
8th meeting of the Quick Start Programme

Executive Board

Geneva

7-8 March 2013

Adoption of the report of the 8th meeting of the Board

Report of the 8th 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 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 Committee* and other QSP participants, and provides operational guidance on the implementation of the strategic priorities of the QSP. The 1st meeting of the Executive Board was held on 26 and 27 April 2006 in Geneva. The 2nd meeting of the Board was held on 23 and 24 April 2007, the 3rd meeting took place on 6 and 7 May 2008, the 4th meeting was held on 23 and 24 April 2009, the 5th meeting took place on 19 and 20 June 2010, the 6th meeting took place on 13 and 14 September 2011 and the 7th meeting took place on 7 and 8 May 2012.
3. Rules of procedure of the Executive Board established the Quick Start Programme Executive Board Committee composed of donor countries and the representatives of the five United Nations regions. Since 2009, the Board introduced a practice to hold a separate meeting of the Committee prior to the meeting of the Executive Board. Accordingly, the Committee held its current meeting on the morning of Thursday 7 March 2013. The outcome of the Committee's deliberations is included under section III below.

* The QSP Trust Fund Implementation Committee comprises representatives of the participating organizations of the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC). 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), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Bank.

I. Opening of the meeting

4. The eighth meeting of the Executive Board was held at the International Environment House II in Geneva on 7 and 8 March 2013. The meeting was opened by the representative of the secretariat, who welcomed the new members of the Executive Board elected by the third session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management held in Nairobi from 17 to 21 September 2012. Following welcoming remarks, the secretariat invited the Executive Board to elect the two Co-Chairs that would preside over the meeting, in accordance with Article 8 of the rules of procedure.

II. Organizational matters

A. Election of officers

5. The participants agreed that Mr. Kouame Georges Kouadio (Côte d'Ivoire) was elected as the co-chair from the group of Government representatives of the five United Nations regions and Mr. Reginald Hernaus (Netherlands) was elected as the co-chair from the group of donors.

B. Organization of work

6. The Board agreed to meet from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. on Thursday 7 March 2013 and from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. and from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. on Friday 8 March 2013. As per previous years, a separate meeting of the Executive Board's Committee on the QSP Trust Fund was held from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. on 7 March 2013 as indicated in the annotated agenda SAICM/EB. 8/1/Add.1.

C. Attendance

7. The meeting was attended by the following regional representatives or their designated replacements: Mr. Kouame Georges Kouadio (Côte d'Ivoire), Mr. Adel Shafei Othman (Egypt), Ms. Jing Ye (China, People's Republic of), Ms. Elsa Miranda (Indonesia), Ms. Lindita Tafaj (Albania), Ms. Tatiana Tugui (Moldova, Republic of), Mr. Lionel Michael (Antigua and Barbuda), Mr. Gordo Jain (Germany), Ms. Kimberly Cochran (United States of America)

8. The meeting was attended by the following donor representatives: Ms. Jill Hanna and Mr. Jorge Peydro-Aznar (European Commission), Ms. Heini Leppänen (Finland), Mr. Philippe Chemin (France), Mr Vassilios Karavezyris (Germany), Ms. Young-Hee Kim and Ms. Gi-Won Seo (Korea, Republic of), Mr. Reginald Hernaus (Netherlands), Ms. Marta Ciraj (Slovenia), Ms. Johanna Lissenger Peitz (Sweden) and Ms. Gabi Eigenmann (Switzerland).

9. The meeting was attended by the following contributors: Ms. Anna Hitschler (ICCA/BASF), Mr. David Azoulay (International POPs Elimination Network, IPEN), Mr. Tsutomu Mizutani (Japan), Mr. Kaj Madsen (UNEP), Ms. Petra Schwager (UNIDO) and Mr. Jonathan Krueger (UNITAR).

D. Adoption of the agenda

10. The participants adopted the following agenda for the meeting on the basis of the provisional agenda set out in document SAICM/EB. 8/1 and SAICM/EB. 8/1/Add.1. IPEN proposed an additional discussion on the percentage of NGO projects funded under the QSP. Egypt proposed a review of the UNEP Governing Council meeting, from 18 to 22 February 2013. Both were adopted as additions to the agenda.

1. Opening of the meeting
2. Organizational matters
 - (a) Election of officers

- (b) Adoption of the agenda
 - (c) Organization of work
3. Report of the Executive Board's Committee on the Quick Start Programme Trust Fund
4. Outcomes of ICCM3 and the 27th Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme
5. Review of implementation of the Quick Start Programme and its Trust Fund
 - (a) Status of the Quick Start Programme
 - (b) Review of the Quick Start Programme Business Plan
 - (c) Status of projects under the Quick Start Programme Trust Fund
 - (d) Non-Trust Fund contributions to the Quick Start Programme
6. Further development of operational guidance on the implementation of the strategic priorities of the Quick Start Programme.
7. Other matters
8. Adoption of the report
9. Next meeting
10. Closure of the meeting

III. Report of the Executive Board's Committee on the QSP Trust Fund

11. Mr. Kouame Georges Kouadio (Côte d'Ivoire), Chair of the Committee, made a summary presentation of the outcome of discussions, as follows:

Executive Board's Committee 8th meeting – morning 7th March 2013

12. The secretariat welcomed attendees, and in invoking the rules of procedure, invited the Executive Committee to elect a chair to preside over the morning session. Accordingly, the Committee elected Mr. Kouadio, Cote D'Ivoire, as Chair.

13. The secretariat introduced document SAICM/EB.8/2 containing a brief overview of ICCM3, with special focus on the decision to extend the term for receiving contributions into the Trust Fund until the 4th session of the Conference to be held in 2015.

14. The secretariat introduced document SAICM/EB.8/3 providing a report on the status of the Quick Start Programme and its Trust Fund, highlighting the financial status of the Trust Fund. Participants noted that the donor make-up has not changed significantly since the establishment of the Programme.

15. The secretariat also indicated that there is currently \$240,000 deposited in the Trust Fund account, and that there is a list of approved projects waiting for funds to become available since May 2012. The secretariat also indicated that there are €800,000 still to be disbursed from an agreement with the European Commission. However, these funds are scheduled for disbursement in December 2014, and the secretariat had requested the Commission to consider providing an advance. The representative from the European Commission indicated that internal discussions will be held on whether an advance could be made.

16. In introducing document SAICM/EB.8/7, the secretariat provided information on proposed changes to operational guidance and procedures. The Committee welcomed the new operational guidance

document prepared by the secretariat, indicating that it would be a timesaving tool for both implementers and the SAICM secretariat. The Committee discussed briefly the proposed changes to the percentage change in budget lines that can be approved by the secretariat without referring to the Trust Fund Implementation Committee for approval.

17. The secretariat also indicated that no requests have been received from project implementers to utilize the Senior Expert Resource Group established by the Executive Board at its 5th meeting. Therefore, a proposal to use this resource as a tool for the secretariat to draw from to assist projects presenting serious problems was presented. The Committee highlighted the need to further advertise this service.

18. The Committee welcomed the proposed changes and decided to defer decisions on them until the afternoon, when a more detailed discussion could be held with the executing agencies and implementers during the full meeting of the Board.

19. The secretariat introduced document SAICM/EB.8/4, containing the proposed updates to the Business Plan of the Quick Start Programme, following the extension of the period for receiving contributions into the Trust Fund until 2015. The secretariat provided a summary of the major changes to the Business Plan.

20. In the ensuing discussion, the Committee expressed support for revising fundraising targets using the formula presented as Option 3 at an average of \$2,272,429 per year, with a 5% increase every year.

21. Regarding fundraising strategies, the Committee requested deletion of references to the P-3 position fulfilling a fundraising role, as well as the establishment of the informal committee to assist the secretariat with fundraising.

22. The Committee highlighted the importance of linking the Quick Start Programme to the longer-term financing and wider objectives. The secretariat was requested to add a section at the beginning of the document providing the necessary background for this purpose. One participant spoke of the importance of post-2015 considerations up to 2020.

23. Regarding application rounds, the Committee supported one rather than two rounds but the decision was deferred in order to discuss further with implementers during the full Board meeting.

24. The Chair closed the Committee meeting at 1.15 pm.

IV. Outcomes of ICCM3 and the 27th Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme

A. 27th Governing Council

25. Following the introductory remarks by the secretariat and the report of the Executive Board's Committee, a discussion on the outcomes of the 27th session of UNEP Governing Council (GC) was held. The representative from UNEP presented an overview of the outcomes of the GC.

26. The UNEP Governing Council welcomed the adoption of the Strategy for the involvement of the health sector in the implementation of the Strategic Approach, and requested the Executive Director of UNEP, inter alia, to give full support to the Strategic Approach and to develop orientation and guidance to implement the 2020 goal on sound chemicals' management. The GC also underlined the importance of mainstreaming activities for sound chemicals management as reflected in the Global Chemical Outlook report; and requested the ED to continue to expand work to facilitate country implementation.

27. The Governing Council further welcomed an integrated approach to address the financing of the sound management of chemicals and wastes and requested the ED to facilitate a meeting to develop a special programme as part of the integrated approach.

28. Mr. Jacob Duer of UNEP joined the Executive Board to present information on the preparations for the consultative meeting to develop the Terms of Reference of the Special Programme. Tentative date for meeting to be held in first week of June 2013, and findings will be presented as an information document at the Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Minamata Convention on Mercury in October 2013. The meeting will be chaired by governments. The draft text is planned to be discussed at the second meeting of the Open-ended Working Group in 2014 and at ICCM4 in 2015. Participants stressed the importance of having documents ready in good time before the each of the meetings where this issue will be tabled.

29. The Terms of Reference will address: institutional strengthening, duration of the programme, parameters of the programme, eligibility criteria, and what needs to be put in place to facilitate the proposal.

30. The Board took note of the information, stressed the need for sufficient time for preparations, suggested some dates later in June and early July, and expressed satisfaction in learning that the planning for this meeting is ongoing and the consideration of consulting the relevant stakeholders, including the secretariat of the Stockholm, Rotterdam and Basel conventions and the SAICM secretariat. The Board also discussed the possibility of transmitting lessons learned from the Quick Start Programme to the upcoming consultative meeting.

B. Outcomes of ICCM3

31. The Board had before it documents SAICM/EB.8/2, the summary of outcomes of ICCM3 and SAICM/EB.8/INF.8, the full report of the Conference.

32. It was agreed that the impacts of the ICCM3 decision to extend the duration of the QSP would be discussed further under item 5.

V. Review of implementation of the Quick Start Programme and its Trust Fund

A. Status of the Quick Start Programme

33. The secretariat introduced documents SAICM/EB.8/3, Section I of the Report of the secretariat on the implementation of the Quick Start Programme and its Trust Fund, SAICM/EB.8/6, Provisional report of the seventh meeting of the QSP Executive Board, Geneva, 7-8 May 2012, SAICM/EB.8/INF/1, Report of the thirteenth meeting of the QSP Trust Fund Implementation Committee, Geneva, 9 May 2012, and SAICM/EB.8/INF/2, Provisional report of the fourteenth meeting of the QSP Trust Fund Implementation Committee, New York, 28 and 29 November 2012. The secretariat drew particular attention to the Trust Fund Implementation Committee 14th meeting where additional projects were approved in spite of a shortfall of funds, given the then-envisaged closure of the QSP Trust Fund.

34. The Board **adopted** the report of its 7th meeting. The Board took note of the information in the reports.

35. The secretariat provided the Board with a summary of the information contained in the document SAICM/EB.8/3.Rev.1. This included detail on funds deposited, non-Trust Fund contributions and leveraged resources.

36. It was noted that the donor base had not increased since last year from 24. The representative from Sweden drew attention to its large contribution in 2012 to SAICM activities as support for management of the QSP in place of funding the Trust Fund directly.

37. The priority list of non-funded projects contains nine already-approved projects from the 12th round of applications that are waiting funding for implementation.

38. QSP is in the 13th round of applications, a year after the 12th round as opposed to the normal six month period, due to the anticipated end of the QSP Trust Fund for contributions.

B. Review of the Quick Start Programme Business Plan

39. The secretariat provided the Board with SAICM/EB.8/3 Report of the secretariat on the status of the Quick Start Programme and its Trust Fund and implementation of the QSP business plan, SAICM/EB.8/4, Updated Business plan according to the decision of ICCM3 and SAICM/EB.8/INF/7, the SAICM QSP business plan updated in September 2011.

40. The secretariat stated that the QSP had missed the fundraising target up to 2012 by approximately \$12,000,000 (a target of \$44.8million with received contributions of \$32.7million).

41. The secretariat **called attention** to SAICM/EB.8/4, Updated Business plan according to the decision of ICCM3, stating that references to the QSP Trust Fund closing for contributions in 2012 had been amended to 2015. In addition, proposals were provided for revised fundraising targets and limiting application rounds to one per year rather than two.

42. The Board **re-iterated** that the decision-makers supporting the extension of the period of contributions for the Quick Start Programme from ICCM3 included donor countries, and therefore a commitment was made to continue to finance the Trust Fund until ICCM4.

43. The Executive Board **approved** the selection of option three for revision of the targets, generally accepted as the more conservative, realistic and modest option. This implied a final total fundraising target for the QSP of \$40,289,445. It was noted that this revision to more modest targets should not work as a disincentive to previously large donors, or indeed new donors, to finance the Trust Fund beyond newly established targets.

a. Option 3

- i. A third, more conservative option, may be considered, by removing large contributions from the calculations i.e. contributions over \$1,000,000, which in this current funding environment are unlikely to be repeated by one single donor. The total remaining contributions for the period 2006-2012 are \$15,907,001, at an average of \$2,272,429 per year. Retaining the annual 5% increase target, with the annual average 2006-2012 as a base, would give QSP fundraising targets of \$2,386,050 for 2013, \$2,505,352 for 2014 and \$2,630,620 for 2015.

44. The Board **approved** the removal of reference in the Business Plan to the P-3 role for fundraising activities, as this should be done by the SAICM secretariat coordinator and the Head of the Chemicals Branch.

45. The Board **approved** the removal of the reference to the informal voluntary committee as an unnecessary step given insufficient time before the closure of the Trust Fund in 2015.

46. The Executive Board discussed at length the merits of reducing the number of application rounds from two per year to one per year. Concerns were raised that this may be a disincentive to donors to provide funding, while application rounds without funding are an inefficient use of applicants' and the secretariat's time. The Executive Board **decided** that only one round per year (with no additional round in 2013) will take place, dependent on the availability of funds in the Trust Fund. The Executive Board **will decide** at its next meeting when the next application round would be opened. In addition, the Board **decided** to review this decision at its next meeting to adapt to the funding conditions prevalent at that time.

47. The Board **decided** that the last application round will be closed as soon as possible after the close of the Trust Fund in 2015 so that there is certainty over the exact level of funding in the Trust Fund, as ICCM4 is the final date that the Trust Fund is open for contributions. It is important that wording related to the closure at ICCM4 is clarified and amended where necessary to allow for closure of the last application round after ICCM4.

48. The seventh Executive Board meeting discussed the allocation of projects to non-governmental organisations (NGOs) as implementing agencies. The allocation for NGO projects as per the Business

Plan currently stands at a maximum 10% of funds per application round. The Board **decided** to increase the maximum level of funding to NGO-implemented projects from 10% of available funds to 20%.

C. Status of projects funded under the Quick Start Programme Trust Fund

49. The secretariat provided the Board with an update on the projects funded under the Quick Start Programme Trust Fund as presented in document SAICM/EB. 8/5 Report on the status of projects funded under the Quick Start Programme as of December 2012. An overview was given by the secretariat with reporting highlighted for attention. There has been progress on receiving reports from project implementers, though there are still improvements to be made. 84% of expected narrative reports were received in 2012 and 50% of expected independent Monitoring and Evaluation reports.

50. The secretariat explained that projects that are suspended are considered by the QSP Trust Fund Implementation Committee (TFIC) as performing inadequately and as a result, declared suspended or cancelled. Remaining funds that have not been spent during the implementation period are returned to the Trust Fund and are considered as available funds for subsequent projects. In some instances where a project expires before any implementation activities have taken place, project implementers are encouraged to re-submit. The secretariat also confirmed that eligibility criteria had become more flexible, and countries are now eligible for more than one project.

51. The secretariat explained that it is difficult to ensure project reports are provided on time. Previous QSP Trust Fund Implementation Committee decisions (8th and 12th meetings) to penalise implementers where reports have not been submitted has had a positive effect on reporting. Previously-mentioned side-events will be used to discuss the reports further with implementers.

52. The Board asked for more information on the seven suspended projects. Implementers provided background on some of the difficulties faced by project implementers, including delays at ministerial level and general delays in signing agreements with Government departments and other agents. Total funds unspent by the seven projects are \$1,176,580 and UNEP has received returned funds totalling \$731,627. The SAICM secretariat is seeking final information and the return of a further \$444,953.

D. Non-Trust Fund contributions to the Quick Start Programme

53. The representative of the secretariat drew attention to document SAICM/EB.8/INF/6 Non-trust fund contributions to the Quick Start Programme that had been approved prior to the meeting.

54. Furthermore, the secretariat provided updates on newly supplied non-Trust Fund contributions. Three new contributions from UNIDO, UNITAR and UNEP, and copies were supplied to Board members.

55. A **decision** was taken not to amend the non-Trust Fund contributions reporting form, following a proposal from the secretariat to do so.

56. There was a question from the Board about co-financing with the GEF. The secretariat responded that these funds come directly from Trust Fund projects.

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

57. The representative of the secretariat drew the attention of the meeting to document SAICM/EB.8/7 Further development of operational guidance on the implementation of the strategic priorities of the QSP, containing issues for possible consideration in the further development of operational guidance. This was discussed by the QSP TFIC during their 14th meeting and recommendations were developed on project implementation, information management, workload management and the use of performance indicators to improve the administration and implementation of the Programme. The Board also had SAICM/EB.8/INF/3 Application materials and reporting forms for the QSP Trust Fund and SAICM/EB.8/INF/10 Proposed draft guidelines for the implementation of QSP projects

58. The secretariat gave an overview of the proposed changes and a powerpoint presentation with relevant detail. The Board **recommended** that documents highlighting changes would be useful, rather than posting the already-changed documents.

59. It was clarified that the official language of the QSP is English and therefore applications and reports are only accepted in English. This is a system that has proven acceptable to project implementers, though the secretariat provides assistance where possible.

60. The Board raised a concern that the restriction of reports in English may represent an obstacle for project implementers, particularly where English is not the major working language. Given the limited time left for the QSP, the Board suggested to consider this issue for longer-term chemicals management funding programmes and included in the TORs of the final evaluation of the QSP.

61. The secretariat proposed that a buffer period is provided to projects that need an extension period to complete administration of the project. This would significantly reduce administration on behalf of the secretariat, though will need to be discussed with UNEP administration. This was **agreed** by the Board.

62. The Board **decided** that the secretariat would be permitted to accept requested budget changes up to 10% of the total direct project costs within the originally approved project budget. Conditions applied: no changes to the overall budget and no addition of new budget lines.

63. The Board **decided** that the secretariat would be permitted to initiate the use of the resources of the Senior Expert Resource Group to help resolve issues with QSP projects, rather than await requests for assistance from implementers. The Board **suggested** that there could be broader communication and advertising of the SERG from the SAICM secretariat to encourage use of the group's resources by project implementers.

64. The secretariat stated that the QSP database under development by the secretariat provides for improved management of information, and will help the QSP fulfil its mandate of making information more widely available.

65. The Board **recommended** that good examples of project information are provided to implementers within the guidelines for greater clarity.

66. The Executive Board considered these guidelines and **adopted** them as appropriate in order to improve the administration and implementation of the Programme.

VII. Other matters

67. The Board discussed, as initiated during the 7th meeting of the Executive Board, merging the meetings of the Executive Board's Committee in the morning and the full Board which starts in the afternoon. In doing so, the Board made reference to rule 29 of the rules of procedure of the QSP Executive Board.

68. The Board **decided** that the meetings of the Executive Board and of its Committee would be merged, as a one day meeting. In instances where the Committee feels it is necessary to hold a separate meeting, it would raise this need to the secretariat. The secretariat would remind Committee members at the time of document distribution to inform the secretariat whether a meeting of the Committee is required. The Board **decided** that the rules of procedure could be amended where necessary, pending legal opinion.

69. The Board **suggested** that agenda items, specifically decision points, are clearly identified in the documents and displayed during the meeting with an overhead projector for the benefit of Board members to ensure greater efficiency.

70. The Board held an initial discussion on the need to conduct a second evaluation of the QSP, in addition to the previous Mid-Term evaluation, as per the recommendation of the seventh Executive Board meeting. The Evaluation report is to be presented to the fourth session of the Conference for its

consideration, given that the next ICCM after 2015 is provisionally scheduled for 2020. The Government of Sweden has made available some initial funding to conduct this exercise as a signal of its commitment to impact evaluation reports. UNEP guidelines dictate that a final evaluation will also be undertaken for the project, which could supplement the second evaluation of the QSP.

71. The Board **decided** that the secretariat will prepare Terms of Reference in advance of the 9th Executive Board meeting.

VIII. Adoption of the report

72. The meeting **approved** the report following its finalization by the secretariat in consultation with the co-chairs. According to customary practice, the report would be formally adopted at the next meeting of the Board.

IX. Next meeting

73. The next meeting of the Board has been tentatively scheduled for March 2014. The Board endorsed the decision to hold the next meeting in late March 2014, with communication due from the secretariat.

X. Closure of the meeting

74. The co-Chair Mr. Reginald Hernaus (Netherlands) closed the meeting at 1.45 p.m. on Friday 8 March 2013.

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