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**Fourth meeting of the intersessional process considering the Strategic Approach and sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020 (IP4)**

Bucharest, Romania, 29 August – 2 September 2022

Nairobi, Kenya, 27 February – 3 March 2023\*

## **Reporting mechanism and process for the Strategic Approach and sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020**

### **Note by the secretariat**

1. The annex to the present note contains the document entitled “*Reporting mechanism and process for the Strategic Approach and sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020*”. The document presented in the annex has been developed and submitted by the United Nations Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC). The annex has not been formally edited.

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\* The fourth meeting of the intersessional process considering the Strategic Approach and sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020 (IP4) was held from 29 August to 2 September 2022 in Bucharest, Romania. The meeting was adjourned on 2 September 2022 and will be resumed from 27 February to 3 March 2023 in Nairobi, Kenya.

## Annex\*: Reporting mechanism and process for the Strategic Approach and sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020

### I. Introduction

1. Reporting on the implementation of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management has been seen as a key tool in assessing progress towards achievement of sound management of chemicals, including helping to assess progress on the individual objectives set out in SAICM texts. Paragraph 24 of the Overarching Policy Strategy recognises the role of the International Conference on Chemicals Management in undertaking periodic reviews of the Strategic Approach, including receiving progress reports from all relevant stakeholders. The future of the reporting mechanism and process is therefore a key consideration in developing and adopting the Strategic Approach and sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020,<sup>1</sup> and was one of the issues addressed by the virtual working group on governance and mechanisms to support implementation.<sup>2</sup>

2. The Programme of Work and Budget 2022-2023 for the Secretariat of the Strategic Approach (SAICM/ICCM.5/Bureau.TC.11/4) includes, among its proposed activities, the provision by the Secretariat of “*additional information to facilitate further consideration of future progress reporting for the new instrument, by reviewing and analysing other relevant/similar processes, including structure, platforms, and resource requirements.*” This information is intended to inform consideration by the Fifth meeting of the International Conference on Chemicals Management, which will take place in Bonn, Germany, from 25-29 September 2023.

3. In order to provide this information, the SAICM Secretariat has contracted the United Nations Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC) to support them in developing a review of existing reporting mechanisms, tools and processes as a basis for making proposals on a reporting mechanism for the Strategic Approach beyond 2020. This review will consider both reporting processes to intergovernmental conventions and processes and stakeholder commitment platforms, and will include consideration of issues such as the ways in which submitted data and information are used, and any reviews of the effectiveness of such reporting processes. The review will go beyond the chemicals and waste sector, also considering reporting experiences in other sectors.

4. It is anticipated that the results of the review will be available during the first quarter of 2023, and this will include both the review and options for consideration in developing reporting for the Strategic Approach beyond 2020. This study will then inform development by the Secretariat of recommendations on the reporting process for consideration by the fifth meeting of the International Conference on Chemicals Management, with UNEP-WCMC providing additional technical support as needed. The review will be made available to the Fifth International Conference on Chemicals Management as an information document to support the working document prepared by the Secretariat.

5. UNEP-WCMC has significant experience of supporting biodiversity-related multilateral environmental agreements with respect to reporting and indicators, including consideration of opportunities for cooperation and synergy at both national and international levels. UNEP-WCMC has also been working with various stakeholders on capture of information on commitments made by non-state actors. More recently UNEP-WCMC has been supporting work on development of indicators for the Strategic Approach, and has developed a report on *Strengthening Collaboration and Coordination Between Biodiversity and Chemicals and Waste Clusters* for the Nordic Council of Ministers.<sup>3</sup>

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\* The annex has not been formally edited.

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, [SAICM/IP.3/5/Corr.1](#)

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, [VWG2/8](#) and the associated stakeholder inputs

<sup>3</sup> See <https://pub.norden.org/temanord2022-513>

## II. Progress to date

6. UNEP-WCMC was contracted at the end of August 2022 to provide support to the Secretariat of SAICM with respect to both reporting and capacity-building for the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management beyond 2020. The Secretariat has provided full briefing on the work to be undertaken, and relevant staff from the Secretariat and UNEP-WCMC are liaising closely.

7. Drawing on the terms of reference and the briefings provided by the Secretariat, UNEP-WCMC prepared a draft annotated outline for the review report identifying the anticipated format and content, and the key sources. This draft annotated outline was reviewed by the Secretariat, resulting in additional ideas and direction, and identification of additional sources. It is recognised, however, that the annotated outline is illustrative rather than definitive, and that the final report may differ in format in the light of subsequent experience and interaction with the Secretariat.

8. During last quarter of 2022, UNEP-WCMC began to review the reporting requirements and processes of a wide range of multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), and locate reviews of individual processes that had been carried out and made available to their respective governing bodies. UNEP-WCMC also reviewed a number of the key documents relating to cooperation and synergies in reporting processes across multiple MEAs, and discussed this with key players in the margins of the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity that took place in Montreal, Canada, in December 2022. Also reviewed were a number of platforms established to compile stakeholder commitments in response to various international targets or objectives, the nature of these platforms and how they engage stakeholders.

## III. Preliminary considerations

9. The study is still under way and will not be finalised until after the resumed session of the fourth meeting of the Intersessional Process. However, the review to date has suggested a range of issues/ideas on which it would be valuable to get feedback. These are set out below. At this stage the origin of these issues/ideas and the associated evidence are not included, but this will be included in the study report. Meanwhile any feedback received on the following would be welcome, sent before 15 March 2023 to [jerry.harrison@unep-wcmc.org](mailto:jerry.harrison@unep-wcmc.org) with copy to [saicm.chemicals@un.org](mailto:saicm.chemicals@un.org).

10. Please note that at present the content of the following (paragraphs 11-15) is in draft format as a basis for discussion and feedback, and will not necessarily be used in the final report in this format. The content of the paragraphs is intended to build on discussions that have already taken place during the intersessional process, integrating considerations that are coming from review of other reporting processes.

11. **General principles for reporting** such as the following may be useful in helping to frame the reporting process and build confidence in it. If thought appropriate, these could be supplemented by principles that are specific to the Strategic Approach.

- a. The key issue is effective implementation, and that the purpose of reporting is to further promote and facilitate implementation.
- b. Data and information should only be collected if it is going to be used for an identified purpose, and that purpose should be made clear.
- c. Wherever possible the reporting process should draw on data and information that government and non-government actors already collect and manage for their own purposes.
- d. Data and information should not be requested again if already available, rather government and non-government actors should be asked to review and confirm that it is still current.
- e. Continuity of format and content in different reporting rounds should be the default position, for ease of use, and to facilitate tracking progress over time in an efficient manner.
- f. Make the reporting process as easy as possible for government and non-government actors to engage with, and efficient in use of time.

g. Focus on the objective of collecting data and information once but using many times, including in the context of avoiding duplicative reporting to multiple agreements/processes.

12. **Key stages in the design process** are likely to include the following, recognising that this is not an exhaustive list and is likely to be added to as the study proceeds:

- a. Make recommendations for consideration: based on current experience and discussions, and experience from other agreements and processes, with these recommendations being available for consideration at the fifth meeting of the International Conference on Chemicals Management.
- b. Design, develop and test the proposed system: with engagement of users during the design and test phases to help ensure feasibility and practicability of the reporting process, and ease of use of the resulting information base.
- c. Finalise and implement the system: and at the same time provide an appropriate support package as identified below, drawing on the experience of other reporting processes and feedback during the design and testing phase.
- d. Review implementation: and adjust the process and the available support package over time so as to help ensure that the reporting process is efficient and effective for both those submitting data and information and those using it.

13. **Key design considerations** are likely to include the following, recognising that this is not an exhaustive list and is likely to be added to as the study proceeds:

- a. Options for submission: including whether there is a single reporting tool developed which all those reporting will use, or whether additional options are needed such as submission of digital content offline and/or submission of hard copy.
- b. Ease of completion and reporting: including elements of good user-friendly design, prefilling draft reports with data and information already available, and use of all United Nations languages.
- c. Security-related issues: including secure access for those reporting, options for managing members of teams contributing to specific reports, and holding of draft reports until submission is authorised by those reporting.
- d. Update of previous submissions: including offering options to update and/or confirm already available data and information that has been pre-filled, and retaining previous reports as a basis for assessing change over time.
- e. Stakeholder-specific reporting: The data and information requested may be different depending on whether the report is being submitted by a government or by a non-government actor, this has design implications.
- f. Interoperability: including linking to any generic reporting tools used by those reporting, appropriate links to any key information sources, other reporting processes, and possibly encouraging the development of APIs for submitting reports for those reporting with sufficient technical capacity.
- g. Automation of outputs: including generating dashboard elements direct from submitted reports wherever possible (including previously submitted reports to enable time series where relevant), and similarly generating tables and graphics for synthesis reports.

14. **Content considerations**, recognising that these will be largely driven (or at least impacted) by decisions that will be taken at the fifth meeting of the International Conference on Chemicals Management concerning mechanisms for taking stock of progress:

- a. Reporting elements: Online reports may include content in the form of check boxes, pull down lists, free text and uploads, and possibly submission of data or information that can be represented spatially. Equivalent formats will also be needed if there is facility for reports to be submitted in other ways.
- b. Indicators: Based on discussions to date it is anticipated that reports will include both process and impact indicators and/or data from which such indicators can be derived. The indicators and the processes for

deriving them have not yet been decided, however it seems likely that while some data and indicators will derive from reports submitted, they will be complemented by indicators managed by other organizations, and/or being used to support other international agreements and processes. Together these indicators would comprise some form of measurability structure.

- c. 'Hierarchy': It may be possible to define a core set of data and information required from all of those reporting, and additional "nice to have" data and information (so introducing mandatory and voluntary elements). This gives the appearance of a smaller reporting requirement and ensures core data and information is available, while also providing structure for provision of further data and information.
- d. Use of reported information: Content (data and/or information) should be linked to specific dashboard elements, synthesis components (graphics, tables or examples), and/or relate to specific SAICM decision processes. If it does not link to one of these, its value should be questioned.
- e. Interlinkages and avoidance of duplication: Is there any data and/or information already submitted to other reporting processes that would be valuable with respect to SAICM reporting, and are there opportunities to integrate the reporting in some way (also recognising that this may work the other way too)?
- f. Stakeholder-specific reporting: There may be differences in content between reports requested of governments and reports requested of non-government actors.

15. ***Promoting and supporting use of the reporting system*** so as to help maximise use of the system and therefore improve its value, and to make the reporting process as 'painless' as possible for government and non-government actors so as to increase reporting:

- a. Support users: through online support, the development and promotion of user support guides, webinars, hands on training sessions and a help desk, making these available in all UN languages insofar as this is possible.
- b. Build engagement: through further considerations of the motivations for reporting and development and implementation of a strategy and actions to increase motivation, building on existing SAICM communications and motivational activities.
- c. Actively demonstrate use: of reported data and information through dashboards and synthesis of reported information as a basis for encouraging more thorough submission of reports, recognising that understanding why data and information is required is fundamental.
- d. Encourage feedback: Actively seek feedback from all stakeholders and users of reported data and information on the reporting process, report content, support arrangements, and use of reported data and information, as a basis for improving reporting in the future.
- e. Capacity-building: In addition to the support provided to those using the reporting system itself, there may also be a need to more broadly build capacity to capture, manage and use data and information, including the development and use of indicators.

16. Again, please note that at present all of the above (paragraphs 11-15) is in draft format as a basis for discussion and feedback, and will not necessarily be included in the final report in this format. Feedback can be sent before the 15 March 2023 to [jerry.harrison@unep-wcmc.org](mailto:jerry.harrison@unep-wcmc.org) with copy to [saicm.chemicals@un.org](mailto:saicm.chemicals@un.org).