
**Third meeting of the Quick Start Programme
Executive Board**
Geneva
6-7 May 2008

Report of the third meeting of the Executive Board of the Quick Start Programme of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management

Introduction

1. In resolution I/4 adopted at its first session, the International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM) decided to establish a Quick Start Programme (QSP) to support initial enabling capacity-building and implementation activities for the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) in developing countries and countries with economies in transition. The Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) was requested to establish a voluntary, time-limited trust fund to provide seed money to support QSP objectives in accordance with resolution I/4.

2. Resolution I/4 also established the QSP Executive Board, consisting of two Government representatives of each of the United Nations regions and all the bilateral and multilateral donors and other contributors to the Programme. The Board reviews progress under the QSP on the basis of reports from the Trust Fund Implementation Committee¹ and other QSP participants, and provides operational guidance on the implementation of the strategic priorities of the QSP. The first meeting of the Executive Board was held on 26 and 27 April 2006 in Geneva. The second meeting of the Board was held on 23 and 24 April 2007.

I. Opening of the meeting

3. The third meeting of the Board was held at International Environment House in Geneva, Switzerland, on 6 and 7 May 2008. The meeting was opened by Mr. Matthew Gubb, Coordinator of the SAICM secretariat, who welcomed the representatives and noted progress achieved since the second meeting of the Board.

¹ The QSP Trust Fund Implementation Committee comprises representatives of the participating organizations of the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The participating organizations of IOMC are the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), UNEP, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) and the World Health Organization (WHO).

II. Organizational matters

A. Attendance

4. The meeting was attended by the following Government representatives of the five United Nations regions:

Africa:	Mr. Adolphe Nahayo (Burundi) Mr. Adel Shafei Osman (Egypt)
Asia-Pacific:	Mr. Supat Wangwongwatana (Thailand)
Central and Eastern Europe:	Ms. Irina Zastenskaya (Belarus) Ms. Nino Tkhilava (Georgia)
Latin America and the Caribbean:	Ms. Gillian Guthrie (Jamaica) Ms. Vilma Morales Quillama (Peru)
Western European and Others:	Mr. Jozef Buys (Belgium) Mr. John Shoaff (United States of America)

5. The meeting was attended by representatives of the following QSP trust fund donor Governments: Austria, Finland, the Republic of Korea, Norway, Slovenia, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

6. The meeting was attended by representatives of contributors to the non-trust fund QSP: Japan, Canada, OECD, International Council of Chemical Associations (ICCA), UNDP, UNEP, UNIDO and UNITAR.

B. Election of officers

7. The representatives elected Ms. Irina Zastenskaya (Belarus) as the co-chair from the group of Government representatives of the five United Nations regions and Mr. Jozef Buys (Belgium) as the co-chair from the group of donors.

C. Adoption of the agenda

8. The representatives adopted the following agenda for the meeting on the basis of the provisional annotated agenda set out in document SAICM/EB.3/1

1. Opening of the meeting.
2. Organizational matters:
 - (a) Election of officers;
 - (b) Adoption of the agenda;
 - (c) Organization of work.
3. Status of the Quick Start Programme:
 - (a) Quick Start Programme Trust Fund;
 - (b) Non-trust fund Quick Start Programme.
4. Report of the Executive Board's Committee on the Quick Start Programme Trust Fund.
5. Further development of operational guidance on the implementation of the strategic priorities of the Quick Start Programme.

6. Further consideration of the Quick Start Programme business plan.
7. Consideration of modalities for the reporting of the Executive Board to the second session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management.
8. Other matters.
9. Next meeting.
10. Closure of the meeting.

D. Organization of work

9. The Board agreed to meet from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. It agreed to set aside a portion of its time for the separate meeting of the committee on the trust fund, composed of regional representative and trust fund donors.

III. Status of the Quick Start Programme

A. Quick Start Programme Trust Fund

10. The meeting took note of the presentation made by the secretariat on the financial and administrative situation of the QSP trust fund, the outcomes of the second, third and fourth rounds of applications to the trust fund, as well as on the status of implementation of projects approved in the three first rounds, as outlined in documents SAICM/EB.3/2 and SAICM/EB.3/3.

B. Non-Trust Fund Quick Start Programme

11. The secretariat reported on declared non-trust fund contributions to the QSP, in particular that of FAO, which had been recognized as a contribution during the Executive Board's preparatory teleconference on 2 April 2008. He also drew the attention of the Board to document SAICM/EB.3/INF/10, containing received declaration forms, including updated ones.

12. One regional representative noted that during the 2 April 2008 teleconference, QSP contributors had been requested to provide updated declaration forms. Given that at the time of the present Board meeting, only half of the contributors had updated their forms, she invited others to update their form.

IV. Report of the Executive Board's Committee on the Quick Start Programme Trust Fund

13. In accordance with ICCM resolution I/4 and rule 29 of the Executive Board's rules of procedure, a committee, composed of the Government representatives of the five United Nations regions and the representatives of trust fund donors, was convened to consider the operation of the trust fund. The committee was chaired by Mr. Jozef Buys (Belgium). It considered document SAICM/EB.3/4, setting out issues for possible consideration in the further development of operational guidance for the QSP trust fund. Mr. Buys briefed the Executive Board on the conclusions of the committee, which were taken up by the Board under the agenda item below.

V. Further development of operational guidance on the implementation of the strategic priorities of the Quick Start Programme

14. The Executive Board had before it document SAICM/EB.3/4, setting out issues for possible consideration in the further development of operational guidance for the QSP. The secretariat representative introduced the document by reminding participants of the Board's previous consideration of a possible definition of enabling activities.

15. Participants noted that discussions on enabling activities since the second Board meeting had been inconclusive and acknowledged that the QSP strategic priorities provided useful guidance. Some participants raised the concern that the absence of clarity on enabling activities risked confusing QSP trust fund applicants. Others recommended that applicants should be

required to provide more information to the QSP Trust Fund Implementation Committee on the links between proposed projects and QSP strategic priorities. The Board decided that QSP trust fund applications forms should be revised in order to make more explicit the requirement for applicants to include information on links with the overall objective and the strategic priorities of the QSP. The extract of the application form with the text modified and agreed by the Board is available in annex A.

16. Participants acknowledged the links between the consideration of enabling activities and the development of criteria for the assessment of QSP contributions. Taking note of the absence of any decision to clarify the scope of enabling activities, the Board decided not to consider the issue of criteria for QSP contributions.

17. Upon the recommendation of the committee on the trust fund, the Board took note of the guidance and forms adopted by the Trust Fund Implementation Committee to facilitate independent monitoring and evaluation of trust fund projects. Participants further noted the value of future independent monitoring and evaluation reports for the Board's report to the second session of the ICCM.

18. The Board also accepted the committee's recommendations concerning the glossary of QSP terms developed by the Implementation Committee. The secretariat was requested to include in the entry on enabling activities a reference to the work areas set out in the strategic objectives of section IV of the Overarching Policy Strategy and to list the work areas. The Board also requested the secretariat to modify the entry of "chemical profile" so that it would read "national chemical profile" and to include an entry for "implementation activities" and an entry describing the different options for decisions available to the Implementation Committee when appraising projects. The revised glossary will be considered by the Trust Fund Implementation Committee at its sixth meeting on 16 and 17 October 2008.

19. The Board noted the observations of the Trust Fund Implementation Committee and views conveyed by regional representatives on the issue of access to QSP trust fund support for multiple projects. Bearing in mind the good progress already made in achieving business plan targets for assisting eligible countries, the demand for follow-on projects and the disadvantage faced by the countries in the early application rounds, the Board decided to revisit its restriction on the number of projects in which applicants could participate.

20. The Board advised the Implementation Committee that, with respect to countries approved in the preceding application rounds for small initial projects of a dollar value of approximately \$100,000,² the present QSP guidelines would be applied flexibly, allowing those countries to receive an additional project subject to the following guidance. The Implementation Committee should:

- give priority to countries which have not previously had support from the QSP trust fund;
- take into account whether there had been satisfactory progress reports on earlier projects involving repeat countries;
- avoid duplication of projects and ensure coverage of different QSP strategic priorities;
- avoid an excessive allocation of resources to individual countries; and
- observe the usual requirements for geographical and sectoral balance.

21. Upon the recommendation by the committee on the trust fund, the Board took note of the delays in project implementation reported so far, and in particular in relation to UNEP's processing of Memoranda of Understanding, which were preventing the early implementation of QSP trust fund activities. Noting also the concerns expressed by the QSP Trust Fund Implementation Committee, the Board decided to raise the matter with the Executive Director of UNEP in the Board co-chairs' letter on fundraising matters.³

² In the case of multi-country projects, the dollar value to be used as guidance by the Implementation Committee for second projects would be the total level of funds assigned to a particular country in that agreement and not the total value of the overall project.

³ See paragraph 26 in section VI on the further consideration of the QSP business plan and the letter in annex B.

22. The Board confirmed that applicants to the QSP trust fund can include in the project budget the direct human resources costs of executing agencies, including staff and consultancy costs. It noted its understanding that such costs related to active involvement in the project, through the provision of international coordination and specific expertise, and were not part of indirect administration costs.

23. In the light of the consideration of the operation of the trust fund by the committee, the Board requested more transparency in reports of the Trust Fund Implementation Committee with regard to decisions to approve projects. It was noted that further information on the justification for the approval of projects, as well as making publicly available approved projects, would help donors demonstrate the value of the QSP trust fund.

24. The Board noted that some trust fund projects in which intergovernmental organizations were involved could cover activities for which other organizations had specific mandates and in which they had comparative advantages. While the Board acknowledged the relevant experience of the other organizations, it encouraged all organizations to cooperate and collaborate for the successful implementation of trust fund projects.

VI. Further consideration of the Quick Start Programme business plan

25. The meeting had before it document SAICM/EB.3/5, a report on the implementation of the QSP business plan, providing information on progress against the business plan strategies and targets and additional information on QSP trust fund applications and approved projects over four rounds.

26. Participants exchanged views on QSP contributions and difficulties in aggregating the value of in-kind contributions. Opportunities for the engagement of industry, the Global Environment Facility and the Multilateral Fund for the Implementation of the Montreal Protocol were also discussed. They considered the challenges faced in increasing the donor base of the trust fund and of engaging civil society contributors. It was noted that the secretariat had limited staff resources to undertake an intensified fundraising effort and that the possible use of an external fundraiser could be pursued. However, the SAICM secretariat was also constrained by UNEP's centralized fundraising arrangements. The Board agreed that its co-chairs should write to the Executive Director of UNEP to raise the matter. A copy of the letter of the co-chairs is available in annex B to the present note. The Board concluded that all possible efforts should be made to increase contributions to the QSP and the trust fund.

27. Following a discussion on the awards concept contained in the business plan, the Board agreed that, drawing on the experience of the "POPs Club" of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) and the Stratospheric Ozone Protection Awards of the United States Environmental Protection Agency, the secretariat would prepare for September 2008 a proposal for an awards system and an event, which would take place during the second session of the ICCM.

28. The Board agreed that while the business plan targets should not be revised, the secretariat should update the business plan, including by adding the summary graphs and tables presented in document SAICM/EB.3/5.

VII. Consideration of modalities for the reporting of the Executive Board to the second session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management.

29. The secretariat representative introduced document SAICM/EB.3/6, presenting the possible format and content of the Board's report to the second session of the ICCM. Participants agreed that an executive summary, factual information on the establishment and operation of the QSP and trust fund, as well as on progress in the implementation of projects should be included. In this regard, the Board noted that independent monitoring and evaluation reports would provide useful information on lessons learned. The Board also agreed to make recommendations to the ICCM on the administrative and logistical operation of the QSP, including on the desirability of having meetings of the committee on the trust fund prior to rather than during Board meetings, as well as the need to provide the secretariat with adequate staff resources to service the QSP.

30. No consensus could be reached on the inclusion of substantive and financial matters in the report and the process for its adoption before the second session of the ICCM. The Board requested the secretariat to develop and circulate for the beginning of September 2008 an initial draft report and invite members to submit comments. A teleconference would be held in late September or early October 2008 to discuss the draft report and to decide if the Board should meet in advance of the second session of the ICCM in order to finalize the report. It was noted that if the Board decided to meet to finalize its report, its fourth meeting should be brought forward to January 2009.

VIII. Other matters

31. Several participants noted that the holding of the meeting of the committee of the trust fund was not convenient for the full Board meeting. It was suggested that, pending ICCM consideration of a revision to its guidance on the matter, the committee should meet on the first morning of the Board meeting, immediately after the adoption of the Board's meeting agenda, and that the Board would reconvene only in the afternoon.

X. Adoption of the report

32. In the absence of sufficient time to consider the report of the meeting, the Board agreed that the secretariat and the co-chairs would prepare a draft which would be circulated for comments to all Board members. The report would then be made available publicly on a provisional basis and formally adopted at the fourth meeting of the Board in 2009.

XI. Next meeting

33. The Board decided to postpone its decision to schedule its fourth meeting, pending the consideration of the development of its report to the second session of the ICCM. It was noted that a final decision on the next meeting of the Board should be made before mid-October 2008.

XII. Closure of the meeting

34. The meeting was closed at 5.30 p.m. on Wednesday 7 May 2008.

Annex A

Amendment to the QSP trust fund application form *

Project objectives and explanation of how the project will support the objective and strategic priorities of the QSP:

Indicate to which of the QSP strategic priorities the project is directly relevant and explain to which specific element of that priority it relates:

Priority A: Development or updating of national chemical profiles and the identification of capacity needs for sound chemicals management.

Explain:

Priority B: Development and strengthening of national chemicals management institutions, plans, programmes and activities to implement SAICM, building upon work conducted to implement international chemicals-related agreements and initiatives.

Explain:

Priority C: Undertaking analysis, interagency coordination, and public participation activities directed at enabling the implementation of SAICM by integrating – i.e., mainstreaming – the sound management of chemicals in national strategies, and thereby informing development assistance cooperation priorities.

Explain:

In addition, please indicate to which of the work areas set out in the strategic objectives of section IV of the Overarching Policy Strategy, namely risk reduction, knowledge and information, governance, capacity building and illegal international traffic, the project is relevant:

* For reference, the adopted text would be inserted on the top of page 6 of document SAICM/EB.3/INF/5, the QSP trust fund application materials.

Annex B

Text of the QSP Executive Board Co-chairs' letter to the Executive Director of UNEP

8 May 2008

Dear Mr Steiner,

The Quick Start Programme (QSP) of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) is in its second year of implementation as an innovative and successful funding mechanism to support chemical safety activities in developing countries and countries with economies in transition. At its annual meeting held in Geneva on 6 and 7 May 2008, the Executive Board of the QSP reviewed QSP finances and requested the co-chairs to consult with you on fundraising arrangements.

The Board was pleased to note that, subject to finalization of one outstanding pledge, the QSP Trust Fund attracted approximately \$7.4 million in 2007, surpassing its fundraising target by \$800,000. The Board was nevertheless conscious of the challenge of achieving similar annual funding in the remaining four years for which the Trust Fund is scheduled to receive contributions. A particular concern is to broaden the donor base beyond the 19 Governments that have so far supported the Trust Fund, including by attracting contributions from industry and private foundations. The Board is also keen to encourage current donors to continue supporting the Trust Fund in the future and to achieve a more equitable balance among them in order to reduce reliance on a handful of large donors for the bulk of QSP funding.

In the light of the above QSP Trust Fund funding challenge, not to mention other financing needs in the area of chemicals and hazardous waste management, the Board was of the view that an enhanced fundraising effort will be needed in the coming years. Attracting new donors beyond those already committed will require increasingly intensive outreach and marketing work.

While SAICM is a multi-sectoral initiative, recognized by the governing bodies of six other intergovernmental organizations, and the great majority of QSP resources have come from development cooperation agencies, the Board was mindful that the QSP Trust Fund and SAICM secretariat are both administered by UNEP on behalf of the broader community of SAICM stakeholders. The Board would thus welcome UNEP leadership in supporting SAICM in the development and implementation of innovative fundraising programmes. In that regard, the Board would encourage UNEP to continue to treat the QSP as a flagship programme and accord it appropriate attention in its new centralized resource mobilization arrangements, bearing in mind Governing Council's request in decision 23/9 that, "as a matter of high priority, [you] make appropriate provision for the implementation of UNEP's responsibilities under SAICM."

Alternatively or in addition, if sufficient expertise or staff resources are not available centrally, the Board would encourage the delegation of fundraising authority to the SAICM secretariat and Chemicals Branch, in appropriate coordination with the UNEP central resource mobilization unit and other responsible intergovernmental organizations. In this regard we also note the recommendation of the Ad Hoc Joint Working Group on Enhanced Cooperation and Coordination between the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions to establish a joint resource mobilization service for the three Convention secretariats. Should such a joint service be established, with a scope that includes SAICM activities, complimentary fundraising efforts could be considered by the SAICM governing body, the International Conference on Chemicals Management.

The Board also requested us to draw to your attention its concern at delays in completion of legal arrangements by UNEP to allow approved QSP Trust Fund projects to proceed. In that regard, the Board

would appreciate it if adaptation for QSP purposes of the new agreement templates currently being introduced in UNEP could be expedited.

We look forward to having your views on these important tasks of sustaining the initial fundraising success of the SAICM QSP as a matter of urgency and to your ensuring that approved Trust Fund projects commence without undue delay.

Yours sincerely

Irina Zastenskaya

Jozef Buys

Co-chairs
Quick Start Programme Executive Board
