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Regional meeting on the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management

**Update on 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**

**I. Introduction**

1. The first session of the United Nations Environment Assembly in its resolution 1/5, requested the Executive Director of UNEP, consistent with the terms of reference for the Special Programme, to establish and administer the Special Programme trust fund and to provide a secretariat to deliver administrative support to the Programme.

2. The terms of reference of the Special Programme stipulated that the secretariat will process application proposals for approval by the Executive Board, manage approved allocations and service the Executive Board. The terms of reference further stipulated that the Secretariat will report on its operations to the Executive Board and will be accountable to the Executive Director of UNEP for administrative and financial matters. Finally, the terms of reference stipulated that the secretariat will submit an annual report to the Executive Board, which will also be sent to the governing bodies of UNEP and of the Instruments for their consideration.

3. Since its operationalization, the Special Programme has undertaken the following activities, with greater detail presented below:

- (a) The Special Programme Trust Fund was established in 2015;
- (b) The Executive Board was established in February 2016;
- (c) The 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Executive Board was held from 2 to 3 February 2016 in Geneva, Switzerland;
- (d) The 1<sup>st</sup> round of applications was open from April to July 2016;
- (e) The 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the Executive Board, which approved 7 projects from the 1<sup>st</sup> round of applications was held from 11 to 13 October 2016 in Bangkok, Thailand;
- (f) The 2<sup>nd</sup> round of applications was open from 22 Feb 2017 to 20 June 2017; and
- (g) The 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the Executive Board, which approved 17 projects from the 2<sup>nd</sup> round of applications was held from 2 to 3 December 2017 at the UN Environment Headquarters, in Nairobi, Kenya.

## **The Executive Board of the Special Programme**

4. The Executive Board is the decision making body overseeing the Special Programme. The Executive Board reflects a balance between donors and recipients. The term of the representatives is a two-year rotation. The Executive Board is composed of the following:

- (a) Four representatives of recipient countries, reflecting equitable, geographical representation, drawn from the following United Nations region: Africa, Asia-Pacific, Central and Eastern Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean. In addition, the Executive Board will have one representative from a least developed country or a small island developing State on a rotational basis;
- (b) Five donor representatives, which are not also recipient countries.

5. The Executive Board has been established with the following representation:

- (a) Recipient countries: Kenya (Africa), Pakistan (Asia Pacific), Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (Central and Eastern Europe), Brazil and Argentina (Latin America and the Caribbean – sharing the two-year term), and Yemen (Least Developed Country);
- (b) Donor representatives: European Union, Finland, Germany, Sweden and the United States.

6. The Executive Board at its first meeting held in February 2016 in Geneva, Switzerland nominated the Co-chairs of the Executive Board: Brazil representing recipient countries and Finland representing the donors. With the hand-over of the Board membership for the Latin America and the Caribbean region from Brazil to Argentina in early February 2017, the Executive Board held a teleconference in April 2017 to nominate a Co-chair for the recipient countries. The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia was subsequently elected as Co-chair representing recipient countries for the rest of the two-year term ending on 2 February 2018. Mr. Niko Urho changed functions, and therefore was unable to complete his two-year term as Executive Board member and Co-Chair representing a donor country. On 16 October 2017, the Executive Board elected Ms. Sofia Tingstorp from Sweden to replace Mr. Urho for the remainder of the two-year term ending on 2 February 2018.

7. On 15 August 2017, Erik Solheim, Executive Director of UN Environment sent out a letter inviting Member States to nominate Executive Board members for the new term starting 3 February 2018 to 2 February 2020 in accordance with the Special Programme terms of reference. The initial deadline for nomination was 30 September 2017, which was subsequently extended to 30 November 2017.

## **II. First meeting of the Executive Board of the Special Programme, February 2016, Geneva, Switzerland**

8. The first meeting of the Executive Board was held from 2 to 3 February 2016 in Geneva Switzerland. Significant progress was made during this meeting, with agreement reached on the Rules of Procedure for the operations of the Executive Board of the Special Programme, the application guidelines, and application forms. The Executive Board also agreed to launch the first round of applications on 4 April 2016, with a deadline of submission of application on 4 July 2016.

### III. First round of applications for the Special Programme, April to July 2016

9. In preparation for the launch, the application guidelines and application forms were finalised following recommendations from the first meeting of the Executive Board. The Special Programme website was updated to include information on the outcomes of the first meeting of the Executive Board, an update on the donors, and information on the launch of the first round of applications. Announcements for the launch of the first round of applications were also made by the Secretariat of Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm (BRS), Minamata and SAICM through their websites and the BRS, Minamata and SAICM broadcasts.

10. A series of outreach events were undertaken by the secretariat of the programme on the Special Programme following the launch of the first round for applications and providing visibility on the donors of the Special Programme, including:

- (a) Technical Briefing on “Financing under the Minamata Convention” held on the margins of the Seventh Session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on Mercury (INC 7), 9 March 2016, Dead Sea, Jordan;
- (b) First meeting of the Bureau of the International Conference on Chemicals Management for its fifth session, 16–17 March 2016, Dead Sea, Jordan;
- (c) Chemicals and Waste Briefing for the Permanent Missions to the United Nations in Geneva, 29 April 2016;
- (d) Webinar series on the Special Programme: the first call for proposals hosted by the BRS Secretariat:
  - (i) 25 April 2016 for Asia and the Pacific and Africa;
  - (ii) 28 April 2016 for Asia and the Pacific and Africa;
  - (iii) 3 May 2016 for SIDS and Latin America and the Caribbean;
  - (iv) 18 May 2016 for Latin America and the Caribbean (Spanish);
  - (v) 19 May 2016 for Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia (Russian);
  - (vi) 19 May 2016 for Francophone Africa (French);
  - (vii) 20 May 2016 for Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia;
- (e) 45th Inter-Organisational Programme for Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC) Meeting, 11–12 May 2016, Geneva, Switzerland;
- (f) Global workshop on enhancing national cooperation and coordination for the implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, 21–23 June 2016, Geneva, Switzerland;
- (g) Meeting of the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties to the Rotterdam Convention, 14 June 2016, Geneva, Switzerland;
- (h) Meeting of the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties to the Stockholm Convention, 28–29 June 2016, Geneva, Switzerland;
- (i) Meeting of the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention, 11–12 July 2016, Geneva, Switzerland;
- (j) Meeting of the Bureau of the Minamata Convention, 24–25 August 2016, Livingstone, Zambia;
- (k) Sub-Regional workshop on enhancing national cooperation and coordination for the implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam, Stockholm and Bamako conventions and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the SADC countries, 6 September 2016, Manzini, Swaziland; and
- (l) Chemicals and Waste Briefing for the Permanent Missions to the United Nations in Geneva, 30 November 2016.

11. Information on the Special Programme was also included in the UNEP Chemicals and Waste Branch, DTIE Newsletters in March 2016 and May 2016.

12. From April to July 2016, the Secretariat responded to a large number of questions and queries from developing countries and countries with economies in transition in support of the development of their application packages.

13. Applications were received from the end of June 2016 and until the deadline of 4 July 2016. A total of 54 applications were received from 45 countries. Acknowledgements of the application packages were sent no later than a week of receipt of the application package. Statistics on the applications status outlining the applications received by region and by type of country are set out in the Appendix to the present note.

14. An internal task team consisting of representatives from the secretariats of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, the Minamata Convention and the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) and the secretariat of the Global Environment Facility was formalized by the executive board at its second meeting. Its role is to assist the Special Programme Secretariat to undertake an appraisal of the applications received from developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

15. Four meetings of the internal task team, comprising of representatives from the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions Secretariat, the interim Minamata Secretariat and the SAICM Secretariat, were convened in July and August 2016, to undertake a technical review of the applications received.

16. To support the work above, the secretariat engaged an intern during the period of June – August 2016. In addition, a Junior Professional Officer supported the Special Programme Secretariat for six months and supported processing the application proposals for approval by the Executive Board and the management of approved allocations over the coming year.

17. Between July and September 2016, the secretariat undertook an appraisal of the applications received for eligibility and completeness resulting in 42 applications being presented to the Executive Board for their consideration and possible approval.

#### **IV. Second meeting of the Executive Board, October 2016, Bangkok, Thailand**

18. The second meeting of the Executive Board was held from 11 to 13 October 2016 in Bangkok, Thailand. The meeting was attended by the full complement of Board members, represented by the following recipient countries: Kenya, Pakistan, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Brazil, Yemen, and the following donors: the European Union, Finland, Germany, Sweden and the United States. In addition, a number of observers attended the meeting, from Governments, IOMC members – UNEP, UNITAR and WHO, representatives from the BRS Secretariat, the interim Minamata Secretariat and the SAICM Secretariat, and the GEF Secretariat.

19. The main objective of the meeting was to review the eligible and complete applications submitted for the first and pilot round of applications. The outcome of the review resulted in seven approved projects for this pilot round amounting to US\$ 1.75 million, taking into consideration, regional balance and the special needs of least developed countries and small island developing States:

- (a) *Benin*: Legal and institutional strengthening for the sound management of chemicals in Benin;
- (b) *Tanzania*: Strengthening institutional capacity for sound management of chemicals and waste in the United Republic of Tanzania;
- (c) *Iraq*: Develop and strengthen the institutional structure for the management of chemicals and waste in Iraq;
- (d) *Kyrgyz Republic*: Strengthening capacities for national implementation of chemicals and waste related international agreements;

- (e) *Ukraine*: Strengthening the enforcement of the Rotterdam Convention in Ukraine, and building capacity to counteract illegal trafficking of chemicals;
- (f) *Argentina*: Strengthening national capacity for the sound management of chemicals and waste; and
- (g) *Dominican Republic*: Strengthening institutional capacity for the implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, the Minamata Convention and SAICM in Dominican Republic.

20. The Board agreed that the second round of applications would be launched in February 2017.

## **V. Second round of applications for the Special Programme, February to June 2017**

21. The launch of the second round of applications was undertaken on 21 February 2017, with a deadline for submission of applications on 20 June 2017.

22. To facilitate this application process, revised application guidelines and application forms were developed. The application guidelines provide detailed steps on how to complete the forms and what information would be required for submission of applications. These documents are also available on the Special Programme's website:

- (a) Application guidelines;
- (b) Application Form IA– project summary; Form IB – project description; and
- (c) Application Form II – project budget.

23. Announcements for the launch of the second round of applications were also made by the Secretariat of Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm (BRS), Minamata and SAICM through their websites and the BRS, Minamata and SAICM broadcasts.

24. A series of outreach events will be undertaken on the Special Programme following the launch of the second round of applications, starting with information sharing events during the Conference of the Parties of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions.

25. In addition, the Secretariat has provided technical support and responded to a large number of questions and queries from developing countries and countries with economies in transition in support of the development of their application packages.

26. Applications were submitted from middle of June 2017 and until the deadline of 20 June 2017. A total of 42 applications were received from 39 countries. Acknowledgements of the application packages were sent no later than a week of receipt of the application package. Statistics on the applications status outlining the applications received by region and by type of country are set out in the Appendix to the present note.

27. A meeting of the internal task team, comprising of representatives from the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions Secretariat, the interim Minamata Secretariat, the SAICM Secretariat and the GEF Secretariat, was convened at the end of June 2017, to verify that the proposed activities as presented in the application fall within the objective and scope of the Special Programme. The applicants will be informed of the outcome of this review and requested to address the comments.

## **VI. Third meeting of the Executive Board, December 2017, Nairobi, Kenya**

28. The third meeting for the Executive Board was held from 2 to 3 December 2017 in Nairobi, Kenya. The meeting was attended by 8 of the 10 Executive Board members, Kenya, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Argentina, Yemen, and the European Union, Finland, Germany and Sweden,

representing a quorum for decision making, in accordance with the rules of procedure for the Executive Board of the Special Programme. In addition, a number of observers attended the meeting, from Iran, Kuwait, Sri Lanka and the Netherlands, representatives from the BRS Secretariat, the Minamata Secretariat and the GEF Secretariat and UN Environment.

29. The main objective of the meeting was to consider the eligible and complete applications submitted for the second round of applications and the draft resource mobilization and communications strategies. The outcome of the review resulted in seventeen approved projects for this round amounting to US\$ 5,096,735, taking into consideration, regional balance and the special needs of least developed countries and small island developing States. The Executive Board approved the following projects:

### **Africa**

- (i) *Ghana*: Strengthening institutional capacity for the sustainable sound management of chemicals and waste throughout their life-cycle and the effective implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam, Stockholm and Minamata conventions and the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) in Ghana;
- (ii) *Kenya*: Support to chemicals and waste MEAs and SAICM implementation in Kenya;
- (iii) *Nigeria*: Strengthening of the legal and institutional infrastructures for the sound management of chemicals (SMC) in Nigeria
- (iv) *The Gambia*: Elimination and environmentally sound disposal of Asbestos in The Gambia;
- (v) *Uganda*: Strengthening national institutional capacity in sound management of chemicals and waste in Uganda.

### **Asia Pacific**

- (vi) *Afghanistan*: Enhancing the sustainable institutional capacity to regulate toxic chemicals;
- (vii) *China*: Strengthening institutional capacity for the implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam, Stockholm and Minamata Conventions and SAICM;
- (viii) *India*: Institutional capacity building for sustainable management of chemicals and waste with special focus on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs);
- (ix) *Kiribati*: Strengthening legal systems, institutions and data collection infrastructures in Kiribati;
- (x) *Papua New Guinea*: Strengthening the institutional framework and national capacity of key stakeholders in Papua New Guinea in wastes and chemical management;
- (xi) *Vietnam*: Strengthening national capacity in sound chemicals and waste management for the implementation of the Stockholm, Basel, Rotterdam, Minamata Conventions, SAICM in Vietnam.

### **Central and Eastern Europe**

- (xii) *Belarus*: Establish a sustainable national infrastructure to join and support the implementation of the Rotterdam Convention in the Republic of Belarus;
- (xiii) *Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*: Strengthening institutional capacities for mainstreaming quadruple synergy schemes in implementation of the National Action Plans (NAPs) for implementation of SAICM and inclusion of Minamata convention;
- (xiv) *Republic of Moldova*: Improving sustainable institutional and regulatory framework for chemicals and waste management throughout their lifecycle in the Republic of Moldova
- (xv) *Serbia*: Strengthening the synergy between Basel, Rotterdam, Stockholm and Minamata Conventions at national level in the Republic of Serbia.

## Latin America and the Caribbean

- (xvi) *Brazil*: Strengthening institutional capacity for sound management of chemicals through the establishment of necessary structure to implement the national legislation on industrial chemicals;
- (xvii) *Ecuador*: Strengthening of the national control system for the management of dangerous materials in Ecuador.

30. Of these approved projects, the following countries received more than the US\$ 250,000 Afghanistan, Brazil, China, Nigeria and Vietnam. The Executive Board applied key criteria in considering projects requesting funding above US\$ 250,000, and these will be included in the revised application guidelines for the next and subsequent rounds of applications.

31. The draft resource mobilization strategy and communications strategy were endorsed by the Executive Board and it was agreed that the Secretariat start their implementation.

32. The Board agreed that the third round of applications would be launched in February 2018.

33. Finally, the Executive Board agreed that the Special Programme was established on 1 September 2015, which is the month and year the Special Programme Trust Fund was established. The Special Programme will therefore be open to receive voluntary contributions and applications for support up to seven years from the date of its establishment, i.e. until 31 August 2022.

## VII. Update contribution of donors to the Special Programme

34. The generous contributions of donors to the Special Programme Trust Fund and its operations are greatly appreciated. The following table provides an update of donor contributions to the Special Programme Trust Fund from 2015 to present.

**Table 1.** Contributions and pledges received 2015-2018 (February 2018)

Donor	Total amount pledged*/contributed
European Commission	11,676,996
Sweden	2,927,456
United States	1,237,750
Germany*	641,082
Norway	233,644
Finland	219,954
The Netherlands*	137,013
Austria	43,248
Denmark*	31,764
<b>Total contributions and pledges**</b>	<b>17,148,907</b>

\* Pledges made and amounts will be adjusted with the exchange rate on the day of receipt

\*\* including PSC

35. The total amount of contributions and pledges to date is US\$ 17,148,907.

36. In line with the Special Programme terms of reference, all signatories and parties to the conventions and other Governments with the capacity to do so, as well as from the private sector, including industry, foundations and non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders, are encouraged to contribute to the Special Programme Trust Fund.