
International Conference on Chemicals Management

Third session

Nairobi, 17–21 September 2012

Item 4 (a) of the provisional agenda*

Implementation of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management: evaluation of and guidance on implementation and review and update of the Strategic Approach

Summary report on progress in implementation of the Strategic Approach

Note by the secretariat

1. In accordance with paragraph 24 of the Overarching Policy Strategy, the International Conference on Chemicals Management undertakes periodic reviews of the Strategic Approach. Two of its functions in that regard are “to receive reports from all relevant stakeholders on progress in implementation of the Strategic Approach and to disseminate information as appropriate” and “to evaluate the implementation of the Strategic Approach with a view to reviewing progress against the 2020 target and taking strategic decisions, programming, prioritizing and updating the approach as necessary”.
2. To facilitate reporting by stakeholders and the performance of its review function, the Conference at its second session agreed upon modalities for reporting by stakeholders on progress in implementation,¹ including:
 - (a) A set of 20 indicators for measuring progress in achieving the objectives of the Strategic Approach in the five areas set out in the Overarching Policy Strategy (risk reduction, knowledge and information, governance, capacity-building and technical cooperation, and illegal international traffic);
 - (b) Guidance for the secretariat on how to collect the data needed, including on the scope of the data needed for each indicator, and a request that the secretariat should develop a simple electronic data collection tool;
 - (c) A request that the secretariat should prepare a baseline estimates report for the period 2006–2008 and a first progress report for the period 2009–2011 for consideration by the Open-ended Working Group;
 - (d) Formal evaluation of progress in the implementation of the Strategic Approach by the Conference at its third session and at periodic intervals thereafter.
3. At its first meeting, held in Belgrade from 15 to 18 November 2011, the Open-ended Working Group considered an overview of the work carried out by the secretariat in preparation for the evaluation of progress in implementation of the Strategic Approach and had before it the draft baseline

* SAICM/ICCM.3/1.

¹ The modalities for reporting by stakeholders on progress in implementation agreed upon by the Conference are set out in annex III to the report of the Conference on the work of its second session (SAICM/ICCM.2/15).

estimates report for the period 2006–2008, the preliminary results from an analysis of data collected from Governments and intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations using the simple electronic reporting tool for the period 2009–2010, as well as information on progress submitted by the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC).

4. The Open-ended Working Group agreed to extend the period of data collection for the first periodic report to the end of January 2012 and for the first report to be based on data for the biennium 2009–2010 with three-year reporting periods thereafter.

5. A summary of the main findings from work undertaken by the secretariat in preparing the baseline estimates report and the first progress report is set out in the annex to the present note. The baseline report is set out in document SAICM/ICCM.3/INF/5 and the report on progress in implementation for 2009–2010 is set out in document SAICM/ICCM.3/INF/6.

6. The results of the data analysis for each question in the survey for 2009–2010 in the electronic tool can be downloaded from the Strategic Approach website in the form of Excel spreadsheets. The spreadsheets contain aggregated data for each group of stakeholders (Governments, intergovernmental organizations or non-governmental organizations), United Nations region and category of developing country according to the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and the listing of small island developing States published by the United Nations.

7. Copies of the questionnaires submitted by stakeholders using the secretariat's electronic reporting tool providing qualitative data and additional comments are also available on the Strategic Approach website.

Possible actions by the Conference

8. The Conference may wish:

(a) To welcome the work carried out in preparing the baseline and progress reports, which provide for the first time comparable data on progress in the implementation of the Strategic Approach according to the indicators agreed upon by the Conference submitted by a wide group of Strategic Approach stakeholders from among Governments, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations;

(b) To take note of those indicators where trends in the data collected demonstrate less progress than expected and discuss possible ways of encouraging additional activities in the intersessional period;

(c) To agree that a second progress report will cover the period 2011–2013 following the same methodology as the first to enable progress over time to be formally evaluated at the fourth session of the Conference;

(d) To request the secretariat to prepare and publish a report, including graphical representations, based on the summary of the information provided in documents SAICM/ICCM.3/INF/5 and SAICM/ICCM.3/INF/6, and work with stakeholders to enrich the Strategic Approach clearing house with references to projects and initiatives reported using the electronic reporting tool;

(e) To request the secretariat to discuss at any regional meetings held in the intersessional period the findings of the work on reporting progress in implementation of the Strategic Approach as they relate to the respective region to raise awareness and increase the number of stakeholders participating in future reporting work and inform the further development of regional implementation plans;

(f) To encourage stakeholders who have not yet done so to transmit to the secretariat their completed questionnaire for the period 2009–2010 in order to increase the representativeness of the collected data for comparison with data to be collected for 2011–2013;

(g) To encourage stakeholders with complementary data to that collected by the secretariat on the 20 indicators to make it available to the secretariat in advance of the fourth session of the Conference to enable a synthesis of findings from additional sources.

Annex

Summary of the main findings of the secretariat's report on progress in implementation of the Strategic Approach

I. Introduction

1. The present summary is drawn from two reports prepared by the secretariat on progress in implementation of the Strategic Approach set out in documents SAICM/ICCM.3/INF/5 and SAICM/ICCM.3/INF/6, primarily the latter, which contains an analysis of progress achieved in implementation of the Strategic Approach in 2009–2010, and represents a more complete set of information. Nonetheless, for those indicators for which baseline estimates were possible, these are included in the present summary for comparative purposes.

II. Status of submissions by stakeholders

2. A total of 124 stakeholders submitted information using the secretariat's electronic reporting tool over a period of eight months.¹ Of those submissions, 108 from 78 Governments, 11 intergovernmental organizations and 19 non-governmental organizations, including from the private sector, were complete and formed the core of the analysis for 2009–2010. Fourteen submissions were made following the extension of the reporting arrangements by the Open-ended Working Group, substantially improving the representativeness of the information from Asia and the Pacific and Latin America and the Caribbean. A list of stakeholders that submitted information is contained in appendix I to the present summary.

3. The overall number of submissions from Governments compares favourably with the level of formal reporting that has been achieved under the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants or the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal,² particularly in view of the voluntary nature of the Strategic Approach and the additional submissions from intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations that play a key role in implementation of the Strategic Approach.

4. There were fewer Government submissions from Africa and Asia and the Pacific than from other regions. Nevertheless, the number of submissions from these regions was adequate for a comparison of trends with other regions. Submissions from developing countries and small island developing States accounted for 83 per cent of the total submissions from Governments, with the balance of submissions being submitted by countries assigned to other categories of development assistance.

5. The total number of reports on progress examined in preparing the baseline report was higher than that for the first progress report, with 157 stakeholders, including 103 Governments, submitting reports. While the number of reports was greater, they were focused on a limited number of questions concerning initial steps in implementation and did not cover the majority of indicators agreed upon by the Conference. Regional meetings provided a useful opportunity for discussion of interim baseline information collected in advance of such meetings. Discussion from a regional perspective of the results of the present and subsequent reports at future regional meetings would be likely to strengthen future reporting arrangements by increasing awareness and the utility of the information collected.

III. Summary of main findings

A. Robustness of the analysis undertaken

6. The data collected for the 2009–2010 progress report provided the first quantitative data on progress in implementing the Strategic Approach for the 20 indicators agreed upon by the Conference at its second session. Appendix II to the present summary provides a list of the agreed indicators.

1 The periods for submitting reports were 4 March to 9 July 2011 and 1 December 2011 to 31 March 2012 following the extension agreed upon by the Open-ended Working Group at its first meeting.

2 UNEP/CHW.10/13, on national reporting under the Basel Convention, identified 94 Government parties that had reported for 2007 and UNEP/POPS/COP.5/29 identified 69 Government parties that had submitted a second periodic national report under the Stockholm Convention.

7. The electronic reporting tool enabled the collection of information on the implementation of over 170 specific activities relevant to the five groups of indicators and categories of objectives of the Overarching Policy Strategy: risk reduction, knowledge and information, governance, capacity-building and technical cooperation, and illegal international traffic. Data relating to indicator 17 on the Quick Start Programme and numbers of Strategic Approach focal points were collected from secretariat records rather than via the electronic reporting tool. All quantitative data reported using the electronic tool were collected in a database enabling them to be aggregated in a number of different ways. In the agreed modalities, the Conference did not distinguish between the data to be collected from Governments, non-governmental organizations and intergovernmental organizations and instead recommended the use of a single set of indicators. For the present overview, data have therefore been reported primarily in an aggregated manner. Participants may wish to refer to documents SAICM/ICCM.3/INF/5 and SAICM/ICCM.3/INF/6 for the results of the analysis for different groups of stakeholders and geographic regions.

8. The number of stakeholders reporting each activity provides a series of “snapshots” of the activities being undertaken on each indicator that could be evaluated over time. This analysis is described in document SAICM/ICCM.3/INF/6 along with graphical representations of the data and core results. Aggregating this information gives an estimate of the number of stakeholders selecting at least one activity in relation to each indicator, which provides a basic estimate of progress on each of the agreed indicators.

9. Allowing for the possibility that each stakeholder may be carrying out more than one activity for any given indicator, an additional estimate of the average number of activities being reported for each indicator can be calculated to provide an estimated average level of activity for 2009–2010 for each indicator. This average provides an additional overall measure of progress that enables the average levels of activity to be compared among key groups of stakeholders. For Governments carrying out similar types of activities, this approach also facilitates a comparison of the levels of achievement among Governments in different geographical regions and among those in different categories of economic development.

10. For some indicators, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations reported lower numbers of activities because the specific activities were considered not to be relevant or applicable to them. Additional analyses are presented in document SAICM/ICCM.3/INF/6 to take account of this. Complementary information from intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations would be useful in clarifying such circumstances.

B. Key findings

11. The table following paragraph 12 summarizes the key findings of the overall analysis of progress in the implementation of the Strategic Approach in 2009–2010 at an aggregated level. The table shows the number of stakeholders reporting at least one activity for each indicator, the average number of activities reported, expressed as a percentage of the total activities for each indicator, and the range of responses for the different activities that contribute to the attainment of each indicator. Additional information and analyses are contained in document SAICM/ICCM.3/INF/6 together with graphical representations of the data. These show that for approximately half the indicators, lower levels of activity were reported by Governments of least developed countries and small island developing States. Geographical differences are discernable for some regions, particularly Latin America and the Caribbean, although the significance of these differences is not clear.

12. Overall, for the biennium 2009–2010, the highest level of activity reported by all stakeholders was for indicators relating to risk reduction, for which more than 90 per cent of stakeholders reported at least one activity towards the achievement of these indicators. Lower overall levels of activity were reported for indicators on knowledge and information and capacity-building and technical cooperation, although in the latter group the indicators were not wholly applicable to all stakeholders.

Summary of key findings of the overall analysis of the first progress report on implementation of the Strategic Approach: 2009–2010

Short indicator name	No. of stakeholders reporting at least one activity	No. of activities assessed	Average number of reported activities		Percentage range of responses on specific activities	
			No.	%	Min	Max
Risk reduction						
1. Use of chemical management tools	112 (99%)	20	7.46	37	23	67
2. Key categories of chemicals subject to risk management	110 (97%)	11	5.71	52	28	81
3. Hazardous waste management arrangements	100 (88%)	14	5.21	37	35	73
4. Periodic monitoring	102 (90%)	7	2.79	40	41	77
5. Setting priorities for risk reduction	106 (94%)	20	8.17	41	32	75
Knowledge and information						
6. Provision of information to internationally harmonized standards	88 (79%)	12	2.36	20	27	67
7. Communication on risks to vulnerable groups	91 (81%)	8	2.34	29	12	59
8. Research programmes	78 (70%)	5	1.79	36	32	54
9. Websites providing information on chemicals	97 (87%)	10	4.10	41	22	59
Governance						
10. Commitment to implement the Strategic Approach	102 (89%)	8	2.53	32	22	45
11. Multi-stakeholder coordination mechanisms	87 (76%)	15	4.44	30	6	69
12. Implementation of international priorities	104 (91%)	24	6.62	28	23	88
Capacity-building and technical cooperation						
13. Bilateral capacity-building and technical cooperation support	34 (30%)	2	N/A	N/A	16	29
14. Priority setting for capacity-building needs	83 (74%)	5	1.31	26	20	40
15. Regional cooperation on the sound management of chemicals	68 (61%)	6	2.06	34	23	51
16. Development assistance programmes that include chemicals	36 (32%)	1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
17. Capacity-building projects supported by QSP	48	1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
18. Capacity-building projects supported by other sources	77 (69%)	11	1.71	16	3	47
Illegal international traffic						
19. Illegal international traffic in chemicals	89 (80%)	8	2.81	35	31	57
20. Illegal international traffic in hazardous wastes	82 (74%)	8	2.26	28	27	57

Note: N/A has been used in the case of indicators 13, 16 and 17 because the data collected did not concern a range of activities.

1. Risk reduction

13. The highest number of reported activities related to the use or implementation of agreed chemical management tools and activities to reduce risk on key categories of chemicals. Particularly noteworthy was the substantial use of tools and guidance published by the participating organizations of IOMC, which confirmed the important role of these organizations in achieving the implementation of the Strategic Approach. Significant levels of activity on risk reduction on pesticides, persistent organic pollutants (as defined under the Stockholm Convention) and mercury or mercury-containing sources were also recorded, with comparatively less activity being reported for chemicals with wide-dispersive uses or high production volume chemicals, perhaps because these terms have relevance only in certain jurisdictions. The associated high level of activity for implementation of the Stockholm Convention, under the set of indicators related to governance, may have influenced the high level of reported activity on persistent organic pollutants and, similarly, the current international focus on mercury may have contributed to the high level of activity reported on mercury.

14. For hazardous waste management arrangements, the overall aggregated analysis does not reflect the comparatively high level of activity reported by Governments.

2. Knowledge and information

15. Compared to indicators relating to risk reduction and governance, a lower overall level of activity was recorded for indicators relating to knowledge and information. While the low number of stakeholders commissioning or funding research on chemical safety is not surprising in a period of economic stringency, the average number of reported activities and the numbers of specific activities reported for provision of information on internationally harmonized standards, including the Globally Harmonized System for the Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS), and the results for communicating information on the risks associated with chemicals to vulnerable groups were lower than might have been expected. Additional progress in implementation of the Strategic Approach could be expected to assist in both of these areas as several projects supported under the Quick Start Programme address implementation of the Globally Harmonized System at both the national and regional levels, work on emerging issues, such as the elimination of lead paint and chemicals in products, has a particular focus on awareness-raising and communication and some of the actions in the Strategic Approach proposed health sector strategy include an increased level of awareness-raising among professionals with duties of care to these vulnerable groups.

3. Governance

16. The highest range of reported activities related to implementation of key international chemicals priorities, notably international conventions and agreements on chemicals. Responses varied considerably depending on the specific convention or agreement. The highest level of reported activity was for three conventions administered by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), namely the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer to the Vienna Convention on the Protection of the Ozone Layer (1985), the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (2001) and the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal (1989). Stakeholders were not aware of the status of implementation of some conventions and instruments, as exemplified by the results for implementation of the International Health Regulations (2005), highlighting the value of stronger future intersectoral collaboration. Consideration of work that builds on and extends the concept of synergies being addressed by the three chemicals and wastes conventions may be helpful in raising awareness and fostering cooperative work in this area.

17. Commitment to the implementation of the Strategic Approach remains high. Considerable progress has been achieved since the baseline period with a continued increase in the number of national focal points among Governments and non-governmental organizations and the use of multi-stakeholder committees to coordinate matters relating to the Strategic Approach and chemicals safety. The network of focal points in intergovernmental organizations has remained static since the baseline period and might be enhanced by the recruitment of focal points from additional regional cooperation organizations and financial institutions, particularly given the need for further work to strengthen the long-term financial arrangements for the Strategic Approach.

4. Capacity-building and technical cooperation

18. The reported activities on capacity-building and technical cooperation showed a mixed level of achievement. Support provided by the Quick Start Programme Trust Fund to enabling activities designed to implement the Strategic Approach has been notable with the programme exceeding its business plan targets for least developed countries and countries on the OECD Development

Assistance Committee list.³ A comparable number of countries were supported by the Quick Start Programme Trust Fund as from the Multilateral Fund of the Montreal Protocol or the Global Environment Facility, indicating the complementarity of this funding source for sound chemicals management.

19. Access to other sources of funding during the biennium 2009–2010 is significantly lower. Support from the United Nations, including United Nations agencies, was recorded as the most common source of funding, a finding supported by complementary analysis carried out by IOMC providing an overview of where individual IOMC-participating organizations are working on chemicals issues in countries.⁴ On average, less than two different funding sources were accessed by respondents, with access to funding through bilateral funding agreements, the World Bank, regional cooperation agreements, the private sector, regional development banks, foundations, charities and multilateral conventions reported only very infrequently.

20. The level of activity related to mainstreaming, specifically whether national development plans addressed priority needs for chemicals, was limited to about one third of respondents, with the highest relative number being in Latin America and the Caribbean. A larger group of developing countries reported that the question on development plans was either not relevant or not applicable to them or they did not know the answer. The level of activity on other planning processes for identifying capacity-building needs was more positive, but focused predominantly on updating or completion of national chemical profiles and national implementation plans for the Stockholm Convention. About a quarter of respondents reported completing or updating Strategic Approach implementation plans during 2009–2010.

21. About two thirds of respondents identified at least one relevant regional cooperation effort on different aspects of chemical safety, notably activities relating to sharing knowledge and information and capacity-building and technical cooperation. This form of cooperation appeared to be strongest in the Western European and other countries group, although the work of regional cooperation organizations in Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean was also mentioned.

5. Illegal international traffic

22. There was little distinction in the levels or nature of activities reported on illegal international traffic in chemicals or in hazardous wastes, with the focus of both on the communication of information on movements of chemicals or wastes out of a country and the establishment of national legislation for dealing with the problem. For hazardous wastes, the level of activity on public information on and awareness of levels and cases of illegal trade and remedial actions being undertaken was reported least frequently. A number of new and strengthened initiatives, such as those involving the Basel Convention and its regional centres, the Partnership for Action on Computing Equipment, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), relevant sections of industry, non-governmental organizations and relevant networks, such as the European Union Network for the Implementation and Enforcement of Environmental Law and the International Network for Environmental Compliance and Enforcement, promise additional work in this area in future years.

3 See SAICM/EB.7/2/Rev.1.

4 See www.who.int/iomc/activity/poactivities/en/index.html.

Appendix I

List of stakeholders submitting information on reporting for 2009–2010

1. The following 78 Governments fully completed the online questionnaire: Albania, Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Bulgaria, Burundi, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Finland, Gambia, Germany, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Jamaica, Japan, Kenya, Latvia, Lesotho, Lithuania, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, New Zealand, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Palau, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Senegal, Serbia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Uganda, Ukraine, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Viet Nam, Zambia. The following 10 Governments partially completed the online questionnaire: Austria, Bahrain, Chad, Ghana, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Marshall Islands, Qatar, Syrian Arab Republic.
2. The following 11 intergovernmental organizations, including 6 participating organizations of IOMC, fully completed the forms: Central American Integration System, European Commission, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; International Labour Organization, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the World Bank, United Nations Development Programme, UNEP, UNIDO, United Nations Institute for Training and Research, World Health Organization (WHO).
3. The following 19 non-governmental organizations, including 6 private sector organizations, fully completed the forms: Armenian Women for Health and Healthy Environment, Associated Labor Unions - Trade Union Congress of the Philippines, Association for Environmental Education and the Protection of Birds in Morocco, Sustainable Development Network, CropLife International, Day Hospital Institute for Development and Rehabilitation, Environmental Ambassadors, Groundwork, Health Care Without Harm, International Council of Chemical Associations, International Council on Mining and Metals, International Society of Doctors for the Environment, International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), ITUC Regional Organization for Africa, New Brunswick Partners in Agriculture, Occupational Knowledge International, Pesticide Action Network, Society of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry and Turkish Chemical Manufacturers Association. The following 6 non-governmental organizations partially completed the forms, submitting one or more parts: Centre for Occupational and Environmental Health, University of Cape Town, Research and Education Centre for Development, Centre for Environment and Sustainable Development, Golan Environment and Heritage Association, International Union of Toxicology, Mediterranean Association for Sustainable Development.

Appendix II

List of indicators for reporting progress in implementation of the Strategic Approach

The following 20 indicators were adopted by the International Conference on Chemicals Management at its second session, in May 2009, along with guidance on the type of data to be collected from stakeholders.

A. Risk reduction

1. Number of countries (and organizations) implementing agreed chemicals management tools.
2. Number of countries (and organizations) with mechanisms to address key categories of chemicals.
3. Number of countries (and organizations) with hazardous waste management arrangements.
4. Number of countries (and organizations) engaged in activities that result in monitoring data on selected environmental and human health priority substances.
5. Number of countries (and organizations) having mechanisms in place for setting priorities for risk reduction.

B. Knowledge and information

6. Number of countries (and organizations) providing information according to internationally harmonized standards.
7. Number of countries (and organizations) that have specific strategies in place for communicating information on the risks associated with chemicals to vulnerable groups.
8. Number of countries (and organizations) with research programmes.
9. Number of countries (and organizations) with websites that provide information to stakeholders.

C. Governance

10. Number of countries (and organizations) that have committed themselves to implementation of the Strategic Approach.
11. Number of countries (and organizations) with multi-stakeholder coordinating mechanism.
12. Number of countries (and organizations) with mechanisms to implement key international chemicals priorities.

D. Capacity-building and technical cooperation

13. Number of countries (and organizations) providing resources (financial and in kind) to assist capacity-building and technical cooperation with other countries.
14. Number of countries (and organizations) that have identified and prioritized their capacity-building needs for the sound management of chemicals.
15. Number of countries (and organizations) engaged in regional cooperation on issues relating to the sound management of chemicals.
16. Number of countries where development assistance programmes that include the sound management of chemicals.
17. Number of countries (and organizations) with projects supported by the Strategic Approach's Quick Start Programme Trust Fund.
18. Number of countries (and organizations) with sound management of chemicals projects supported by other sources of funding (not Quick Start Programme funding).

E. Illegal international traffic

19. Number of countries having mechanisms to prevent illegal traffic in toxic, hazardous and severely restricted chemicals individually.
 20. Number of countries having mechanisms to prevent illegal traffic in hazardous waste.
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