UN environment programme

saicm Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management

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Possible elements of a survey on experiences with the SAICM Virtual Working Group process held between October 2020 – February 2021

I.   Background

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the logistical difficulties in rolling out vaccines globally, particularly in developing countries, the ICCM5 Bureau at their fourteenth meeting held in January 2021 agreed to postpone the face-to-face 4th intersessional process meeting (IP4) and the 5th International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM5) scheduled for July 2021.

The World Health Organization and other assessments, project that the rollout of effective vaccine-based immunization in all countries will only be completed by late 2022, at the earliest, but more likely sometime in 2023. This paper proposes elements of an online survey to be circulated to all SAICM stakeholders for completion and the data gathered from the survey will be used to develop an assessment of the experiences with the SAICM Virtual Working Group process. The findings of the assessment will inform the design of future work for the intersessional process until the time when face to face meetings are feasible.

II.   Objectives of the survey

The objectives of the survey include:
(i)   Gather information about stakeholders' experiences and views to inform the design of future work in the intersessional process; and
(ii)   Increase ownership and shared responsibility by engaging with SAICM stakeholders using their experiences and suggestions for planning the next phase (inclusion, enhanced participation).
(iii)   The SAICM Secretariat will finalize and disseminate the survey, and analyse and share the results. The survey will be shared widely, including to all SAICM focal points and beyond.

III. Elements of the survey

The elements of the survey should primarily include positive and negative experiences, as well as, suggestions for the future, as follows:
(i)   What has worked well?
(ii)   What has not worked so well?
(iii)   What actionable recommendations can be proposed based on these experiences?

Reference to these aspects could be included in the survey chapeau to invite stakeholders to share **positive and negative experiences** and put forward **actionable recommendations** on that basis.

Some of the suggested elements may be surveyed using a **multiple choice format**; some using a **4 point scale** (e.g. "not suited – somewhat suited – suited – very well suited"); a limited number of **open questions** (with a limited number of characters in answer spaces).

IV. Proposed questions for the survey

A. Stakeholder information

Information sought includes (*multiple choice questions)*
   o   Which VWGs did you register for and which virtual meetings did you attend? (via a table with meetings (like on the website), people can put an X for the ones they attended) *(VWGs 1, 2, 3, 4)*
   o   Did you provide written comments? *(Y/N)*
   o   How often did you provide comments? *(1 – 3 – 5-7, more)*
   o   Country
   o   Region *(AFR, AP, CEE, GRULAC, WEOG)*
   o   Which stakeholder group do you belong to? *(Government, IGO, NGO, Private sector, Academia, other – please specify)*
   o   Which sector group do you belong to? *(open response – to be confirmed)*
   o   Which organization for you belong to? *(optional)*
   o   Answering as representative of stakeholder group / network / coalition *(optional?)*

B. Review of experiences Oct 2020 – February 2021

Technology, connectivity and access
* Meeting platform:
   o   How did WEBEX work for you in general? *(Well / not so well / not well at all)*
   o   Did you have any problems, if so which ones? *(multiple choice: e.g. connectivity; sound; video; chat; raising hand; other – please specify?)*
* If you experienced difficulties or were unable to participate in VWG meetings, what were the main reasons*? (multiple choice: e.g. poor internet connection; lack of IT equipment; time zone differences; conflicting meetings, other – pls specify)*
* Was it helpful to use chat box during the VWG meetings? *(Y/N)*
* Based on your experiences, do you have any suggestions on how to improve the chat box during the VWG meetings? *(open question)*
* Are there other technologies/ platforms you used and would consider better suited for the VWG meetings? If yes, which one? Please explain which functions the VWG meeting could most benefit from? *(open question)*

Meetings, meeting documents and information
- Website:
  - Did you find all necessary information and documents on the SAICM website? *(Y/N)*
  - Were you able to access the calendar of meetings? *(Y/N)*
- Are you pleased with the final reports of the VWGs? If not, what are your specific concerns? *(open question)*

Meetings, preparations and follow-up
- Timing and time zones:
  - Was the timing OK for you in relation to your time zone? *(Y/N)*
  - Were the VWG meetings announced sufficiently ahead of time? *(Y/N)*
- Documents:
  - Were the VWG meeting documents available in time? *(Y/N)*
- How much time before VWG meetings would you need to consult and be sufficiently prepared*? (multiple choice: 1 to 3 days, 1 week, 2 weeks, more than 2 weeks)*
  Was there enough time between VWG meetings to prepare for subsequent sessions? *(Y/N)*
- How much time between VWG meetings is needed in order to digest meeting summaries and prepare for subsequent sessions? *(multiple choice: 1 to 3 days, 1 week, 2 weeks, more than 2 weeks)*
- Was the overall schedule of all 4 VWGs manageable for you? *(multiple choice: e.g. manageable/ not so manageable / very difficult to manage)*

C. Potential future process

Technology, connectivity and access
- Functionalities of a video platform:
  - which functionalities would you like to be made available? *(multiple choice: group chat; chat function; other pls specify)*
- Apart from the meeting platform, which other virtual meeting modalities would be useful? *(pls specify)*
- Time zones:
  - should meetings be held several times, in smaller groups, in different time zones? *(Y/N)*
  - Which starting time would work best for you for future meetings *(multiple choice: e.g. starting time 12.00 CET (Brussels) / 8.00 EST (New York) / 22.00JST (Tokyo), and a few more)? 10 CET (…) 14 CET (…);*
- Language:
  - Do you think participants should convene in small groups that work in different UN languages, and then report back to a plenary group? *(Y/N)*
  - Do you think online interpretation is needed? *(Y/N)*
  - Do you think the working documents should be translated? *(Y/N)*
- Regions:
  - Would an opportunity for a regional dialogue be helpful for your region? *(Y/N)*
- Would you need support in order to participate effectively in an online process? *(No, yes – please specify: multiple choice: e.g. access to conference facilities in embassies / UN offices / hotels; internet financial support / other – pls specify?)*

Meetings, preparations and follow-up
- Are the meeting objectives well suited for the virtual work? *(Yes/No, please specify)*
- Which practices have been helpful during the VWG process? *(multiple choice - tick Y/N: exchange & dialogue; deepen mutual understanding; generating new ideas; resolving conflict; negotiating text; other – pls specify)*

- Feedback in writing:
  - Should stakeholders who cannot participate actively in meetings be able to submit written contributions? *(Y/N)*
  - How long do you need to consult internally and provide feedback in writing? *(multiple choice: e.g. for commenting on a 10 pages document, I need: 1 week / 2 weeks / 4 weeks / 6 weeks)*

Topics to be considered in the future

- Do you have any other suggestions to further the preparations for IP4 and ICCM5? In your view, what are the priority areas to advance in 2021? *(open question)*

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