

# SAICM - What It is, What It's For

**SAICM - the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management, a policy framework to foster the sound management of chemicals - was adopted by the International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM) on 6 February 2006 in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. For more on SAICM see <http://www.saicm.org/>. The ICCM is SAICM's governing body: the section of the site headed ICCM gives details of the Conference's second meeting, ICCM2, in Switzerland from 11 to 15 May 2009. This session will review progress in implementing SAICM's brief.**

Chemicals in all their forms are essential to modern life. But we have to balance our recognition of their importance with a proper prudence over their potential costs. These include the chemical industry's heavy use of water and energy, and the possible adverse impacts of chemicals on the environment and human health. These are what make sound chemicals management a key issue in sustainable development.

SAICM promotes chemical safety worldwide. Its overall objective is the sound management of chemicals throughout their life cycle so that, by 2020, they are produced and used in ways that minimise significant adverse impacts on human health and the environment. This "2020 goal" was adopted by the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002 as part of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.

SAICM is distinctive in its insistence that chemical safety is a sustainability issue. It is also comprehensive: its stakeholders include governments, IGOs and NGOs, and members of the chemicals industry. While voluntary in nature, it is backed by senior politicians and by the governing bodies of key intergovernmental organisations.

SAICM has three parts: the Dubai Declaration on International Chemicals Management, which spells out the high-level political commitment to SAICM; an Overarching Policy Strategy which sets out its scope, needs, objectives, financial considerations, underlying principles and implementation and review arrangements; and a Global Plan of Action. Objectives are grouped under five themes: risk reduction; knowledge and information; governance; capacity-building and technical cooperation; and illegal international traffic.

The Global Plan of Action serves as a working tool and guidance document to support the implementation of SAICM and other relevant international initiatives.

To support the building of capacities and implementation activities in the developing world during its initial phase, SAICM includes a Quick Start Programme. The programme has so far funded 82 projects in 76 countries worth more than USD 14 million.

The second session of the ICCM, being the SAICM governing body, will be the first time that the Conference performs its numerous functions. These include an evaluation of SAICM implementation thus far, looking at emerging issues and proposing appropriate action. The next session of the Conference will be in 2012.

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