

Planning and Implementing a National Action Programme for Integrated Chemicals Management

A Guidance Document

May 1997

*Pilot Programme to Assist Countries in Implementing National Action Programmes
for Integrated Chemicals Management*

IOMC

INTER-ORGANIZATION PROGRAMME FOR THE SOUND MANAGEMENT OF CHEMICALS

A cooperative agreement among **UNEP, ILO, FAO, WHO, UNIDO, UNITAR** and **OECD**



The *Pilot Programme to Assist Countries in Implementing National Action Programmes for Integrated Chemicals Management* is conducted in the context of UNITAR's Training and Capacity Building Programmes in Chemicals Management.

For additional information please contact:

Training and Capacity Building Programmes in Chemicals Management
United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR)
Palais des Nations
CH-1211 GENEVE 10
Switzerland
FAX +41 22 917 8047
EMAIL: cwm@unitar.org
WEBSITE: www.unitar.org/cwm

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Introduction to the Guidance Document

The *UNITAR/IOMC Pilot Programme to Assist Countries in Implementing National Action Programmes for Integrated Chemicals Management* was initiated in 1996, with financial support from the Swiss Government, as a follow-up to the preparation of a National Profile at the country level. Through this programme, UNITAR, together with the six member organizations of the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC)¹, namely UNEP, ILO, FAO, WHO, UNIDO and OECD, will assist four pilot countries in implementing a National Action Programme for integrated chemicals management.² Three developing countries, namely Argentina, Ghana and Indonesia, were selected in February 1996 to participate in the pilot programme. While funding available through the pilot programme is targeted mainly to assist developing countries, Slovenia, a country in economic transition, was accepted to participate as an associated pilot country following a decision of the Inter-Organization Coordinating Committee (IOCC) of the IOMC during its Seventh Meeting, 28-29 April 1997. Each of the pilot countries will undertake a National Action Programme as a means towards the development of a fully integrated and comprehensive national chemicals management system. Few countries have undertaken such a challenge, thus the pioneering efforts of the pilot countries will serve to illuminate key challenges and opportunities of an integrated national approach to chemicals management, and will help to strengthen subsequent capacity building efforts.

Over a period of approximately 18 months, each pilot country will plan and implement a National Action Programme to address priority areas of national chemicals management as identified at the country level through consultations among all interested parties (i.e. "stakeholders") and based on the assessment of existing chemicals management infrastructure as documented in the country's National Profile. A multi-stakeholder National Coordinating Team (NCT) will guide and oversee the National Action Programme, and various Technical Task Forces will be established to undertake concrete activities within each of the priority areas to be addressed.

This guidance document is part of a series of documents intended to assist countries in strengthening national chemicals management, and represents a follow-up to the UNITAR/IOMC guidance document entitled *Preparing a National Profile to Assess the National Infrastructure for Management of Chemicals: A Guidance Document*. A companion document, the *IPCS/UNITAR/IOMC Key Elements of a National Programme for Chemicals Management and Safety*, provides relevant substantive information including further explanation of international developments related to chemicals management, discussion of some of the key elements and functions of a national chemicals management system, and sources of additional information. In order to assist with specific activities that countries may undertake in the context of their National Action Programmes, e.g., organizing a national workshop, exploring relevant activities of international and bilateral organizations, strengthening national information systems for chemicals management, etc., additional documentation will be made available to countries throughout the UNITAR/IOMC pilot programme.

¹ The IOMC is a cooperative agreement among the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), The World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The membership of UNITAR in the IOMC is currently pending.

² The pilot countries were selected from among those which took part in the UNITAR/IOMC National Profile Capacity Building Programme and which applied for participation.

The guidance and suggested sequence of activities which are presented in this document are intended to assist countries in planning and implementing a National Action Programme in a manner that meets national needs and circumstances. Recognizing that each country has different priorities and faces a unique situation, the guidance is intended to be flexible and countries are encouraged to adapt it to meet their specific needs. While this version of the guidance has been developed primarily for the countries formally participating in the pilot programme, it is hoped that it will also prove useful to other countries undertaking efforts to build an integrated approach to national chemicals management. Upon completion of the pilot phase in 1998, the guidance will be revised to incorporate the practical lessons learned by the pilot countries and to more adequately reflect the range of experiences that can occur in developing a National Action Programme as a result of regional, cultural, economic and other differences among countries.

Part A of the document provides background information on international and national developments in the field of chemicals management, and discusses some possible opportunities and challenges of a national approach to integrated chemicals management. **Part B** provides suggestions regarding organizational issues, including the establishment of the National Coordinating Team and possible means for ensuring broad stakeholder participation. **Part C** of the document discusses the role and activities of the Technical Task Forces to be established under the NCT and outlines some suggested steps for integrating the work undertaken within the National Action Programme, including the compilation of a comprehensive draft report on integrated chemicals management to be presented for national review and follow-up. Evaluation of the programme is also addressed in Part C.

PART A: Background and Overview

1. Agenda 21 Target: Chemicals Management Capacities by the Year 2000

Since the early 1990s, a number of international policy developments have taken place with major relevance for chemicals management at the international as well as national levels. In 1992, at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development ("Rio Conference"), Heads of States or Governments from more than 150 member countries of the United Nations adopted *Agenda 21*, a comprehensive document outlining responsibilities of States towards the achievement of sustainable development. Chapter 19 of Agenda 21 is entitled "Environmentally Sound Management of Toxic Chemicals, Including Prevention of Illegal International Traffic in Toxic and Dangerous Products", and includes recommendations for achieving the sound management of chemicals by the year 2000, a goal to which all countries present at the Rio Conference agreed. In 1994 the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety (IFCS) was established as a means for countries to regularly discuss their activities and priorities for the sound management of chemicals, including progress made in implementing Chapter 19 of Agenda 21.

Through its six programme areas, Chapter 19 addresses international assessment of chemical risks, harmonization of chemical classification and labeling, information exchange on chemicals and chemical risks, risk reduction, strengthening national capacities and capabilities for chemicals management, and prevention of illegal international trade in toxic and dangerous products. *Programme Area E on Strengthening of National Capabilities and Capacities for Management of Chemicals* is of particular relevance to countries that are in the process of establishing or improving their national systems for chemicals management. It provides a list of basic elements of national chemicals management, namely: (a) adequate legislation, (b) information gathering and dissemination, (c) capacity for risk assessment and interpretation, (d) establishment of risk management policy, (e) capacity for implementation and enforcement, (f) capacity for rehabilitation of contaminated sites and poisoned persons, (g) effective education programmes and (h) capacity to respond to emergencies. However, there is little guidance for countries on how to integrate these functions into a national programme, nor how to link chemicals management policies within the context of broader environmental and economic development goals and strategies. This guidance document is designed to assist countries in working through a pragmatic and step-wise process to strengthen priority elements of national chemicals management, through implementation of a National Action Programme, as a means for achieving concrete progress toward the ultimate goal of a fully integrated and comprehensive national system.

2. Integrated Chemicals Management: Challenges and Opportunities

The challenge of establishing a coherent national chemicals management framework that meshes with broader national environmental and development policies and effectively addresses local needs is one that has yet to be tackled by most countries. Although some developing countries and countries in economic transition have initiated programmes to address aspects of chemicals management and safety, discussions in the IFCS have documented that the great majority of these countries do not have fully functional and comprehensive national systems in place. The ***institutional, technical, legal and administrative challenges*** faced by developing countries and countries in transition committed to establishing sound chemicals management schemes are multi-fold.

At the ***institutional level***, several ministries may be responsible for various aspects of chemicals management but there may not be sufficient coordination among them to ensure a

comprehensive and non-duplicating overall approach. This lack of a clear division of responsibility can impede the process of developing and implementing sound national chemicals management policies and programmes. In particular, this fragmented, sectoral approach can make it difficult to implement a preventive approach to chemicals management.

At the ***technical level***, countries are faced with difficult questions such as: How can chemicals imported and used be identified, taking into consideration that thousands of different trade names are used by industry? How can chemicals be classified in order to distinguish between different hazards and risks? What minimum technical infrastructure should be established in order to monitor importation and use of chemicals? What laboratory facilities are available and what would be required to set up a process for ensuring the quality of chemical products being sold and used in the country? What type of information system is needed to ensure that relevant information is made available to all those who need it?

Regarding ***legal and administrative aspects*** of chemicals management, several developing countries and countries in economic transition have adopted sophisticated regulatory frameworks but lack the administrative capacity for efficient implementation and enforcement. In other cases the laws and regulations that apply to chemicals have developed over time and in a piecemeal fashion, resulting in gaps and overlaps. The challenge for countries is to develop innovative and integrated approaches that will make most effective use of limited resources.

In addition to these challenges, countries also need to consider how chemicals management can be raised as a priority issue at the national level, given the range of competing problems and issues facing most countries. It is also important to define how chemicals management activities can effectively support other programmes and objectives, recognizing that managing chemicals is one component of broader national efforts to achieve environmental protection and sustainable industrial and agricultural development. Some of the questions which might be raised in this regard include: How can chemicals management programmes contribute to national efforts to promote pollution prevention and cleaner production, particularly within small and medium-sized enterprises? What potential impacts might decisions made in the context of chemicals management have on regional and international trade? How might stronger management of chemicals positively affect the country's international image and the market for its products? How can improvements in chemical safety enhance the health and quality of life of its citizens?

By its very nature, an integrated approach requires the involvement of all parties that have a role in managing chemicals. Experiences in the past have shown that national schemes for the sound management of chemicals in some cases have been developed without appropriate coordination among concerned ministries, nor involvement of other key parties such as industry and public interest groups. This lack of consultation may have contributed to low acceptance of these policies, resulting in inadequate implementation and enforcement. Although the concept of multi-stakeholder consultation may be new to some countries, the IFCS has stressed its importance for the establishment of successful and effective chemicals management policies. The IFCS recently reinforced this principle by issuing a recommendation during its Second Session in Ottawa, Canada, 10-14 February 1997, which "Encourages UNITAR/IOMC and partner countries to actively involve non-governmental groups in the planning and implementation of the UNITAR/IOMC pilot capacity building programme for integrated chemicals management."

At the international level, experience gained during past technical assistance programmes suggests opportunities for improvement and better coordination of efforts among the various international organizations. Capacity building activities aimed at assisting countries in strengthening various aspects of chemicals management often have not contributed to an integrated approach at the country level, since assistance is generally provided on a sectoral basis. Coordinating external support activities and fitting them into the national chemicals management framework is an important challenge to be undertaken at the international level in promoting integrated approaches at the country level.

3. Suggested Stages for Planning and Implementing a National Action Programme for Integrated Chemicals Management: An Overview

A group of experts from developing and developed countries, international organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) convened to discuss national chemicals management capacity building during the UNITAR sponsored *Expert Meeting on Strengthening National Capabilities and Capacities for the Sound Management of Chemicals*, Montézillon, Switzerland, 26-30 August 1996. The expert group outlined a multi-stakeholder process consisting of a sequence of stages for planning and implementing a National Action Programme for integrated chemicals management. The process recommended by the expert group, and in particular by participants from several countries which have used similar models, has provided the basis for the suggested organizational structure and sequence of activities that is outlined in the remainder of this document. This procedural guidance is intended to stimulate a country-driven process that will effectively catalyze national action on priority areas of concern and foster multi-stakeholder involvement. Figure 1 illustrates the stages of the suggested national process.

Overview of a National Action Programme

An important preliminary step and substantive foundation for a National Action Programme is the completion of a National Profile (see Box 1). Through the IFCS, all countries have been encouraged to assess their existing infrastructure and capabilities for managing chemicals through preparation of a National Profile, using the UNITAR/IOMC National Profile Guidance Document. In addition to highlighting national priorities and identifying existing gaps and weakness in the national chemicals management infrastructure, a National Profile which has been prepared with input from all interested parties sets the groundwork for multi-stakeholder collaboration in the development of the National Action Programme. In recognition of the important role of a National Profile, the preparation of a comprehensive National Profile through a multi-stakeholder process was a prerequisite for participation in the pilot programme.

After completion of the National Profile, an initial planning meeting with the participation of key officials of relevant government ministries, together with UNITAR/IOMC, would serve to clarify the intended objectives and activities of the pilot programme, establish a time frame and discuss budgetary needs for programme implementation. The ministry serving as the National Coordinator could take the lead in organizing such a meeting. After this initial planning meeting, a National Priority Setting Workshop would be organized to seek input from all interested parties within and outside of government on the national chemicals management priorities and objectives to be addressed through the National Action Programme. The National Priority Setting Workshop would also result in a "Terms of Reference" for a multi-stakeholder National Coordinating Team (NCT) which would be established to guide and implement the National Action Programme. The Terms of Reference would include the work plan, responsibilities and operating procedures of the NCT. Once the national process has been set up, the National Action Programme would be implemented through the activities of Technical Task Forces established under the umbrella of the NCT. Towards the end of this approximately 18-month process, the results and progress made in implementing the National Action Programme would be brought together in a draft report outlining the elements, policies and overall structure of the national system for integrated chemicals management.

Box 1
Preparation of a National Profile:
A Key Starting Point

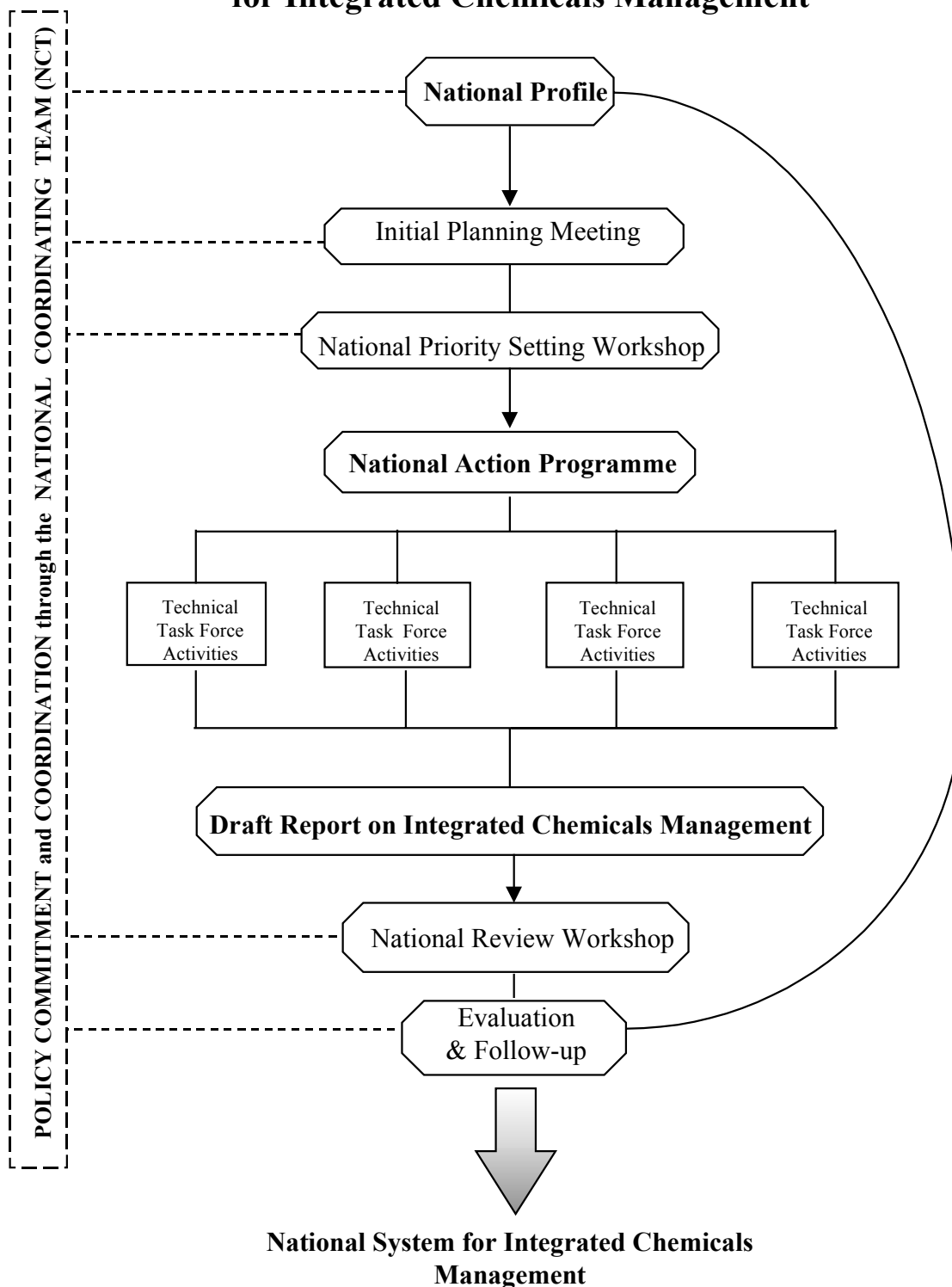
A National Profile is a comprehensive and systematic assessment of a country's existing infrastructure and capacities for managing chemicals. It includes information on legal, institutional, administrative and technical aspects of national chemicals management, as well as identification of existing strengths, gaps and weaknesses. A National Profile can serve as an important reference document for strengthening national chemicals management, thus the preparation of a National Profile through a multi-stakeholder process is considered to be a key starting point for the development of a National Action Programme for integrated chemicals management.

The IFCS, during its second session in Ottawa, Canada in February 1997, issued a recommendation reinforcing this approach which "Encourages countries to prepare and continuously update national profiles, using the UNITAR/IOMC guidance document, with the involvement of all concerned parties, and to use conclusions based on these assessments to define priorities to be addressed through national action programmes for strengthening chemicals management..."

Towards the end of the pilot programme period, a National Review Workshop would be organized to review the draft report and the progress made in implementing the National Action Programme. In addition to obtaining feedback from a broad range of stakeholders, this workshop would generate commitment towards further implementation of the national system. At the conclusion of the pilot programme, an independent evaluation would be conducted to contribute towards ongoing assessment and follow-up activities.

Figure 1

Planning and Implementing a National Action Programme (NAP) for Integrated Chemicals Management



Principles for an effective National Action Programme

The following points were emphasized by the expert group as important principles for developing an integrated national approach for chemicals management:

- An integrated approach to national chemicals management should address the production, processing/formulation, transport, distribution, use and disposal of chemicals following a life cycle approach, including linkages to pollution prevention and control and taking into account economic considerations.
- Recognizing the role of various stakeholders in achieving the sound management of chemicals, all parties should be engaged in a national dialogue and action programme towards the development of a national system. Identifying the broadest possible set of chemicals management objectives and potential benefits as seen from the perspective of all stakeholders can help mobilize this type of broad-based action.
- Countries should prioritize their chemicals management objectives through a systematic yet pragmatic approach in order to identify general areas of concern and should then take fast track action to address priority problems through the development of concrete action programmes, building upon past achievements and ongoing initiatives.

PART B: Setting up a National Action Programme

1. Getting Started

The following pages provide some practical guidance and suggested steps for organizing a successful National Action Programme, including initial planning activities, establishing the National Coordinating Team (NCT), organizing a National Priority Setting Workshop to define the chemicals management priorities to be addressed, and drafting a Terms of Reference that clearly spells out a work plan and division of responsibility within the NCT for carrying out the necessary tasks and activities.

Designating a National Coordinator

The **National Coordinator** is responsible for organizing and facilitating the National Action Programme. The National Coordinator acts as the central coordinating point within the country, and serves as the primary liaison to UNITAR and other outside organizations. The National Coordinator should be located in a national ministry or agency which is responsible for, or closely associated with, chemicals management issues. It is important for the National Coordinator to have the respect, trust and cooperation of all those involved in the National Action Programme. In addition, the designated National Coordinator should have sufficient authority and political clout to be able to contribute effectively to high-level decision making in the area of chemicals management.

Some options for an appropriate National Coordinator might include the National Focal Point for the IFCS, the country's Designated National Authority (DNA) for the London Guidelines on the Exchange of Information on Chemicals in International Trade, or an official from a lead ministry or agency that is currently responsible for inter-ministerial coordination on national chemicals management issues or from the ministry or agency which served as National Coordinator for the preparation of the National Profile. The designated National Coordinator should seek an official endorsement by all parties during the National Priority Setting Workshop or at some appropriate point during the planning process.

The responsibilities of the National Coordinator agency include organizing meetings, ensuring timely information exchange among members of the NCT, tracking progress and addressing obstacles, and keeping high level policy makers informed of progress achieved and actions required. As the primary liaison to UNITAR/IOMC, the National Coordinator will be involved in managing the funding provided in the context of the pilot programme and will be responsible for forwarding requests to UNITAR/IOMC for specific assistance, training and/or guidance on behalf of the members of the NCT and the various Technical Task Forces.

Raising awareness and mobilizing commitment of key stakeholders

While organizational leadership will be provided by the National Coordinator, substantive leadership and input on key issues of chemicals management should come from a variety of ministries and non-governmental sectors. Active and broad-based involvement is essential for the success of the National Action Programme, thus it is important to generate interest and awareness among relevant groups regarding the goals of the programme, the opportunities it can provide, and the implications and responsibilities it might hold for those who will be directly involved in and/or affected by its implementation. The experiences of several

countries indicate that an effective communication and outreach effort, combined with broad-based consultations with parties of interest, should be undertaken by the National Coordinator prior to establishing any formal structure for the development of a National Action Programme. Stakeholders should be involved from the very start in order to ensure their full commitment.

Due to the variety of stakeholders to be involved in the National Action Programme, it is useful to tailor the awareness raising strategy to the particular situation and concerns of each group. Some issues to consider in developing effective outreach include:

- What is the message to be conveyed to various parties of interest regarding the National Action Programme and its goals? How can the National Action Programme be most effectively promoted among the various parties of interest?
- For each stakeholder group, what are the potential benefits of collaborating with the National Action Programme initiative, what are the key issues to be addressed, and what are likely to be their main interests and concerns?

The National Coordinator should seek to make use of relevant events or fora, such as national or regional workshops, inter-ministerial meetings and interactions with industry and other non-governmental groups, as a means for generating interest and establishing linkages to ongoing activities and related programmes.

Clarifying the role of international/bilateral partners

UNITAR and the six member organizations of the IOMC (i.e. UNEP, ILO, FAO, WHO, UNIDO and OECD) are officially collaborating in the context of the pilot programme, and have a range of expertise and services which will be made available to pilot countries in the context of National Action Programme planning and implementation. Input and involvement of other international and/or regional organizations, bilateral assistance agencies and other external groups such as industry, research and public interest NGOs, also will be actively pursued throughout the 18-month programme. Matching the expertise and programmes of these organizations with specific needs at the country level and ensuring that international services and support are delivered in a coordinated manner are some of the important issues to be addressed through the pilot programme.³

It is important to clarify the role and expected contributions of the partner organizations at the outset in order to ensure effective planning and collaboration. The **Initial Planning Meeting** to be organized by the National Coordinator at the start of the pilot programme provides an opportunity to initiate discussion on the role and potential contributions of the IOMC organizations and UNITAR (see Box 2). As the National Action Programme takes shape, it will become increasingly clear what specific types of assistance and input will be needed, as well as what these and other external organizations might be able to provide.

³ The document *Activities and Resources of International and Bilateral Organizations to Support National Chemicals Management and Safety Programmes* is being prepared to assist countries in identifying potential partners and sources of support among the various international and bilateral organizations involved in chemicals management and safety.

Although a more detailed work plan will be developed later on by the National Coordinating Team, it is a good idea to draft an initial work plan and preliminary budget in preparation for or directly following the Initial Planning Meeting in order to help set the process in motion and to ensure a common understanding of the programme's objectives, time frame and financial implications. The preliminary work plan should give approximate deadlines for completion of the various suggested stages within the 18-month programme, and should set forth a schedule of activities to initiate the programme (e.g. proposed dates for a National Priority Setting Workshop). Having a preliminary work plan available will be useful for presenting the overall programme framework to decision makers, potential national stakeholders seeking to join the initiative, and/or prospective international partners interested in providing support and assistance.

Box 2: The Initial Planning Meeting

At the start of the pilot programme, an Initial Planning Meeting should be organized to clarify the objectives of the programme and to discuss specific aspects of programme implementation, including a proposed time frame and budget. This meeting is to be organized by the National Coordinator, and should involve high-level officials from key governmental ministries (e.g. Ministries of Environment, Health, Agriculture, Industry, Labour), a representative from UNITAR/IOMC, regional or local representatives of IOMC organizations, and other groups or individuals, as appropriate.

Some of the issues to be addressed during this Initial Planning Meeting might include:

- What parties within and outside government should be involved in the National Coordinating Team? What level(s) of representation (e.g. decision maker, technical staff) would be most effective?
- How can awareness of the programme be raised among the various parties of interest and what outreach is needed to ensure broad participation?
- What will be the general time frame for planning and implementing the National Action Programme? What is a proposed date for the National Priority Setting Workshop and who will take the lead in organizing it?
- What are some of the priority areas that are likely to be addressed in the National Action Programme? What might be some potential contributions from UNITAR/IOMC and other external actors in addressing these objectives?
- What are the anticipated resource needs for organizing and implementing the National Action Programme?
- What are the responsibilities and commitments of UNITAR/IOMC and the partner country in the context of the pilot programme?

2. Organizing the Work of the National Coordinating Team (NCT)

The role of the NCT

The basis for successful planning and implementation of a National Action Programme for integrated chemicals management is the establishment of a clear management structure for overseeing and undertaking the necessary activities. It is therefore suggested that a **National Coordinating Team (NCT)** be established with representatives of the various parties within and outside of government that have a role in chemicals management and safety. Some of these participants will have been identified during the initial awareness raising stage, particularly those within government. However, additional outreach is likely to be necessary to obtain the involvement of non-governmental groups.

Planning and implementation of the National Action Programme will involve a sustained team effort, combined with a decentralized delegation of specialized projects to Technical Task Forces which will address various substantive areas of national chemicals management. Thus the role of the NCT as the central coordinating body is to set the overall direction and orchestrate the National Action Programme, while making sure that effective coordination and integration of delegated projects and tasks takes place. Effective leadership, delegation, and coordination are vital to a smoothly functioning NCT.

The role of the National Coordinating Team involves more than the substantive aspects of strengthening chemicals management. It also involves building the required policy support for the actual implementation of the action programme in the country.

Some key issues to consider in establishing the NCT and defining its mandate include:

- Which governmental ministries and agencies should participate in the NCT?
- What organizations and interests outside of government should be represented on the NCT?
- If the number of groups interested in participating is too large, how can membership be determined in order to ensure effective representation of all of the various perspectives and interests?
- What will be the main roles and specific functions of the National Coordinating Team? How can operating procedures and responsibilities be made clear to all participants in order to minimize potential misunderstanding and conflict?
- What specific contributions (time, expertise, constructive input, etc.) will be expected from each of the members of the NCT?

By organizing a transparent and well managed national process that responds to the needs of the various concerned parties and interest groups, the NCT can maximize the chances of success.

Identifying concerned parties

What does it mean to be a "concerned party" in the context of a National Action Programme for integrated chemicals management? A concerned party or stakeholder can be a governmental ministry or agency at the national, provincial or local level, or any of a number of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) including research and academic institutions, public interest groups, labour unions, industry associations and other bodies concerned or directly involved with any of the various aspects of chemicals management and safety. These groups recognize that the decisions made during planning and implementation of the National Action Programme could have an impact on their activities or affect issues with which they are concerned.

The range of concerned parties that will become involved in a National Action Programme for integrated chemicals management will vary among countries. In general, however, concerned parties will come from four general sectors:

- *Federal, regional and local government ministries, agencies or other government bodies*

Concerned governmental entities at the national level may include the Ministry of Agriculture, Commerce, Economics, Environment, Health, Industry, Justice, Labour, Public Works, Transportation, Customs or other governmental entities responsible for the development and implementation of laws, regulations, policies and activities related to chemicals management throughout their life cycle, including pollution prevention and control.

In some countries, provincial, state, or regional governments may also participate in the process as important stakeholders. For example, if some aspects of chemicals management are typically the responsibility of regional or local officials, then the national government may be unable to achieve the development of a successful National Action Programme without obtaining the cooperation and agreement of these entities.

- *Industry and agricultural groups and associations*

These may include chemical industry associations, farmers' associations, and other groups which represent the main producers or users of chemicals in the country. Industrial groups that are well organized and interested in improving their capacity to manage chemicals safely can be key partners in a National Action Programme. Agricultural organizations are also crucial, since pesticides and other agricultural chemicals comprise a large share of chemicals used in many countries.

- *Public interest groups and workers' unions*

These may include environmental, consumer, public health or other community-based organizations, labour unions, and other associations that share a concern about the sound management of chemicals in the country. Typically, the basis of this concern will be issues regarding human health or environmental risks from chemicals and pollutants.

It may be difficult to determine the appropriate interest group representatives, particularly if the groups are too numerous for all to be directly involved. Therefore, it may be

necessary to establish a mechanism to determine the most qualified or interested organizations, or to establish a means for allowing the groups to determine for themselves who should represent their interests and concerns.

- *Academic and research institutions*

This group typically includes researchers from major universities as well as representatives of industrial, agricultural, oil or mining research centres and other sources of scientific/technical information on various aspects of chemicals management.

If the number of concerned parties is very large, it may be impractical to involve everyone. In such cases, it is generally advisable to involve at least one representative from the principal groups that may be affected by the National Action Programme and whose views will span the range of perspectives and concerns. In some cases it may be important to include a person or group for political reasons. For example, the presence of a specific individual may be necessary to ensure the cooperation of the national legislature or to facilitate close cooperation with an industry or environmental coalition.

The bottom line is that the views of all groups with legitimate concerns should be included as part of the national process. All participants should recognize that the National Action Programme is a joint effort to improve national chemicals management and not an opportunity for politically motivated lobbying.

Defining the organizational structure of the NCT

Once a National Coordinating Team has been convened with representatives of all relevant stakeholders, an important first step is to agree upon how it will be organized and decide what leadership and administrative positions should be created to ensure that the group will operate effectively. A possible organizational structure for the NCT may consist of the following elements:

- *National Coordinator*
- *Programme Coordinator*
- *Secretariat*
- *Chairpersons for meetings (rotating)*
- *Members of the National Coordinating Team*
- *Technical Task Forces*

The following examples offer some ideas on how the various roles and management functions might be divided within this type of organizational structure.

To ensure consistency throughout the 18-month programme and to facilitate good coordination, the National Coordinator may elect to designate a **Programme Coordinator** who will be responsible for day-to-day programme management. The Programme Coordinator should be someone with a clear understanding of national chemicals management who is able to work effectively with other ministries and stakeholders, both within and outside of government. The role of the Programme Coordinator might include:

- General management of the NCT's activities throughout the National Action Programme;
- Convening members, scheduling meetings, and preparing the NCT agenda;
- Delegating specific programme tasks, enlisting the assistance of outside experts, and arranging any other mechanisms necessary to advance the National Action Programme; and
- Promoting NCT consensus on key issues, resolving disagreements and differences, supervising and maintaining coordination of delegated tasks, conducting further consultations on pending issues, and in general ensuring effective implementation of the National Action Programme.

One or several persons may be appointed to serve as the **Secretariat** of the NCT. The main role for the Secretariat is to assist the Programme Coordinator in performing the above functions, to record discussions and decisions made during NCT meetings, and to facilitate information exchange within the NCT and its various Technical Task Forces.

The NCT may also consider **rotating chairpersons** for NCT meetings, whereby the various involved organizations would have the opportunity to host and chair one or several meetings of the NCT. This sharing of responsibility can help foster active involvement and a sense of ownership on the part of NCT members. In deciding how frequently the chair should rotate, a balance should be sought between enabling a broad range of organizations to take a leadership role, while ensuring continuity of programme activities. If the NCT decides to establish a rotating chair, it may be advisable to have rotating positions in the Secretariat as well, so that an individual from the same organization as that of the chairperson will be able to take lead responsibility for recording the meeting proceedings.

Technical Task Forces will be created within the NCT to undertake specific projects and activities in the context of the National Action Programme. While the task forces may include parties in addition to those serving on the NCT, the coordinator or chair of each task force should be an official NCT member in order to ensure effective coordination and integration of task force activities within the overall National Action Programme. In addition, task force meeting reports should be regularly submitted to the Secretariat of the NCT. A more detailed explanation of the role and suggested structure of the Technical Task Forces is provided in Part C, Section 1.

Defining responsibilities of NCT members

Active and responsible participation should be expected of all members of the National Coordinating Team in carrying out the tasks involved in implementing the National Action Programme. Specific responsibilities may include the following:

- *Participating in NCT and/or Technical Task Force activities*

NCT members should actively engage in whatever task is delegated to them by the National Coordinator, Programme Coordinator or other relevant authority in the NCT, and should strive to complete delegated tasks within the stipulated time frame.

- *Maintaining communication with their respective constituencies*

NCT members should make every effort to ensure the continued support of their constituencies for the National Action Programme. It is expected that members will regularly communicate with their constituencies on the progress being made and the decisions adopted within the NCT, including encouraging their respective organizations and ministries to take actions that will support the aims of the National Action Programme.

- *Contributing their respective expertise to the National Action Programme*

Members of the NCT should tap their respective individual resources, areas of expertise and institutional contacts to contribute to the National Action Programme.

- *Hosting and chairing individual meetings of the NCT*

If a rotating chair is established within the NCT, each member of the NCT should take responsibility for hosting and chairing one or several meetings, as appropriate.

Defining operating procedures

The following are some issues to consider in developing operating procedures for the NCT. In order to prevent misunderstandings and inefficiency, it is important to clearly define how the team will operate.

- *Meetings*

It is suggested that throughout the 18-month programme, the National Coordinating Team meet sufficiently regularly (e.g. once a month) to plan, exchange information and review progress made in the various programme tasks and activities.

During the initial programme stages, more frequent meetings are likely to be necessary. During the latter stages, however, when much of the work will be carried out by Technical Task Forces working in parallel on specific activities, the NCT should find the most appropriate format for maintaining close coordination. For example, the full NCT may decide to meet once a month to review the progress of the various task forces, and otherwise meet in smaller groups in the context of task force activities.

- *Decision Making Procedures*

The NCT must clearly delineate its operating procedures at the outset, such as defining which issues are open for discussion and which will be decided in some other way. A sure recipe for dissatisfaction of concerned parties is when input is sought but then is not utilized or considered in making the final decisions. Likewise, clear rules for decision making within the NCT should be laid out in advance, such as whether a majority vote, full consensus or some other means will be used to make decisions, who will put up issues for voting and under what circumstances, etc.

Preparing a Terms of Reference

To formalize the organization of the National Coordinating Team it is recommended that a **Terms of Reference** document be prepared and agreed upon by NCT members. The preparation of a Terms of Reference, a concise document which outlines the agreed upon organizational structure and operating procedures of the NCT and the responsibilities of its members, is one concrete means for ensuring a transparent and orderly process (see Box 3).

Managing an effective participatory process

The basis for an effective, well coordinated participatory process is clear communication. From the outset, participants in the National Coordinating Team need to understand their responsibilities and know what is expected from them in the context of implementing the National Action Programme. A well prepared Terms of Reference will be instrumental in this regard. Participants also should be convinced that they have an important role to play and that their input will contribute to the attainment of improved chemicals management in the country.

Box 3: Sample Table of Contents for a Terms of Reference Document

The following is a possible outline for a Terms of Reference (TOR) for the National Coordinating Team. The TOR should document the agreed upon organizational structure and operating procedures of the NCT and the various responsibilities of its members. Once prepared, copies of the TOR should be distributed to all members and should be referred to as necessary.

- I. Introduction to the National Action Programme and the Role of the National Coordinating Team (NCT)
- II. Organizational Structure of the NCT
 - National Coordinator
 - Programme Coordinator
 - Members of the NCT
 - Rotating Chairpersons
 - Secretariat
 - Technical Task Forces
- III. Responsibilities of NCT Members
 - Participation in NCT and Technical Task Force activities
 - Liaison to their respective constituencies
 - Providing expertise and input
 - Hosting/chairing meetings on a rotating basis
- IV. Operating Procedures
 - Meetings
 - Decision-making procedures
 - Coordination mechanism

Coordination among a heterogeneous group such as the National Coordinating Team is a subtle and complex process which is constantly shifting in nature and priorities. What may be basic and essential communication to one party may be excessive or unnecessary to another. In addition, the actions and time commitments required of individuals and groups involved in planning and implementing the National Action Programme may vary significantly from one week or month to the next. The NCT must be able to anticipate these emerging requirements to maintain effective coordination and ensure timely accomplishment of delegated tasks.

In many cases, it will be possible to easily reach agreement and incorporate the input of most parties on specific issues. In other cases, however, simple consensus will not be a realistic goal due to differences in opinion and interpretations among members of the National Coordinating Team. In such cases, the best that can be hoped for is to clarify areas of agreement and disagreement and, with this knowledge carefully recorded, move ahead towards the development of workable and generally acceptable strategies. The involvement of higher authorities to resolve particular issues may also be necessary.

3. Defining the Scope and Content of the National Action Programme

Once an organizational structure has been created through the establishment of the NCT, the next step forward is for the country to define the scope and content of its National Action Programme based on the needs that have been identified through its National Profile as well as input received from relevant ministries and stakeholder groups. In order to receive full support at the national level, the need for each proposed project or activity to be included in the National Action Programme should be clearly justified. An important step, therefore, is to define the problems and issues of highest priority within the country, and then decide what actions need to be taken to address those concerns. The organization of a National Priority Setting Workshop involving all parties of interest can be an effective mechanism for taking this next step. In preparation for this national priority setting process, careful consideration should be given to the objectives and key elements of a national chemicals management system, as well as how such a system fits within the broader environmental policy framework.

Clarifying the objectives of national chemicals management

Clearly defining the objectives of national chemicals management will help guide a country's decisions regarding what specific activities, projects, and policy actions should be initiated through its National Action Programme, and will help to generate commitment among key groups and decision makers. The objectives and potential benefits identified by various stakeholder groups may vary widely depending upon their perspectives and interests, thus it is important to get input from all concerned parties.

Many chemicals management objectives pertain to the reduction of risks to health and the environment associated with chemical substances and pollutants. Other national objectives related to trade, the economy and sustainable development will also be served by effective chemicals management. Box 4 provides a list of some broad national chemicals management objectives which countries may wish to use as a basis for defining their own set of objectives.

Box 4: Possible Objectives of National Chemicals Management

The following are some general objectives that a country might identify for its national chemicals management system:

- To target efforts and resources towards chemicals of priority concern.
- To increase awareness among workers and the public regarding the potential risks and safe use of chemicals.
- To prevent accidents and to respond effectively to accidents when they occur.
- To reduce the use of particularly hazardous chemicals and to pursue safer alternatives.
- To reduce exposure to toxic chemicals in the home, at the work place and through the environment.
- To reduce exposure to and minimize risks arising from inadequate disposal of chemicals.
- To obtain better information on the current and potential impacts of chemicals on the environment and health, and to disseminate such information.
- To gain better control over how and what chemicals are being imported and used in the country.
- To minimize trade barriers and enhance the competitiveness of products in the global market.
- To coordinate national activities in response to international initiatives and agreements.

Countries are encouraged to develop their own list of national chemicals management objectives, and to target the activities to be undertaken in the context of their National Action Programmes to address these goals.

Defining the key elements of a national system for integrated chemicals management

The key elements of the national system should be closely related to the country's chemicals management objectives. For example, if reducing risks to health and environment associated with chemicals of priority concern is one of the main objectives, then it may be important to strengthen the capacity for risk-based priority setting and risk management in the context of the national chemicals management system. If increasing the public's awareness of chemical safety practices is an important objective, the national system should incorporate education and risk communication elements.

The chemicals management elements outlined in Chapter 19 of Agenda 21 provide a good starting point for defining the elements and activities to be included in a national system for integrated chemicals management. A list of possible elements of a chemicals management

system, based on those listed in Chapter 19 and expanded to reflect in particular the needs of developing and industrializing countries, is provided in Box 5.

In addition to these key elements, countries should also consider the various responsibilities and obligations under international and regional agreements related to chemicals management. International conventions that the country has ratified or is in the process of ratifying, as well as other international/regional agreements and programmes that are implemented at the country level, need to be considered in terms of how they will be implemented in the context of the national system. Some relevant international programmes and conventions directly linked with national chemicals management include the Prior Informed Consent (PIC) procedure under the London Guidelines and FAO Code of Conduct, various ILO conventions, the Montreal Protocol, etc. The country's National Profile should provide a listing of relevant international programmes and agreements. International initiatives can provide a motivating force for positive action at the country level, and thus can provide an important contribution to national chemicals management. Such opportunities for mutual reinforcement between the fulfillment of international obligations and actions taken to meet national needs should be fully explored.

The need to manage negative impacts and risks applies to all stages of the chemical life cycle, thus the national chemicals management system should incorporate elements to effectively address all aspects of chemicals production, processing, transport, handling, use and final disposal. A key challenge will be to build upon existing structures and ongoing activities, many of which may be sectoral in nature (e.g. addressing problems associated with one environmental medium), while at the same time creating an overall national approach that is fully integrated and consistent with the principles of managing chemicals throughout the life cycle. The chemicals management activities undertaken by non-governmental sectors (e.g., industry, public interest groups, research/academic institutes) may also represent a significant contribution towards addressing risks associated with various stages of the chemical life cycle.

Defining linkages with national environmental and sustainable development programmes

To be fully comprehensive, a national chemicals management system should incorporate linkages with other relevant national programmes, such as pollution prevention and control programmes, education, agricultural extension services, occupational health and safety programmes, among others. These linkages are important because some of the goals and actions undertaken in these other areas are necessary to support effective chemicals management, and vice versa.

On a broader level, it is also necessary to identify the linkages between the chemicals management system and the country's larger plans for sustainable development, including activities undertaken in the context of the UNDP Capacity 21 programme. This will underscore how the National Action Programme for integrated chemicals management can help advance the country's broader development plans. Highlighting linkages between national chemicals management and issues of economics and trade, such as market access and the global competitiveness of national export goods, might be helpful in this regard.

Box 5: Possible Elements of a National System for Integrated Chemicals Management

The following list of elements of a national chemicals management system was developed by participants in the Expert Meeting on chemicals management capacity building (Montézillon, Switzerland, August 1996), based on the list of elements set forth in Programme Area E of Chapter 19.

- adequate legislation;
- information generation, gathering, use and dissemination;
- capacity for hazard and risk assessment, interpretation and communication;
- establishment of risk management policy, including evaluation of safer chemical alternatives and non-chemical options;
- capacity for implementation and enforcement;
- capacity for rehabilitation of contaminated sites and poisoned persons;
- education, awareness raising, and training programmes;
- capacity to respond to emergencies;
- pollution prevention and waste minimization; and
- product stewardship and industry action programmes such as "Responsible Care™".

Identifying priority areas to be addressed through the National Action Programme

Each country will be in the best position to devise appropriate criteria to prioritize the areas to be addressed through its National Action Programme. Some possible strategies for identifying these priority areas might include:

- *Assessment of existing gaps and inconsistencies in the national chemicals management infrastructure, based on the National Profile*

The preparation of a National Profile should have revealed areas of chemicals management where basic infrastructure is lacking and bottlenecks exist that seriously hamper national chemicals management efforts. For example, a lack of access to chemical information and laboratory infrastructure may be preventing the country from undertaking meaningful assessments of chemical risk, or inadequate coordination among involved ministries may be hindering effective decision-making. Addressing some of these deficiencies may be defined as a priority for the National Action Programme.

- *Risk-based priority setting*

The results of risk assessment and comparative risk analyses can help illuminate in more scientific terms the relative seriousness of current public health and environmental risks and thus can be an important priority-setting tool. Using risk as one of the criteria can help to ensure that the National Action Programme will be focused on priority problems for which important reductions in risk can be realistically achieved. Existing knowledge of which economic sectors, types of chemicals, and/or stages of the chemical life cycle are associated with the greatest environmental and health problems in the country can serve as a useful starting point for identifying priorities for risk reduction.

- *Pooling national stakeholder priorities to identify the issues of greatest interest and concern*

Identifying priorities based on the views of the various stakeholders is another possible approach. In practice, this can be achieved through voting or some other ranking process. This approach has the advantage of ensuring that the selected priorities will enjoy political support and therefore greater chances of timely implementation. The caveat is that the perception and ranking of priorities among members of the public and within specific interest groups can differ markedly from the actual risks being experienced, thus this approach could lead to less than optimum outcomes in risk-based terms. However, engaging the public in chemicals management issues and demonstrating commitment to action in response to stakeholder concerns may be equally important.

The NCT may wish to consider these as well as other possible approaches, or a combination thereof, in deciding how best to identify the chemicals management priorities to be addressed through the National Action Programme. The organization and format of the National Priority Setting Workshop, as described in Box 6 below, should also be carefully considered so that it will serve as an effective forum for this national priority setting process.

Box 6: National Priority Setting Workshop

Defining the priorities to be addressed through the National Action Programme and organizing the work of the National Coordinating Team to address those key concerns are the two main objectives of a National Priority Setting Workshop, which is suggested as a first key event to kick off the National Action Programme. Broad participation among all parties of interest is crucial to the success of this workshop. Workshop participants should be of sufficiently high authority to effectively engage in priority-setting and decision-making and to catalyze action within their respective organizations.

The National Profile will serve as an important reference for identifying and prioritizing the areas of chemicals management to be addressed through the National Action Programme. The input of the various parties of interest participating in the workshop also will aid in identifying areas of priority concern. In order to facilitate an effective priority-setting process, an appropriate workshop format should be selected. The UNITAR/IOMC document entitled *Organizing a National Workshop on Chemicals Management and Safety: A Guidance Document* provides additional information and suggestions.

In addition to defining the national chemicals management priorities to be addressed, the workshop should also result in the formal establishment, if one does not yet exist, of the National Coordinating Team (NCT) which will be responsible for guiding and implementing the National Action Programme. Within the NCT, Technical Task Forces should be established to address the various priority issues to be included in the National Action Programme. A work plan and time frame of activities to be undertaken by the National Coordinating Team should be developed, and its organizational structure, operating procedures and the responsibilities of its members clearly defined.

Key outputs of the National Priority Setting Workshop include:

- List of chemicals management issues to be addressed through the National Action Programme;
- Membership of the National Coordinating Team;
- Work plan and time frame for National Action Programme planning and implementation;
- Organizational structure and operating procedures of the NCT;
- List of Technical Task Forces to be established; and
- Actions for follow-up, including proposed date and location of the next meeting of the NCT.

4. Developing a Work Plan for Implementing the National Action Programme

Having identified the priorities and key elements to be addressed through the National Action Programme, the National Coordinating Team should put on paper its plans for the coming months. Developing a detailed work plan is critical to the success of the National Action Programme. The work plan should define all activities, tasks, and policy actions to be carried out, and should place them into a specified time frame. An sample time frame for the pilot programme is provided below to illustrate. For a fully developed work plan, additional levels of detail would be provided for each stage on specific activities, responsible actors, target dates and expected outputs or results.

Activity	4Q 1996	1Q 1997	2Q 1997	3Q 1997	4Q 1997	1Q 1998	2Q 1998	3Q 1998	4Q 1998
National Profile completed									
Initial Planning Meeting									
National Priority Setting Workshop									
Initiation of National Action Programme									
Technical Task Force activities									
Preparation of Draft Report on Integrated National Chemicals Management									
National Review Workshop									
Programme evaluation and initiation of follow-up activities									

In developing the work plan, the NCT will have to make decisions on the following issues:

- The specific activities that will take place in the context of implementing the National Action Programme and the sequence, time frame and expected outcomes of these activities.
- The specific contributions and responsibilities of the various actors involved in carrying out the activities, including measures of performance, deadlines and means for coordination.

- The allocation of human and financial resources to implement all activities outlined in the work plan.

Identifying tasks and activities to be undertaken

Each of the activities to be undertaken in the National Action Programme should be broken down into a sequence of concrete activities that can be feasibly implemented, including intermediate objectives or outputs and final targets. Some activities may include actual implementation (e.g. setting up an information system), while other activities addressing more complex issues could have the development of a specific proposal as their main objective.

Developing a time frame for implementing activities

The allotted time frame for implementing each of the activities in the National Action Programme should also be clearly specified, along with deadlines for delivering any intermediate outputs and/or final products. Because a National Action Programme is implemented through the activities of Technical Task Forces working in parallel, each task force will need to recognize that its work is part of a larger process and that deadlines will have to be respected in order to ensure coordinated progress in implementing the National Action Programme.

Dividing and assigning responsibilities

Aside from timing considerations, the work plan should also contain a clear assignment of responsibilities for each of the planned activities. It should indicate what specific activities have been delegated to particular task forces or individuals. The division of responsibilities for the various activities comprising the National Action Programme will be highly specific to each country's substantive priorities and institutional make up, but in general activities should be assigned to those national entities which have the technical and financial capacity to actually carry them out. In many cases it will be useful to assign the lead responsibility to one ministry or entity, and have other groups serve as active partners.

Development of targets and indicators to evaluate progress

Effective programme management requires the identification of suitable progress indicators and monitoring mechanisms to keep track of implementation and to trigger corrective actions when necessary. The development of an effective management control system (i.e. intermediate targets, progress indicators, monitoring mechanisms, etc.) is particularly important to maintain control of the National Action Programme, which is intrinsically broad in scope and which will involve a great diversity of actors undertaking coordinated actions while remaining under different authorities, lines of command, and jurisdictions.

Indicators selected for evaluating progress in National Action Programme implementation should be adapted to existing capacities, keeping in mind that overly sophisticated indicators may be unnecessarily expensive and time-consuming. Existing indicators which have been developed in the context of other programmes may provide sufficient information.

Information such as data on poisonings, numbers of chemicals banned or restricted, number of training courses provided, etc., can serve as useful indicators depending upon the nature of the activity and the objectives being sought. While the selection of indicators will necessarily depend on the types of activities being undertaken, the bottom line is that the NCT needs to devise or choose appropriate indicators and monitoring mechanisms to ensure that the implementation process is effective and to ensure that corrective actions can be made in time if there are indications that the intended results are not being achieved.

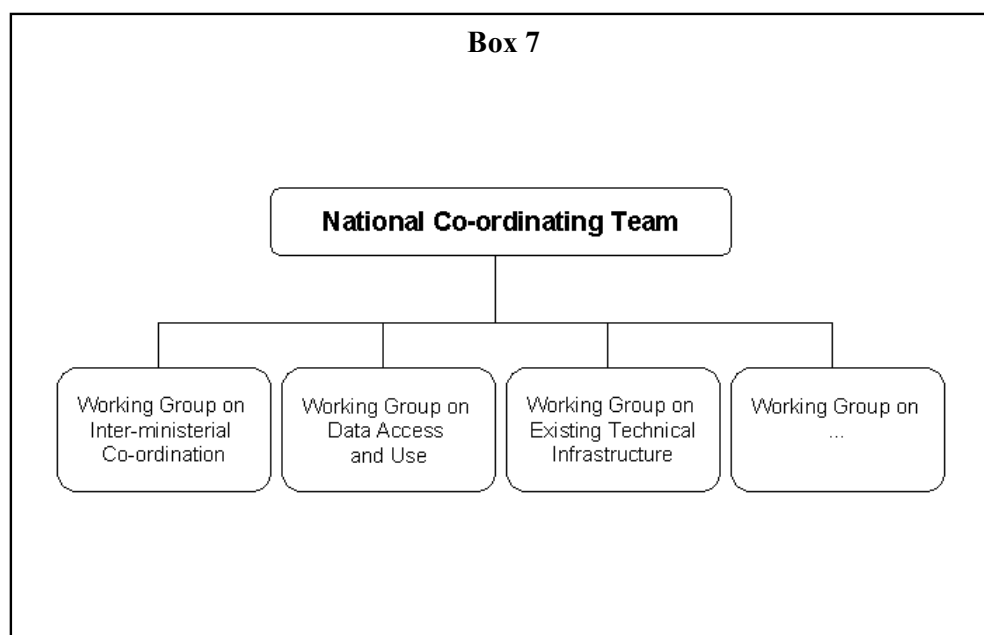
PART C: Implementing the National Action Programme

1. Planning and Implementing Technical Task Force Activities

The National Coordinating Team is responsible for guiding and overseeing the development and implementation of the National Action Programme. However, much of the actual work will be done by **Technical Task Forces** established under the auspices of the NCT. The following sections offer some guidance on setting up effective task forces, and provide some practical suggestions regarding potential activities to be undertaken by the task forces.

1.1 Setting Up the Technical Task Forces

The National Priority Setting Workshop should have resulted in the identification of a number of Technical Task Forces to be established to undertake specific activities in the context of the National Action Programme. The nature and membership of each task force will depend on the specific issues and tasks to which it has been assigned. Some may be formal in nature, such as a task force mandated to revise existing legislation. Other task forces may be rather informal and short-term, such as a task force responsible for coordinating a specific training event.



Role of the Technical Task Forces

The role of the Technical Task Forces is to plan and implement all activities, tasks, and projects associated with the particular chemicals management area for which responsibility has been delegated to it by the NCT. Each Technical Task Force is expected to draw on existing expertise and knowledge of local conditions in developing plans and undertaking activities to meet its objectives. The Technical Task Forces should maintain close coordination with the NCT and with other task forces. One way to ensure this is to appoint as task force coordinators or chairpersons individuals who are also active members of the NCT.

Box 8

***Example A: Technical Task Force
on the Development of Integrated
Chemicals Management Legislation***

In some cases, the primary objective of a Technical Task Force will be to develop a concrete proposal which will then be considered for implementation at the national level. The following is an example of such a task force:

A task force on the development of integrated chemicals management legislation might initiate its activity with a critical assessment of existing national laws and regulations in the field of chemicals management. This assessment could focus on the identification of legal gaps, outdated regulations, and opportunities for modernizing existing instruments or developing new ones. A next step for the Technical Task Force could be to examine available international and national examples of legislation that could provide effective regulatory models or innovative ideas to streamline and integrate the body of laws being examined. The opinion of national and international experts could be consulted at this point. A final step for the task force could be to generate a concrete proposal for updating existing regulations or proposing new legal instruments to better address the needs of integrated chemicals management at the country level.

Defining task force goals and responsibilities

Each task force will need to clarify its goals, the activities to be undertaken and the intended outputs or results. It is useful to have adequate discussion at the start in order to ensure that all are clear on the task to which they have been assigned, and to come to some level of agreement on the key issues and challenges, the main objectives to be achieved, and the desired outcomes. Given that the work of each task force is part of a larger effort, the group must also clarify how its activities relate to, depend upon or contribute to the efforts of other task forces addressing different aspects of chemicals management within the National Action Programme.

Identifying expertise and resources needed

In establishing the Technical Task Forces, the NCT should ensure that appropriate local expertise and required resources are available to each task force. This includes ensuring that the skills of individual members are suitably matched with the substantive area to be addressed, while allowing for a breadth of experience and perspectives within the group to enable the consideration of all angles and possible options in developing effective solutions.

Participants in the task forces are likely to include members of the National Coordinating Team itself, as well as other experts and representatives from the various stakeholder groups within and outside government, as appropriate. In some cases a task force may be linked to an activity that is already ongoing at the country level, such as a technical assistance project funded by an external agency. In such instances, it may also be important to have the representation of external groups in the task force.

The amount of resources required by each Technical Task Force will vary according to the specific area of the National Action Programme for which it is responsible. Funding for some of the Technical Task Force activities will be available through the National Coordinating Team as part of the funds provided to the three developing countries in the context of the pilot programme. For other proposed activities, particularly those that will require substantial funding, the task force should prepare a budget proposal to be submitted through the NCT to higher national authorities and/or to international and bilateral organizations that may be in a position to provide the needed support.

Ensuring coordination among task forces within the NCT

The NCT will play a key role in coordinating and integrating the activities undertaken by the various Technical Task Forces in the context of the National Action Programme. As is often the case during implementation of any complex project, it is likely that intermediate outputs and products generated by certain Technical Task Forces will constitute important inputs to the work of others. Effective project management by the NCT is therefore needed to ensure that the individual work plans developed by the task forces are mutually consistent. Such consistency is necessary to keep the implementation of the National Action Programme on schedule and to ensure compatibility among task force initiatives. The individual task forces also have the responsibility to keep the NCT apprised of ongoing and planned activities in order to facilitate an integrated national approach.

Box 9

Example B: Technical Task Force on Strengthening National Information Systems for Chemicals Management

For aspects of chemicals management for which it is feasible to complete the required actions during the 18-month National Action Programme, the work of the Technical Task Forces might be to implement concrete projects such as in the following example:

A Technical Task Force on national information systems for integrated chemicals management might start, as a first phase, by generating a project proposal. This would entail undertaking an assessment of existing databases and information needs, studying alternative information systems for meeting these needs, evaluating available options based on financial and technical viability, and proposing the optimum solution according to national criteria in a formal project proposal. The second phase of this task force's activities may consist of securing the financial resources to implement the proposed project by channeling the proposal to appropriate national or international sources and managing the fund-raising effort. The final phase for the task force would then be to manage the actual implementation of the information system project including all activities related to engineering, procurement, installation, operative training, fine-tuning, and routine operation.

Box 10: Possible Subjects to be Addressed by Technical Task Forces

The following are some possible areas to be addressed by Technical Task Forces in the context of a National Action Programme for integrated chemicals management:

- ***Developing or revising chemicals management legislation.***
Activities: review of existing legislation, identification of laws/regulations to be updated, development of proposals for new laws and regulations as needed, etc.
- ***Establishing national policies and mechanisms for information generation, gathering, use and dissemination.***
Activities: assessment of existing information and data collection practices, training programmes on collection/interpretation/use of chemicals management information, development of a project proposal for a national information system for chemicals management, etc.
- ***Establishing national policies for risk-based decision making.***
Activities: evaluation of risks caused by specific chemicals of concern under local conditions, identification of priority chemicals or sectors to be targeted for risk reduction, training on risk assessment and its potential uses for chemicals management decision-making, etc.
- ***Strengthening regulatory enforcement and compliance.***
Activities: improving coordination between ministries and enforcement agencies (e.g., between the Ministry of Environment and the Customs agency in charge of implementing import/export controls mandated by the ministry), developing a compliance assurance programme for specific industrial sectors (outreach, technical assistance, etc.), streamlining reporting requirements, etc.
- ***Public education and awareness raising.***
Activities: conducting chemical safety training programs for industrial and agricultural workers, developing a public risk communication strategy, developing a proposal for inclusion of chemical safety education in elementary school curricula, etc.
- ***Promoting pollution prevention and industry action programmes.***
Activities: developing pollution prevention programmes in collaboration with industry and public interest groups, undertaking pilot demonstration projects, conducting industry training programs on pollution prevention techniques, promoting community right-to-know initiatives, etc.
- ***Promoting the safe use of pesticides and other agricultural chemicals.***
Activities: incorporating chemical safety training and information into agricultural extension services, exploring possible partnerships with bilateral assistance agencies to provide training for agricultural workers, etc.
- ***Integrating implementation of international agreements and programmes.***
Activities: identifying linkages and common elements among international agreements and programmes as implemented at the country level, developing a proposal for integrating implementation within the national system for integrated chemicals management, etc.

1.2 Implementing Technical Tasks Force Activities

The activities of the Technical Task Forces form the substantive core of the National Action Programme. Taken together, their achievements will to a large degree determine the success of the National Action Programme. The following considerations concern the effective implementation of task force activities.

Selecting among possible options to achieve task force objectives

Each task force will need to develop a strategy and plan of action for achieving its objectives. As a first step, a range of possible options or alternative courses of action to meet its mandate should be identified by the task force. For each of these possible options, the task force should identify in a systematic and detailed manner the specific activities, resources and actors that will be needed.

In order to select among the possible options, task force members, in consultation with the NCT as appropriate, should develop a set of criteria by which the various options can be evaluated to select the most appropriate one. Some possible criteria might include:

- the extent to which priority risks will be reduced;
- the amount of risk reduction or other benefit to be achieved relative to the amount of resources or effort required;
- the degree of certainty that the anticipated results will be achieved;
- the time frame in which the anticipated results will be realized (immediate versus long-term);
- technical feasibility;
- sustainability;
- political acceptability;
- compatibility with existing infrastructure, policies or ongoing initiatives;
- favorable linkages with the activities and goals of other task forces;
- the degree to which the suggested option has been tested and proved successful in other countries/situations;
- etc.

In systematically applying the criteria to the various options, the task force may wish to develop a simple ranking system (e.g. assigning values of 1-5) to be used in evaluating how well each option measures up to each of the various criteria. In carrying out this exercise, the task force may also find it necessary to distinguish between criteria that the selected option must fulfill, versus criteria which are desirable but not essential. At the end of this process, the task force should have identified a suitable strategy for achieving its objectives.

Developing a work plan for the task force

Once the task force has determined the approach it will use in addressing its component of the National Action Programme, the next step is to develop a detailed work plan. The work plan should specify the sequence of necessary tasks and activities, the time frame including relevant deadlines and events, the entities or individuals that will be responsible for their execution, and expected outputs or results for each step in the process. A well-prepared and

detailed work plan can help to ensure effective coordination, accountability and timely completion of planned activities.

The work plans of the respective Technical Task Forces will become a part of the overall work plan of the NCT. It is therefore suggested that the task forces submit their work plans to the National Coordinator as a basis for coordinating the various task force activities within the framework of the National Coordinating Team.

Obtaining technical assistance and conducting training activities

The National Coordinating Team, jointly with the Technical Task Forces, should take an active role in identifying needs and seeking national as well as international sources of support, guidance and technical assistance to move the implementation process forward and resolve technical and resource constraints.

The pilot programme includes provisions to support the work of the task forces through targeted technical assistance activities. These may include staff training, expert advice from international resource persons, consultant visits, arrangements for matching available technical expertise of bilateral or international organizations with specific capacity building needs, and other technical support activities. The nature of this technical support will be determined by each country's specific requests and the capacities and available resources of partner organizations.

Concrete requests should be prepared by the Technical Task Forces, in consultation with the NCT, to ensure that international and bilateral organizations become aware of and are able to directly address specific needs that are identified during the course of National Action Programme implementation. The requests should be in the form of a brief proposal which clearly states the objectives of the planned activity, its importance to national chemicals management, the type of assistance needed, and provisions to be made for the long-term sustainability of the activity or project. The Technical Task Forces are expected to play a proactive role in identifying concrete needs and channeling their requests to international and bilateral partner organizations through the NCT and the National Coordinator.

Conducting pilot projects/field trials

The development of a national chemicals management system cannot take place solely on an abstract or theoretical level. It may be useful, therefore, to put the ideas or solutions developed by the Technical Task Forces through practical tests under local conditions. The execution of pilot projects or field trials of proposed chemicals management instruments or solutions can serve this purpose.

Pilot projects and field trials are excellent opportunities to gather practical feedback, refine preliminary design proposals and stimulate further thinking. They can also have a powerful demonstration effect which can catalyze broad support for larger scale implementation of a particular policy solution. This demonstration aspect of pilot projects can be particularly important in the case of new and innovative chemicals management instruments that are not previously known in the country, but which might offer an efficient solution. Successful pilot

projects can improve the acceptance of innovative solutions by showing their effectiveness in solving particular chemicals management problems under local conditions.

Assessing and reporting on progress achieved

The progress achieved in the implementation of the Technical Task Forces' mandates should be measured by the task force leaders and the National Coordinating Team in relation to the work plans submitted by each Technical Task Force as well as the objectives and overall work plan established for the National Action Programme. A simple measure of progress is to compare the actual outputs and results achieved with those originally anticipated, as indicated in the work plan. As discussed in Part B, Section 4, the National Coordinating Team should devise a set of progress indicators and monitoring mechanisms to keep track of the overall implementation process. Each Technical Task Force should also monitor its own progress through use of agreed upon indicators and other appropriate means.

It is important that each task force take an active role in monitoring its own achievements, documenting any obstacles or unforeseen developments, and communicating this information to the NCT. Towards the end of the pilot programme and upon the conclusion of their activities, each task force will be expected to produce a consolidated report of its activities, outputs and achieved results. These Technical Task Force reports will be key inputs for the compilation of a draft report on integrated chemicals management to be presented and reviewed at the national level.

2. Developing a Draft Report on Integrated Chemicals Management

The National Coordinating Team will play a lead role in reviewing and integrating the various Technical Task Force reports. The review process should identify any gaps, inconsistencies and overlaps which remain to be solved by the NCT. As a result of this review process and based on a consolidation of the various task force reports, a **Draft Report on Integrated Chemicals Management** should be completed towards the end of the approximately one year period of task force activities. This report will serve as the main reference document for a National Review Workshop during which the National Action Programme will be evaluated and plans for its further implementation will be developed. The draft report should include a description of all aspects implemented or proposed for the integrated national chemicals management system, including programme elements, policies, procedures, ongoing activities, infrastructure and relevant linkages. It is important that the views of all stakeholders involved in the National Action Programme are reflected in the report, thus initial drafts of the report should be circulated widely for review. A sample outline for the report is provided in Box 11.

Updating the National Profile

In a parallel effort to the compilation of the draft national report on integrated chemicals management, the NCT should also update the National Profile to incorporate any developments which may have occurred during National Action Programme implementation. These may include actions taken by the Technical Task Forces, additional information that has been obtained relevant to chemicals management or any further assessments conducted on the existing national infrastructure.

Box 11: Sample Outline of a Draft Report on Integrated Chemicals Management

Following is a suggested outline which countries are invited to use as a starting point for developing a report format that will suit their particular needs.

Executive Summary

I. Introduction to the National Action Programme

- A. The International Policy Context for a National Action Programme for Integrated Chemicals Management
- B. Initiation of a National Action Programme as Follow-up to the Preparation of the National Profile
- C. Participation in the National Action Programme
- D. Summary Overview of the National Action Programme

II. Progress in Implementing the National Action Programme

- A. Key Outcomes of the National Priority Setting Workshop
- B. Summary of Technical Task Force Activities
 - 1. Task Force X on _____
 - a) Mandate and objectives
 - b) Summary of activities
 - c) Progress achieved
 - d) Challenges encountered
 - e) Follow-up needed
- C. Integration Of and Linkages Among Task Force Activities

III. Analysis and Lessons Learned

- A. Benefits and Challenges of an Integrated Approach to Chemicals Management
- B. National Coordination and Multi-Stakeholder Involvement

IV. Summary Recommendations

- A. Priority Actions for Further Implementation of the National Action Programme
- B. Recommendations for Sustaining National Action for Integrated Chemicals Management

Annex: List of Members of the National Coordinating Team

3. Mobilizing High Level Commitment to Implement Integrated National Chemicals Management

Once a draft report has been prepared on the progress achieved through the National Action Programme, the goal is to focus national attention on what additional actions are required to further develop a national system for integrated chemicals management. Obtaining policy commitment and endorsement of key decision makers within and outside of government on the draft report is necessary to ensure sufficient momentum and commitment of resources towards implementation of proposed policy actions and strategies. The experiences of countries that have developed integrated national approaches for chemicals management have shown the critical importance of the policy commitment and support of high level authorities for effective implementation and follow-up. The support, involvement and input of the whole spectrum of national stakeholders on the draft national report will be key to secure broad policy support and maximize the chances of its complete implementation.

An important task of the National Coordinating Team and National Coordinator will be to mobilize this high level policy commitment. Ideally the involvement of key decision makers and high level authorities will have been ongoing from the outset, from the initial planning stages through the implementation of the National Action Programme and preparation of the draft report for integrated national chemicals management.

The **National Review Workshop** represents an excellent opportunity to bring outstanding issues to the fore, to discuss follow-up actions and next steps needed to sustain the implementation of the integrated national chemicals management system, and to generate high level policy support. An important objective of the workshop is to define the concrete actions pending or needed, and the amount of additional resources that will be needed. These recommendations and conclusions should be officially channeled to the highest levels of authority. In addition to focusing the attention of national leaders on actions needed in the area of chemicals management, the workshop recommendations may also provide an important basis for pursuing opportunities for bilateral/international support and technical assistance.

4. Evaluation of the National Action Programme

At the conclusion of the 18-month programme time frame, a formal review will be conducted by an independent outside party, to be selected jointly by the pilot countries, UNITAR/IOMC and the Swiss Agency for Development and Co-operation. This review will cover the experiences, achievements and lessons learned in the country through the implementation of the National Action Programme. In the context of this independent evaluation, countries will be expected to play an active role in providing feedback and other inputs to the evaluation process, including a self-assessment of progress made and results achieved, and the identification of emerging concerns and changing priorities within the context of national chemicals management. The progress reports kept throughout the implementation process by the National Coordinating Team and Technical Task Forces, as well as any updates to the National Profile, will be valuable inputs into the independent evaluation process.

Box 12: National Review Workshop

Once the draft report on integrated chemicals management has been prepared, countries will be encouraged to organize a National Review Workshop to review progress made to date, to obtain additional input and to solidify commitment towards its further implementation. In addition to enabling the various interested parties to comment on the draft report, the National Review Workshop provides an opportunity to build momentum and secure broad support among national and international actors for implementation of follow-up actions.

Some potential outcomes of the National Review Workshop might include:

- Official recognition of the progress achieved through the National Action Programme;
- Endorsement of specific proposals developed by the NCT and Technical Task Forces to address key areas/elements of chemicals management;
- Feedback from various perspectives on the general direction, ongoing activities and proposed strategies of the National Action Programme, and concrete suggestions for improvement or modification;
- Commitment of key parties, including governmental ministries, industry leaders and other non-governmental stakeholders, to take specific actions to strengthen national chemicals management and safety within their respective spheres of responsibility; and
- Development of a follow-up strategy, with clear allocation of responsibility and identification of potential sources of national, bilateral and/or international support, for the further implementation of the national system for integrated chemicals management.

Based on the results of the National Review Workshop, a summary list of recommendations and follow-up actions should be prepared and circulated to all key parties to ensure that the national momentum which has been generated through the National Action Programme will be maintained.

In addition to pointing out areas in which further action is needed, the independent evaluation process will provide countries with concrete recommendations for addressing outstanding issues and improving the strategies and policies being used to address specific aspects of national chemicals management in the context of the National Action Programme. The evaluation should also illuminate possible improvements in relation to operational and coordination aspects among national stakeholders and actors in the chemicals management system at the country level, as well as the effectiveness of partnerships established between national actors and international and bilateral organizations.

5. Initiating Follow-up Activities

While significant progress will be made by the end of the 18-month National Action Programme, countries may not be able to fully complete all activities within this time frame, thus continued action and follow-up beyond the formal conclusion of the programme will be important. Some of the Technical Task Forces may have pending activities or projects: every effort should be made to bring these activities to a successful conclusion. Towards this end,

national authorities may wish to preserve the Technical Task Force structures beyond the nominal conclusion of the National Action Programme.

In following through with implementation of planned activities or pending projects, countries will be encouraged to seek further assistance as needed from national entities as well as from outside sources such as bilateral assistance agencies and other international actors. Ideally, implementation of the National Action Programme will have provided ample opportunities to establish solid contacts and working relationships between national authorities and international/regional/bilateral sources of support and technical expertise in the various areas of chemicals management. Countries should actively seek to maintain and effectively use these relationships to channel their requests for technical assistance, project financing and other support they might require in relation to the continued strengthening of their national chemicals management systems.

It is hoped that the collaboration among the various national stakeholder groups that has been established and exercised during the implementation of the National Action Programme will remain viable and active beyond the formal conclusion of the pilot programme. The maintenance of an effective coordinating mechanism among national stakeholders and concerned agencies is vital to the continued operation of an integrated national chemicals management system.

Likewise, a national consensus for regular budgetary allocations that will enable the continued operation of the national chemicals management system is also necessary. The National Action Programme will have provided an opportunity to raise the awareness and consolidate the policy support of key decision makers in the important area of national chemicals management and safety. Whatever degree of policy commitment towards national chemicals management has been achieved during the National Action Programme, it will need to be constantly built upon to maximize the chances that a fully operational and comprehensive national system for integrated chemicals management can be sustained.