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**Fourteenth meeting of the Quick Start Programme  
Trust Fund Implementation Committee**  
New York  
28-29 November 2012

## **Provisional report of the fourteenth meeting of the Trust Fund Implementation Committee of the Quick Start Programme of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management**

### **Introduction**

1. In resolution I/4 adopted at its first session, the International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM) decided to establish a Quick Start Programme (QSP) to support initial enabling capacity building and implementation activities in developing countries and countries with economies in transition. The Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) was requested to establish a voluntary, time-limited trust fund to provide seed money to support QSP objectives in accordance with resolution I/4.

2. Representatives of the participating organizations of the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC)<sup>1</sup> were invited to form a Trust Fund Implementation Committee to review progress in the implementation of projects funded under the QSP trust fund and to review existing project management arrangements under the programme with a view to enhance the operational aspects of the Programme and its trust fund.

### **I. Opening of the meeting**

3. The fourteenth meeting of the Committee was held at the UNDP Headquarters building in New York on 28 and 29 November 2012. The representative of the secretariat opened the meeting at 3:00 p.m on Wednesday 28 November 2012.

### **II. Organizational matters**

#### **A. Election of a chairperson**

4. In accordance with the rules of procedure, Mr. Mark Davis, Senior Officer, Pesticide Management Plant Production and Protection Division of FAO, was re-elected to chair the meeting.

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\* The report of the meeting is issued on a provisional basis and will be considered for adoption by the Implementation Committee at its fourteenth meeting.

<sup>1</sup> The participating organizations of IOMC are the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), the World Bank and the World Health Organization (WHO).

**B. Adoption of the agenda**

5. The representatives adopted the following agenda for the meeting on the basis of the provisional agenda set out in document SAICM/TF.14/1:

1. Opening of the meeting
2. Organizational matters:
  - (a) Election of a chairperson;
  - (b) Adoption of the agenda;
  - (c) Organization of work
3. Adoption of the report of the thirteenth meeting of the Committee
4. Update on the outcomes of ICCM3
5. Update on implementation of decisions of the thirteenth meeting
6. Further development of application procedures and project management arrangements for the Quick Start Programme Trust Fund
7. Status of projects funded under the Quick Start Programme
8. Other matters
9. Next meeting
10. Adoption of the report
11. Closure of the meeting

**C. Organization of work**

6. The Committee agreed to meet from 3.00 p.m. to 6.00 p.m. on Wednesday, 28 November 2012 and from 10:00 a.m to 12:00 p.m on Thursday 29 November 2012.

**D. Attendance**

7. The following organizations were represented: FAO, ILO, OECD, UNDP, UNEP, UNIDO, UNITAR and WHO. The Committee noted the absence of the World Bank.

**III. Adoption of the report of the thirteenth meeting of the Committee**

8. The Committee had before it the provisional report of the Committee's thirteenth meeting held on 9 May 2012, contained in document SAICM/TF.14/2. The Committee was informed that changes were made to the report following comments submitted by Committee members.

9. The Committee adopted the meeting report of its thirteenth meeting.

**IV. Update on the outcomes of ICCM3**

10. The Committee took note of the information provided by the secretariat regarding the outcomes of the third session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM3). The Committee noted that by its resolution III/1 on financial and technical resources for the implementation of the Strategic Approach, the Conference decided, inter alia, to extend the term for

contributions to the Quick Start Programme Trust Fund until the fourth session of Conference, and that the Quick Start Programme would continue to support activities to enable initial capacity-building and implementation consistent with its objectives and strategic priorities, unless the Executive Board provides additional operational guidance on strategic priorities.

## **V. Update on implementation of decisions of the thirteenth meeting**

11. At its thirteenth meeting, the Implementation Committee, following the appraisal of 28 complete and eligible applications for funding, decided on a procedure to allocate funds to a number of projects, based on the assumption of availability of resources in the run up to ICCM3.

12. The secretariat provided an update of the current status of the trust fund, indicating that pledges and funds available into the trust fund are only sufficient to support up to two additional projects from the priority list of 8 projects approved at the thirteenth meeting of the Committee. The secretariat also indicated that it is considering an option of having a conversation with the European Commission regarding a possible amendment to the existing agreement for a total of EUR 3.0 million in support of QSP trust fund projects to allow for a partial disbursement of the remaining EUR 860,000 in order to support the remaining projects in the priority list. The secretariat will update the Committee on the outcome of these negotiations as appropriate.

13. The secretariat also provided an update on a recently received an earmarked pledge for CHF 150,000 from the Government of Switzerland in support of projects in the Central Asia and Azerbaijan. The Committee agreed that these funds could be used to support a project entitled “Supporting SAICM and GHS Implementation in the Republic of Tajikistan” with UNITAR as an executing agency, approved at the eleventh meeting of the Committee and currently awaiting signature by all parties. In using these funds for a project already approved, funds would be available to support additional projects from the priority list.

14. It was suggested that the secretariat reviews other projects already approved that could meet the criteria for other earmarked contribution in order to maximize the use of existing resources.

15. In addition, following the suspension of the project in Djibouti in the thirteenth meeting of the Committee, the SAICM National Focal Point sent a request to the secretariat advocating for the continuation of the project given that conditions for success were now in place. Under exceptional circumstances, the secretariat received a revised application developed by the National Focal Point, considering that the suspended project was funded under the umbrella of the earmarked contribution from the European Commission in support of ACP countries for the implementation of the three Multilateral Environmental Agreements related to chemicals.

16. The Committee decided not to consider the new proposal on the grounds that it was not submitted following a formal round of application. The Committee invited the applicant to re-submit the proposal once a new application round is opened.

17. The Committee further suggested that consultations be held with the European Commission to allow for flexibility in using these funds in support of a project from the priority list approved at the thirteenth meeting entitled “Strengthening Capacities for National SAICM Implementation and Supporting GHS Capacity Building in the Republic of Burundi”. The secretariat will update the Committee on the outcome of these consultations accordingly.

## **VI. Further development of application procedures and project management arrangements for the Quick Start Programme Trust Fund.**

18. Since the period for receiving contributions into the Quick Start Programme Trust Fund has been extended until 2015, the secretariat focused on the revision of existing guidance documents in order to assist project implementers in the design and implementation of projects, as well as in reporting on progress in the implementation of projects with a view to improve both the management and the monitoring of projects under the trust fund.

19. According to Resolution I/4, the QSP TF Implementation Committee approves project management arrangements under the Programme. In accordance to this role, the secretariat prepared an analysis of the main problems facing the programme related to its administration and effective management, with proposed solutions for the consideration and possible decision of the Committee.

20. The Committee considered these proposed changes, contained in document SAICM/TF.14/INF/4 (Proposed changes to application forms and the reporting templates) decided to send in their comments and feedbacks by 14 December 2012. Proposed changes address some of the issues affecting the effective administration and management of the Programme, including the use of performance indicators for the monitoring of projects. In addition, the secretariat developed a proposed new guidance for project implementers to assist them throughout the project implementation process and clarify the requirements for each of the steps of the project.

21. The Committee recognized the importance of providing clear guidance to project implementers and agreed that the proposed guidance for implementers contained in the annex of document SAICM/TF.14/5 be used to facilitate the project implementation process. In addition, the Committee agreed to the following:

### **I. Project Implementation**

#### **a) Project timelines**

- Considering the average time for initiating project administrative arrangement once agreements are signed, an additional buffer of six months could be added to the estimated completion date to allow for these arrangements to take place without affecting the implementation time of the project.
- Projects that are not reporting evidence of progress within 12 months of signature by UNEP and the Executing Agency or Project Implementer shall be considered for suspension by the Trust Fund Implementation Committee.

#### **b) Implementation guidance**

- The secretariat should endeavour to provide additional guidance at the beginning of the project to explain the procedures and clarify any administrative issues as necessary using the least costly communication method available. This can also be done through special sessions during regional meetings.

#### **c) Requests for budget revisions**

- The Committee agreed that different models for budget revisions should be explored to allow for budget revision flexibility by the secretariat. The secretariat will look at the different models and consult with the Committee electronically for a decision.
- A clear directive regarding over expenditures should be developed and communicated to project implementers. The directive will make it clear that any unapproved over-expenditure will be the responsibility of the project implementer.

#### **d) Reporting on progress**

- In order to assist project implementers to improve the quality of monitoring and evaluation reports, the secretariat should compile a list of evaluators that have produced good quality reports for QSP Projects and make it available to project implementers to assist them in finding experienced professionals. Also, a sample of good reports could be shared with implementers for reference.
- Amend templates for progress and M&E reports to incorporate a reference as to how recommendations made by the evaluator have been subsequently addressed.
- For projects facing serious delays in the submission of project reports, or in the implementation of the project in general, the secretariat could explore using the services of an expert from the Senior Expert Resource Group to advise on project implementation and preparation of project reports.

- Executing agencies are responsible for ensuring that project reports are prepared and submitted on time in accordance with the requirements specified in the project agreement.
- The Senior Expert Resource Group could assist projects which require expert intervention as well as projects with reporting difficulties.

## **II. Information management**

- Development of a comprehensive web-base relational database and reporting system for the efficient administration of the Programme.

## **III. Workload management**

- During high peaks of work associated with the processing of application rounds and preparations of the meetings of the QSP governing bodies, the secretariat should consider hiring additional temporary staff to cope with excess workload associated with these activities.

## **IV. Performance indicators**

- Implementation guidelines and application forms should direct project implementers in the use of performance indicators with a view to improve the monitoring of projects and support evaluation of the programme.

22. The Committee noted that while some of the revised guidance will apply to new projects only, implementers of existing projects could benefit from this guidance material as appropriate.

23. Resolution III/1 of ICCM3 on financial and technical resources for implementation of SAICM decided that the Quick Start Programme will continue to support activities to enable initial capacity-building and implementation consistent with its objectives as set out in section IV of the Overarching Policy Strategy and its strategic priorities unless the Executive Board provides additional operational guidance on the Strategic Priorities. The Implementation Committee took note of this decision and agreed that the Committee does not have the mandate to provide recommendations to the Executive Board with regards to additional operational guidance on the Strategic Priorities of the Programme. However, IOMC participating organizations that are members of the QSP EB could provide their individual views to the Board.

## **VII. Status of projects funded under the Quick Start Programme**

24. The representative of the secretariat updated the participants on the status of the projects funded under the Quick Start Programme Trust Fund in the first twelve rounds. A project implemented by CILSS which had been facing delays was presented to the Committee. The Committee decided that no further disbursements will be made until proper project reporting is submitted to the secretariat and project progress is in accordance with approved work plan and budget. The Committee also stressed that any unauthorized budget expenditure is the responsibility of the project implementer. The Committee also requested that further information on over-expenditures incurred by the project is provided.

## **VIII. Other matters**

25. The fund raising strategy prepared by the secretariat with a view to assist the secretariat in increasing the fundraising efforts to support the replenishment of the QSP Trust Fund in the next intersessional period was discussed by the Trust Fund Implementation Committee. The Committee suggested highlighting the strategic aspects. The Committee recommended treating the involvement of the private sector with caution as there could be potential conflict of interest.

26. Suggestions were also made to market projects that are in the pipeline to potential donors through newsletters or other specific tools. Communicating the success of the programme based on results was also considered advantageous to raise the profile of the QSP before donors. Regional development banks could be attracted to support regional initiatives based on regional priorities.

27. A discussion on the next application round was held. It was decided that the next application round should proceed as per the QSP Business Plan and opened immediately. The secretariat would make special mention of special earmarked funds to stimulate specific submissions.

28. The Committee suggested that letters be sent to the donors by the Chair of the Trust Fund Implementation Committee making reference to the existing backlog of unfunded projects and encouraging them to contribute to the Trust Fund.

#### **IX. Next meeting**

29. The fifteenth meeting of the Trust Fund Implementation Committee would be convened on 30 and 31 May 2013, back-to-back with the next meeting of the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC).

#### **X. Adoption of the report**

30. The secretariat presented a draft report of the meeting based in the discussions of the previous day and comments and feedbacks were received. It was agreed that the secretariat would finalize the report and circulate a draft report to the Committee within two weeks of the meeting. Taking account of any comments received, the secretariat would then issue the report on a provisional basis, pending adoption at the Committee's fifteenth meeting.

#### **XI. Closure of the meeting**

31. The chairperson declared the meeting closed at 12:27 p.m. on Thursday 29 November 2012.

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