VIRTUAL WORKING GROUP ON ISSUES OF CONCERN

REQUEST FOR ELECTRONIC FEEDBACK

The co-facilitators have released a proposal on how to address the existing emerging policy issues and other issues of concern (30 November 2020) based on the submissions received.

Please submit your feedback and proposals to the SAICM Secretariat at saicm.chemicals@un.org, with a copy to delfina.cuglievan@un.org by 21 December 2020.

Please provide electronic feedback as follows:

1) General comments and considerations

UK views:

All existing emerging policy issues (EPI) and other issues of concern (IOC) should be treated through the same process for review and prioritization and designated as issues of concern that warrant global action.

There is a continued need to be very clear about the value that this multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral framework brings to these issues of concern to ensure we are placing resources where we will make the greatest impact.

A process to address the existing emerging policy issues and other issues of concern is required which prevents delays amongst those issues where progress is being made, whilst reviewing those which may need either phasing out, editing or moving to a different forum. To do this an assessment is needed about whether there is enough evidence (outlining the problems and potential solutions), sufficient commitment and sufficient resources within this framework.

To avoid further delays we propose that ICCM5 should establish a multi-disciplinary and multi-sectoral expert group to review all the current EPIs and IOC in conjunction with one another.

Within this the existing working group for each eight of the EPIs or other issues of concern, led by the responsible IOMC organization could be invited to present an initial review of the issues according to the modalities established for the new beyond 2020 instrument. This multi-stakeholder and multi-disciplinary group should then evaluate the evidence and draw out key priority actions across all the IOC. This should lead to decisions about whether to continue issues, phase them out or make recommendations for moving them to another forum.

It is felt that establishing individual groups for each IOC would require significant additional resource, something that has already proved a barrier to action for EPIs and IOC. As noted in the UNEP report

Commented [DC1]: Without having agreed the modalities it is difficult to make recommendations at this time but the assumption is that the new modalities will be designed in a way that will ensure the Beyond 2020 is the best platform to review these issues and where coordinated global action can have the greatest impact.

This should also include some assessment of stakeholder commitment to the issues and reassurance of active engagement.
'An Assessment Report on Issues of Concern: Chemicals and Waste Issues Posing Risks to Human Health and the Environment' is it important to have a 'manageable number at any one time where coordinated international action can have the greatest impact'. This is because the implications of continuing with or adding an issue that is not a global priority will have a knock-on impact to others by drawing on the valuable in-kind and financial resource available whilst clouding the message from the global community about our key priorities for action. Reviewing the issues together would allow this consensus to be made about where the priorities lie for coordinating limited international resources.

One group to oversee all the IOC would also make it possible to suggest new ways for addressing these in an integrated and holistic manner as also suggested in the UNEP assessment report.

Once a review has been made in this way, time-bound work plans with clear associated milestones and indicators and identified actors should be produced. Each work plan should identify where possible availability of potential sponsors, resourcing and technical assistance.

This group would be bought together at checkpoints identified throughout the workplans to monitor and evaluate progress.

2) Section IV - Co-facilitators’ proposal on the way forward for consideration by the VWG

A. Key general considerations in moving forward

   i. The emerging policy issues process has been useful in raising profile of issues on the international stage.

   ii. There is a need to review, assess and prioritise the emerging policy issues and other issues of concern in to move forward with a clear plan of action.

   iii. Progress to date has been variable across the issues. There is a need to be flexible so that a decision to either continue, close, revise or move the issues to another forum may be taken on an issue by issue basis (i.e. no blanket decision).

   iv. The path forward must stimulate ownership for action in moving forward for the particular emerging policy issue and / or other issue of concern and an understanding of resourcing both financial and in kind for each issue.

   v. The decision-making on the future of the emerging policy issues and other issues of concern will be transparent.
vi. The International Conference is the appropriate body to take decisions on the future of the current emerging policy issues and other issues of concern. These decisions should be made in a transparent evidence-based way.

B. Proposed approach

i. At ICCM5: The ICCM should agree to an omnibus resolution on the emerging policy issues and other issues of concern that:
   (a) Recognizes the progress on the emerging policy issues and other issues of concern under SAICM to date;
   (b) Highlights any immediate and specific priority actions, as appropriate, to ensure that efforts and momentum continue where necessary and appropriate;
   (c) Sets out a process to determine next steps on the existing emerging policy issues and issues of concern under the beyond 2020 instrument (see possible options set out in (ii) below).
   (d) Establishes a multi-sectoral and multi-disciplinary group to review all of the issues of concern in conjunction with one another to identify specific priority actions, explore new ways of working and develop time-bound work plans.
   (e) Requests the next session of the International Conference [ICCM6] to deliberate on and determine the path forward on the emerging policy issues and other issues of concern in the beyond 2020 instrument.

ii. Options for the process to determine next steps (see B.i.(c)):

   OPTION 2
   (1) Establish a single time-bound multi-disciplinary and multi-sectoral expert group to review and refine work plans, monitoring and evaluating progress and make recommendations to the ICCM for all the issues of concern and submit recommendations on priorities, suggested new way of working and develop co-ordinated work plans at least 6 months prior to the following session of the International Conference [ICCM6] (e.g. in the form of a task force or an ad hoc working group) with the purpose of defining relevant objectives and milestones and laying out actions. The main functions would be:
   • reviewing all the issues together to come to a consensus about where the priorities lie for coordinating the available international resources
   • looking into new ways for addressing the issues in a holistic and integrated manner
   • developing and coordinating the implementation of a workplan, including propose indicators for relevant targets under different Strategic Objectives of the Beyond 2020 instrument;

   Deleted: OPTION 1
   [The existing working group for each EPI, led by the responsible IOMC organization[,] [SAICM stakeholders] will be invited to submit proposals on an emerging policy issue or issue of concern to the secretariat six months before the following session of the International Conference [ICCM6] for consideration at that meeting. The secretariat will make the submissions available on the SAICM web-site.]
   The proposals will include: (i) workplans; (ii) proposal for issue-specific goals and indicator(s) in the new instrument; and / or (iii) review of the emerging policy issue or issue of concern according to the modalities established for the new beyond 2020 instrument.
   Should no proposal be submitted, the next International Conference [ICCM6] may decide to discontinue the Emerging Policy Issue or other issues of concern. Should a submitted proposal be deemed insufficient, [ICCM6] may postpone further consideration of the future of the emerging policy issue or other issue of concern to [ICCM7].]
• coordinating with other subsidiary bodies, IOMC organizations and beyond (e.g. the convention secretariats);
• monitoring and evaluating the progress against the indicators; and
• making recommendations to the ICCM (e.g. completion of the IoC, extension of the time frame of the subsidiary body, elevation of the IoC to other fora).