at a minimum by having designated an official SAICM national focal point. On an exceptional basis, civil society networks participating in SAICM can also be eligible to present project proposals.

The terms of reference for the QSP Trust Fund set out in resolution I/4 of the ICCM provide that “independent monitoring and evaluation and reporting on project implementation to the QSP Trust Fund Implementation Committee<sup>1</sup> will be the responsibility of project proponents.”

The QSP Executive Board<sup>2</sup> recommended that monitoring and evaluation be undertaken in an appropriately simple and “light” fashion, commensurate with the size of the projects concerned. The Board directed that experience in this regard should be kept under review by the Trust Fund Implementation Committee in the early stages of the trust fund’s operation and reported to the Board.

### 1. Purpose of the independent monitoring and evaluation

The purpose of the independent monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of QSP Trust Fund projects is to provide a neutral third party assessment of project implementation, to identify project achievements and challenges, to measure project performance against objectives and to provide indications of progress.

- **Monitoring** is considered to be the continuous process of assessing the status of project implementation in relation to the project work plan. It is considered as a means to suggest performance improvements and the achievement of results.

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<sup>1</sup> The ICCM invited representatives of the participating organizations of the Inter-Organization Programme on the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC) and the United Nations Development Programme to form a Trust Fund Implementation Committee. This Committee is responsible for appraising and approving projects to be financed by the QSP trust fund and meets twice a year.

<sup>2</sup> The QSP Executive Board consists of two government representatives of each of the United Nations regions and all the bilateral and multilateral donors and other contributors to the QSP. The Board meets once a year to review progress and provides operational guidance on the implementation of the programme.

- **Evaluation** is understood as a way of determining as systematically and objectively as possible the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and impact of the project's activities in relation to its objective.

The M&E should be undertaken using evidence-based information that is credible, reliable and useful, thereby permitting the incorporation of conclusions, recommendations and lessons

The following guidelines provide general information for the selection of the M&E arrangements, including as annex terms of reference, and a suggested standard guidance and format for M&E reporting to be used by all third party evaluators. It is intended to be generic and can be adapted for each project.

## **2. M&E role**

The M&E aims to support project accountability by reporting on activities funded through the QSP trust fund to the SAICM secretariat, UNEP as trust fund administrator, the QSP Trust Fund Implementation Committee and the QSP Executive Board. The M&E is expected to provide advice to project managers and the implementing agency on achievements, shortcomings, lessons learned and to recommend follow-up actions.

It is important that the personnel undertaking the M&E are not involved in the project implementation and do not rely exclusively on, or collaborate with, the implementing agency in the process of reporting.<sup>3</sup> The M&E is expected to follow progress, activities and outcomes of the project based on documentation and information provided by the project implementing organization, stakeholders or other relevant actors involved in chemicals management activities.

The M&E is expected to provide a **progress report after 12 months of project activities** and a **final report** at the end of the project.<sup>4</sup> Reports can only be submitted in English. The report is expected to comprise the following documents, for which detailed explanations are provided in section 5 of the present guidelines:

- Form A: independent M&E information
- Form B: overall project assessment
- Form C: stakeholder involvement
- Form D: project objective(s)

Upon completion, the report shall be submitted to the SAICM secretariat and to the project executing agency, if any. The SAICM secretariat will review the reports and forward them to the project implementing agency and to the QSP Trust Fund Implementation Committee.

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<sup>3</sup> The project implementing agency may however be contacted to obtain documents, lists of relevant contacts, reports or general information on the project.

<sup>4</sup> For projects of less than 12 months, only one final report is required.

### **3. Qualifications of the selected individual/organization:**

Applicants to the QSP trust fund are required to have identified an arrangement for monitoring and evaluation before submitting their applications. The application guidance provides that the independent monitoring and evaluation should be undertaken **by a person or an organization, which has no ties to the project development and implementation**. It is further suggested that that applicants identify, for example, an academic institution, a research centre, an independent consultant, or a non-governmental organization.

It is expected that the person or organization has **relevant experience and expertise** in project management, in particular in the field of chemicals. Participation and experience in similar chemicals projects would be an important asset. For example, the persons or organizations may have been involved in projects for the implementation of Multilateral Environment Agreements, such as the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal, the Montreal Protocol on Substances That Deplete the Ozone Layer, the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade, the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, as well initiatives such as International Code of Conduct on the Distribution and Use of Pesticides, the Green Customs Initiative or Cleaner Production.<sup>5</sup>

The M&E person should have **general knowledge of the national chemicals situation** or should have access to such information when available. He or she should also have **general knowledge of activities of relevant stakeholders**, such as Government Ministries and institutions, civil society groups, industry and intergovernmental organizations.

Alternatively, the monitoring and evaluation person should demonstrate strong skills and background in the monitoring and evaluation of international projects relating to different sectors, such as agriculture, development, environment, health, industry and labour.

### **4. Subcontracting arrangements**

It is expected that the M&E **arrangements will have been set up before the project started**. The person or organizations identified in the application should be sub-contracted and terms of reference agreed upon.

- The specific **tasks** described in the annex to the present document may be used as example for the terms of reference. The present monitoring and evaluation guidelines and forms may provide additional information to identify exactly the description of the work to be undertaken.
- The **budget** for the work to be undertaken should also be agreed upon before the implementation of the project and should reflect the budget provisions in the project management agreement signed with UNEP, or where appropriate the project executing agency. Any significant increase should be endorsed by the SAICM secretariat or where relevant the project executing agency.

Although the tasks of monitoring and evaluation will be subcontracted by the funding recipient, the monitoring and evaluation expert and/or organization should remain impartial and independent. Sub contracting arrangements

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<sup>5</sup> In particular, involvement in the implementation of projects for the development of the Stockholm Convention National Implementation Plans, a national Chemicals Profile and those implemented through the Multilateral Fund for the Implementation of the Montreal Protocol and the Global Environment Facility would be very relevant.

cannot be used to influence the work and substance of the monitoring and evaluation report(s). Any attempt to undermine the accountability of the project implementation should be denounced to the SAICM secretariat.

## **5. Detailed guidance for using the M&E template forms**

### **Form A: Independent M&E information**

The purpose of this form is to provide background information on the M&E body and the documents provided in the report. A contact person should be identified on the form, as well as all relevant contact details. Summary information about the M&E institution or expert should be given, including experience in similar projects, demonstrated expertise in chemicals management or relevant monitoring and evaluation skills. The project title, geographical coverage and reporting period should be indicated.

All documents that form part of the report should be listed, including the main M&E reporting forms and supporting documents such as meeting reports, publications, information materials, press clippings or any other relevant material used for the M&E. Lines can be added as necessary.

Titles of documents/materials should be indicated. Numbers should be given to all report documents. Where relevant, indications should be given to related documents, in particular documentation supporting reports on activities and outcomes.

### **Form B: Overall Project Assessment**

The purpose of this form is to provide a summary of the findings of the M&E. The form should first provide an overview of the **methodology** used for the M&E. This section should indicate the principal means to gather information on the project, such as the conducting of interviews and the use of a questionnaire, meetings and other relevant reports. If appropriate, the section should highlight means of verification and the availability and reliability of information provided. The section should be concise and sources should be listed under forms A and C.

The **narrative report** is expected describe and analyse the general performance of the project and the achievement of its specific objectives. Such information should co-relate to the “project objectives” forms. Interim M&E reports provided after 12 months should focus on immediate results and compliance with the original project work plan. Final M&E reports should refer to the main conclusions of the interim progress report and should contain information on the achievement of objectives, results and outputs. The M&E narrative should also consider factors such as stakeholders’ and sectoral involvement in the project implementation, sustainability of the project and proposed follow-up, and the contribution of the project to the national chemicals management framework.

The section relating to **links with the QSP objective and strategic priorities** should indicate how the project has generally supported the aim of the QSP to “support initial enabling capacity-building and implementation activities in developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States, and countries with economies in transition”. References should also be made to the relevance of the project’s outcomes to the three strategic priorities of the QSP, which are:

- The development or updating of national chemical profiles and the identification of capacity needs for sound chemicals management;

- The development and strengthening of national chemicals management institutions, plans, programmes and activities to implement SAICM, building upon work conducted to implement international chemicals-related agreements and initiatives;
- The undertaking of analysis, interagency coordination, and public participation activities for integrating – i.e., mainstreaming – the sound management of chemicals in national strategies, and development assistance priorities.

The **main conclusions** of the M&E should be indicated as a summary of the outcomes of the assessment, balancing achievements and shortcomings. Positive outcomes and challenges faced in the undertaking of project activities or the achievement of expected results should be listed in this section. The section should also refer to the “project objectives” forms. In M&E progress reports, provided after 12 months of activities, conclusions may also take the form of recommendations for remedial follow-up actions.

**Lessons learned** during the project, which may be touched upon in previous sections of the report, should be highlighted in this section. Positive as well as negative conclusions on the implementation of the project should be objectively reported. Such lessons aim to provide useful information for other QSP projects or for the further implementation of the present project.

#### - **Form C: Stakeholders involvement**

A key indicator for assessing the project is its capacity to reach target beneficiaries and in particular actors involved in chemicals management. Relevant stakeholders include Governments, regional economic integration organizations, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and individuals from all relevant sectors, including, but not limited to, agriculture, environment, health, industry, relevant economic activity, development cooperation, labour and science. Individual stakeholders include consumers, disposers, employers, farmers, producers, regulators, researchers, suppliers, transporters and workers.

Interviews with or questionnaires completed by individuals involved in the project are a useful source of information in relation to multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral involvement, as well as about the progress and achievements of project activities and objectives. The undertakers of the M&E may wish to contact meeting participants, members of the project steering committee, Government officials from different relevant Ministries or agencies, non-governmental organizations or industry groups. Contacts may be facilitated by the project implementing organization. The form should indicate under “organization-sector” and “responsibility” relevant background information, such as the position of the person interviewed within the organization, as well as the group or interests represented by the organization and/or sector. Also separately indicate the role and function the person interviewed had in the project, for example by indicating if the individual was a meeting participant, a member of the project steering committee, a project staff, an outside Government official, etc.

#### - **Form D: Project Objectives**

The purpose of the Project Objective form(s) is to establish a framework for the M&E. A number of specific objectives should be identified from the project description. Each identified objective requires a separate form and should be identified with a number. Several pages can, however, be used for the same objective.

**Project objectives** should be explicitly defined in the project description developed by the project implementing agency. Based on this information, the M&E may identify similar or adapted overall project objectives. Project objectives can be adapted if, for example, they are too specific or if there is significant overlap of objectives in the project description. It is recommended that objectives remain as broad as possible and are not mixed with activities. Clearly indicate under the “objective” box, which project objective the form refers to. In the neighbouring field “Fulfilment of the objective”, please indicate whether the objective has been met or not. Briefly highlight how the project activities have contributed to the achievement of its objectives.

All **activities and actions** identified in the project description and/or work plan and expected to have been completed at the time of reporting should be listed. A specific objective is expected to have numerous activities and/or supporting actions. It is possible for the same activity or action to correspond to multiple project Objectives. In this case it is possible to repeat these in several “objective forms”. The **status** section should indicate the situation of planned activities at the time of reporting. Please check “completed” if the activity or action undertaken as planned in the project proposal. Please check “ongoing” if the activity is still undertaken at the time of reporting in compliance with the work plan. Check “delayed” if the activity is ongoing but does not follow the planned schedule or if it has been postponed. Check “cancelled” for activities which were planned not could not take place. Please us the “Notes” section for clarification or justification on “delayed” and “cancelled” activities.

The **means of verification** field is used to document how the actions and/or activities were verified. These may include interviews with stakeholders, meeting reports, research reports, field visits, etc. Please attach all related documentation cited in this section, list them under form, Independent M&E information, and provide them with a report document number. Also list interviews undertaken in form C. In the **remarks** section, provide any complementary or explanatory information, including on completion status, future corresponding activity information, links to other objectives, etc. Use also this section to indicate successes, good practices, challenges or shortcomings.

## **6. Questions and submission of reports**

The SAICM secretariat can be contacted at any time to provide further guidance on the M&E, as well as additional information about SAICM and the QSP trust fund. The person undertaking the M&E is also invited to report any important matter before of after the submission of progress and final reports.

### **Once completed, reports should be sent to the SAICM secretariat:**

SAICM secretariat  
c/o Chemicals Branch, UNEP/DTIE,  
11-13 chemin des Anémones,  
International Environment House  
CH-1219 Geneva, Switzerland  
Fax: (+41 22) 797 34 60  
E-mail: saicm@chemicals.unep.ch

**Annex:**

**Sample terms of reference for independent monitoring and evaluation**

**1. QSP trust fund project:**

- Project name and number:
- Summary description of the project:
- Start date:
- Duration:
- Date of submission of the first monitoring and evaluation report:
- Date of submission of the final monitoring and evaluation report:

**2. Objectives and outputs**

The objective of the independent monitoring and evaluation of QSP trust fund projects is to provide a neutral third party assessment of project implementation, to identify project achievements and challenges, to measure project performance against objectives and to provide indications of progress.

The monitoring and evaluation consultant or firm is expected:

- to follow progress, activities and outcomes of the project based on documentation and information provided by the project implementing organization, stakeholders or other relevant actors involved in chemicals management activities.
- to provide a progress report after 12 months of project activities and a final report at the end of the project<sup>1</sup>.

Reports can only be submitted in English and will be developed using specific templates and forms. The progress and/or final report(s) shall be submitted to the SAICM secretariat once completed.

**3. Specific tasks and responsibilities:**

The tasks for the development and submission of the monitoring and evaluation report(s) include:

- Study of project background materials, including the project description, work plan and application to the QSP trust fund, the guidelines and forms for monitoring and evaluation of QSP trust fund projects, SAICM texts and QSP general materials.
- Study of general national chemicals management information, including, when available, a National Chemicals Profile, existing relevant policies and legislation and reports of other relevant international and national projects.

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<sup>1</sup> For projects of less than 12 months, only one final report is required.

- Monitoring of the project activities and outcomes, through contact with the project management and/or other relevant stakeholders, in order to regularly gather information and documentation on implementation of planned project activities, including meeting documents, reports and participants' lists, developed public information and training materials, publication and other relevant reports.
- Undertaking interviews of and/or sending questionnaires to stakeholders involved in the project in preparation of the monitoring and evaluation report(s), using the guidelines and suggested format of the SAICM secretariat.
- Drafting of the monitoring and evaluation report(s) using all previously obtained information and documents in relation of the project and by filling the specific templates provided by the SAICM secretariat.
- Timely submission of the finalized progress and/or final report to the SAICM secretariat on the agreed dates, after 12 months of project activities and/or upon completion of all project activities.
- Availability to provide additional information or correction on the report(s) after submission.