

Draft

Information note

Workshop on Development of Legal and Institutional Infrastructures on Sound Management of Chemicals – SAICM Implementation.

Introduction

The workshop in the Asia-Pacific region 24-25 May is the second regional workshop on development of legal and institutional infrastructures on sound management of chemicals held in conjunction with a SAICM Regional Meeting. The first workshop took place in Riga December 2006 back to back with the SAICM regional meeting.

The workshop in Bangkok will focus on the first preventive steps in the supply chain, steps to be taken before or when chemicals are placed on the market and taken into use, often called “Chemicals Control”.

The purpose of the workshop is to identify and assess the needs and non-financial barriers for the development of national institutions and legal infrastructures for chemicals control.

The workshop has been made possible by funding from the Swedish Government.

SAICM Implementation

The Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management that was adopted at the International Conference of Chemicals Management (SAICM) in Dubai 6 February 2006 recognized in the Dubai Declaration that there is lack of capacity for managing chemicals in developing countries and countries with economies in transition. This was also recognized in the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity building adopted by the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in February 2005 where chemicals were appointed as one of the thematic areas.

Capacity building in sound management of chemicals is part of the seventh objective of the Millennium Development Goal on environmental sustainability and was recognized in paragraph 56 k of the 2005 World Summit Outcome that stresses that support is needed to the developing countries in strengthening their capacity for sound management of chemicals and hazardous wastes by providing technical and financial assistance, as appropriate.

The facilitation of sound management of chemicals will depend on the development of national legal and institutional infrastructures. However, most developing countries and many countries with economies in transition have not managed to establish the necessary national legal and institutional infrastructures for the sound management of chemicals.

The main gaps seem to be the absence of a framework legislation regulating the obligations of manufacturers, importers and professional users of chemicals.

The establishment of national legal and institutional infrastructures for the sound management of chemicals will require financial resources which might be an important barrier for the establishment of the legal and institutional infrastructures in developing countries and countries with economies in transition. To ensure additional financial resources, SAICM recommended mainstreaming (integration) of sound management of chemicals into the development agenda. The costs of establishment of and sustaining national legal and institutional infrastructures for the sound management of chemicals should therefore be an integrated part of mainstreaming of sound management of chemicals into the development agenda to be carried out in developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

The mainstreaming of sound management of chemicals into the development agenda consists of a number of steps including an analysis of the gaps in national legal and institutional infrastructures for sound management of chemicals and means to fill these gaps in light of the identified priorities.

UNDP/UNEP programmatic partnership on mainstreaming

UNDP and UNEP have developed a programmatic partnership on mainstreaming of sound management of chemicals into the development agenda, which will be tested in a number of countries, such as Uganda, Zambia, Cambodia, Macedonia and Ecuador.

There are two core guidance tools that are being tested in the country projects:

- UNEP/WHO Health and Environment Linkage: Managing the linkages for sustainable development – A toolkit for decision makers
- UNDP Technical Guide for Mainstreaming the Sound Management of Chemicals in MDG-Based Policies and Plans

These two central guidance documents are supposed to be supported by other detailed guidance on specific aspects to be developed in the future. Detailed guidance on legal and institutional infrastructures is currently not available.

The workshops are part of a process which has the specific objectives of:

1. Identifying and assessing the needs and non-financial barriers for the development of legal and institutional infrastructure in the area of chemicals control.
2. Development of a toolkit for facilitation of the development of national legal and institutional infrastructures and to test the toolkit in a number of countries from the four UN regions with developing countries and countries with economies in transition.
3. Ensuring that the tools for facilitation of the development of national institutions and legal infrastructures meet national needs.

The workshop and its follow-up activities will thus be part of the UNEP/UNDP programmatic partnership on mainstreaming of sound management of chemicals into the development agenda.

The project consists of three connected phases:

Phase 1 consist of an identification and assessment phase of the needs and non-financial barriers for the development of national institutions and legal infrastructures together with a

discussion and recommendation of for the elements of a toolkit to meet the identified needs and non-financial barriers.

The identification and assessment of needs and non-financial barriers will build on the on experience of countries that either already has developed National Profiles on chemicals management or National Implementation Plans for the Stockholm Convention as they will have useful practical experience with implementation of plans for management of chemicals and the problems they have faced.

The identification and assessment phase will be facilitated through regional workshops that will discuss the following themes:

- Development of national legal infrastructures
- Development of national institutions
- Stakeholder involvement

The workshops could also serve as a mean for the identification of countries where it would be most suitable to test the toolkit.

Phase two will consist of implementation of the conclusions from the workshops through development of a toolkit on development of legal and institutional infrastructures and subsequent testing in a countries.

Phase three will consist of a discussion of the results from the testing of the toolkit in countries in order to identify whether there is a need for amendments to the toolkit.

The Workshop

The Workshop has, as said above, a focus on chemicals control, the first steps of a sound management of chemicals before or when chemicals are placed on the market or taken in use. It will consist of five sessions during two full days with introductory presentations to the different themes and group discussions of issues in three of the sessions in relation to the theme of the session. The topics to be discussed are included in representatives from the region will also make presentations of the situation in their country.