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# **Organizing a National Priority Setting Workshop for the Sound Management of Chemicals**

**Guidance Note**

**April 2005 Edition**

**IOMC**

INTER-ORGANIZATION PROGRAMME FOR THE SOUND MANAGEMENT OF CHEMICALS  
A cooperative agreement among UNEP, ILO, FAO, WHO, UNIDO, UNITAR and OECD



## **The International Project Context for the Workshop**

With financial support from the European Commission and the Government of Switzerland, UNITAR is in a position to support 17 developing countries and countries with economies in transition in 2004-2005 to develop and update a National Chemicals Management Profile, organize a National Priority Setting Workshop, and develop a National Chemical Safety Website. Through the project, partner countries also have an opportunity to explore, as appropriate, the development of a *National Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals* which is linked to the WSSD goal to achieve chemical safety by the year 2020. Countries participating in the project include the following: Albania, Algeria, Belarus, Burundi, Congo, Costa Rica, Democratic Republic of Congo, El Salvador, Guinea-Bissau, Jamaica, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Panama, Sao Tomé and Príncipe, South Africa, Suriname and Thailand. Partner countries are convening national priority setting workshops during the course of 2005.

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## 1. Introduction

This guidance note is intended to assist partner countries in thinking through key issues relevant to organizing a multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder workshop as an important activity in the 2004-2005 project on *National Profile Preparation, Priority Setting and Information Exchange for Sound Chemicals Management*. The ideas and guidance presented below draw upon experiences gained by countries that have organized national priority setting workshops in the past. They also take into consideration recent discussions at the international level concerning capacity building, such as those that took place at the two sessions of the Preparatory Committee for the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM PrepCom) and the global “Thematic Workshop on Synergies for Capacity Building under International Agreements Addressing Chemicals and Waste Management.”<sup>1</sup>

The suggestions included in this guidance note are based on the approach to chemicals management capacity building outlined in Programme Area E of Agenda 21’s Chapter 19, as adopted by heads of state and governments at the Rio Summit in 1992. Programme Area E of Chapter 19 encourages countries to develop a national system for chemicals management and outlines specific elements that need to be put in place in order to be able to address national concerns, as well as obligations originating from international agreements.

Given this framework, the note aims to inform national level preparatory discussions regarding how the national priority setting workshop may effectively contribute towards strengthening the overall national infrastructure for the sound management of chemicals. In particular, the note outlines a number of possible objectives for the workshop, with a view to exploring opportunities to strengthen the cooperation of concerned sectors and stakeholders at the national level, as encouraged by Agenda 21. It is up to each country to consider the proposed suggestions outlined below and to tailor the workshop to its own needs and circumstances. The guidance note concludes by outlining practical steps that need to be undertaken in preparing a National Priority Setting Workshop.

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<sup>1</sup> UNITAR organized a Thematic Workshop on “Synergies for Capacity Building under International Agreements Addressing Chemicals and Waste Management” in collaboration with the Secretariats of the Basel Convention, the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), the Geneva Environment Network (GEN), the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), and within the framework of the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC). The workshop was held in Geneva on 30 March – 2 April 2004. A report is available at <[www.unitar.org/cwm/c/tw/ws8/index.htm](http://www.unitar.org/cwm/c/tw/ws8/index.htm)>.



## 2. The International and National Context of the Workshop

This section briefly reviews the international policy framework for chemical management capacity building, and highlights some of the current international discussions that are potentially relevant to national level discussions in preparation for and during the workshop.

### 2.1 Agenda 21, Chapter 19

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 provides an international strategy for achieving the sound management of chemicals throughout their life-cycle. Programme Area E of Chapter 19 on the *Strengthening of National Capabilities and Capacities for Management of Chemicals* is of particular relevance to countries in the process of strengthening their national systems for chemicals management. Programme Area E provides the basic elements of a national chemicals management system, which include the following:

- (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.

When identifying these basic elements of a national system for chemicals management in at the Rio Summit in 1992, governments endorsed a general framework to guide decision makers at the national level to implement Chapter 19, as well as international agreements concerned with chemicals management.

### 2.2 International Agreements

In addition to Agenda Chapter 19, countries are faced with a growing number of obligations under international agreements and conventions to which they are a Party. Examples of international agreements, many of which have only been recently negotiated, include:

- Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants;
- Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade;
- Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Waste and their Disposal;
- Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemicals Weapons and on their Destruction (Chemical Weapons Convention, CWC);
- ILO Chemicals Convention 1990, No. 170;
- ILO Prevention of Major Industrial Accidents Convention 1993, No. 174;

- Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer and the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer;
- United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances; and
- UNECE Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention).

In addition to legally binding instruments, a number of soft law agreements have been negotiated and adopted internationally which also provide important normative guidance for chemical management capacity development.<sup>2</sup> Relevant agreements include for example:

- FAO International Code of Conduct on the Distribution and Use of Pesticides (Revised version);
- UN Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS); and
- Bahia Declaration on Chemical Safety, adopted at Forum III of the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety.

### **2.3 International Discussions on Synergies for Capacity Building**

While each international agreement has its precise objectives and purpose, some of the capacities required in order to implement the obligations of different agreements at the national level (including required regulatory and policy instruments) are similar, if not the same. A number of requirements, such as awareness raising, information exchange, risk communication, or the development of technical capacities, are common across many agreements. One of the key challenges for countries and international organizations involved in capacity building is to create bridges and identify synergies between capacity building activities across several conventions. Annex 1 links national capacity requirements under important international agreements with the elements of a national chemicals management system outlined in Chapter 19 Programme Area E.

The theme of co-ordination and synergy development has recently received attention at the international level. A number of decisions taken by governing bodies of international agreements emphasize the need for improved co-ordination among the activities of the various existing initiatives. For example, Decision 6/5 of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) for the Stockholm Convention encourages countries to “ensure close co-ordination at the national level between authorities responsible for the Stockholm Convention and those responsible for the Basel Convention.” Another example can be found with Decision VI/29 of the sixth Conference of the Parties of the Basel Convention (2002), which promotes cooperation in “undertaking joint activities to improve co-ordination and coherence between chemical and waste programme activities.”

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<sup>2</sup> For a summary of international conventions and agreements concerned with the sound management of chemicals, please refer to <[http://www.unitar.org/cwm/publications/TWS-8/TWS8\\_5.pdf](http://www.unitar.org/cwm/publications/TWS-8/TWS8_5.pdf)>.



### ***Recommendations Emerging from UNITAR's Thematic Workshop on Synergies for Capacity Building***

At the 2004 “Thematic Workshop on Synergies for Capacity Building under International Agreements Addressing Chemicals and Waste Management,” participants identified practical activities and measures towards identifying and realizing synergies for capacity building at the national level. Participants at the workshop agreed that synergy development can take place at three levels, advancing from a more basic level to one of greater sophistication. Firstly, it may simply involve exchanging information among various government agencies on a particular issue. For example, relevant ministries would inform each other of their inspection schedules. A second level could involve a more systematic co-ordination of activities, for example, scheduling joint inspections. Finally, a more profound degree of synergy development might involve a fully integrated approach to activities in a specific area. In the case of inspection, it may mean that a single inspectorate is created rather than having separate bodies involved in inspections.

Participants at the workshop highlighted a number of opportunities for synergy development among the activities of the environmental, health, agriculture, trade, industry and other ministries and institutions involved in chemicals management. The results of the workshop suggest that by collaborating and pooling resources, the requirements of more than one international agreement can be often addressed. Focal points for different agreements may, for example, consider improving information exchange, co-ordinating relevant activities (for example by consulting in advance of international meetings), sharing the use of laboratories, or providing joint training for customs officials.

The workshop resulted in a number of recommendations for identifying and realizing synergies at the national level. These recommendations may be relevant to the national priority setting workshop and include, for example, the following:

- regular co-ordination meetings in preparation for and as a follow-up to international meetings and negotiations, such as the SAICM process;
- preparation of a situation analysis, which identifies the agreements relevant to the country, summarizes implementing measures already in place, and identifies potential areas for synergy development;
- organization of a national workshop on the integrated implementation of international agreements, bringing together national focal point agencies and other ministries and stakeholders;
- development of an Integrated National Programme, including a coherent legal and institutional infrastructure, for the sound management of chemicals and wastes that addresses issues including the integrated implementation of international agreements;
- close collaboration among focal points of international agreements to place chemicals management on the national sustainable development agenda (e.g. via ministries of finance, planning, parliamentarians, etc.);
- ensuring the involvement of ministries and institutions that are not primarily concerned with chemicals and waste management, such as ministries of finance/customs and state/local authorities; and

- creating linkages with institutions that have specific jurisdictional responsibilities, such as state/local authorities.

Several related workshops have taken place at the regional levels, to identify and strengthen synergies for capacity building. The Geneva Environment Network and its partners held workshops in Africa, Latin America and Central and Eastern Europe during 2002-2004 to promote the coordinated implementation of chemicals and wastes related international agreements. Another example is a workshop that focused on implementation of the Stockholm Convention and synergies with other chemicals agreements, held by UNEP Chemicals in Egypt in early 2005.

## **2.4 SAICM**

The topic of co-ordination and integrated chemical management capacity building has also received attention at the recent session of the SAICM PrepCom. The SAICM process aims to bring together stakeholders to review current actions to advance the sound management of chemicals, identify gaps and propose concrete projects and priorities. Participants at SAICM PrepCom2, held in October 2004, suggested that one of the concrete measures to be included in SAICM should encourage countries to develop an Integrated National Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals. Such a programme may include, for example:

- development of a comprehensive national profile;
- formalization of an inter-ministerial and multi-stakeholder co-ordinating mechanism on chemicals management issues, including co-ordination of national Government and multi-stakeholder positions in international meetings;
- development of a national chemical safety policy outlining strategic goals and milestones towards reaching the WSSD goal;
- development of national chemicals safety information exchange systems;
- development of national strategies to mobilize national and external resources and to raise the importance of chemicals management within national sustainable development frameworks; and
- development of policies of systematic stakeholder involvement, bringing synergies from related initiatives on chemicals management.<sup>3</sup>

## **2.5 The National Context for the Workshop**

At the national level, chemicals management activities are typically undertaken through various ministries and stakeholders. A key challenge for the national priority setting workshop is to explore opportunities to build on and complement these activities, rather than to create new and separate initiatives. The National Profile is available as a reviewed draft at the workshop, and already features the diverse range of relevant initiatives, including details of ongoing activities, responsible bodies and officers, and existing infrastructure. The Profile would thus feature information about important national activities, such as development of a National Implementation Plan under the Stockholm Convention, or a national plan of action to implement recommendations contained in the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety

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<sup>3</sup> Report of the Second Session of the Preparatory Committee for the Development of a Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM PrepCom2), Annex IV.

Bahia Declaration. Highlighting these ongoing activities may facilitate the identification of possible synergies and win-win collaborations between the various government agencies and stakeholders gathered at the workshop.



### **3. Defining the Scope and Objectives of the National Workshop**

Defining the scope of the workshop and its specific contribution towards strengthening the national system for chemicals management are important considerations that will affect how the workshop is structured, which background documents are needed, what presentations are given, and how the discussion sessions are organized.

The following sections outline some potential objectives that may be pursued by the national workshop. The list of possible workshop objectives and outcomes presented below is neither exhaustive nor exclusive. Countries should feel free to select those objectives that are relevant to their specific national circumstances, and may find it more productive to focus on those objectives that are most feasible given the limited time available at the workshop. Following a brief introduction of each objective, issues that the workshop organizing committee may want to consider prior to the workshop in order to facilitate effective preparation are raised. Suggestions are also provided for possible topics of discussion at the workshop, as appropriate.

#### **3.1 Review and Endorsement of the National Profile**

A comprehensive and complete National Profile to which all stakeholders have contributed and for which they feel ownership increases the chance that the National Profile becomes a widely accepted national reference document. The national workshop provides an opportunity to obtain final comments on the draft National Profile and to facilitate final endorsement of the document. However, conducting a chapter-by-chapter review of the National Profile should be undertaken with caution, as this may require a significant amount of time. Sectors and stakeholders should therefore have received an earlier opportunity to provide detailed written comments.

Prior to seeking endorsement at the workshop, it is important to establish clear timelines to ensure that the National Profile is as complete as possible, and has been initially reviewed. Thinking through the kinds of issues that may be contentious and planning a strategy for dealing with any difference of opinion at the workshop can help to ensure that relevant discussions run smoothly. It is also important that the National Profile is sent out well in advance of the workshop, to allow participants sufficient time to become familiar with its content.

At the workshop itself, the following questions could be addressed:

- How will any current information gaps in the National Profile be filled, recognizing that the first version of a National Profile is unlikely to be complete?
- How can the National Profile be maintained as a ‘living document’ to which stakeholders continue to contribute towards in the future?
- What can be done to ensure that specific projects undertaken by various actors take the National Profile into consideration?

- How can the main results of the National Profile be brought to the attention to national decision-makers?
- How often should the National Profile be updated?

### **3.2 Taking Stock of National Implementing Activities for International Chemical Management Agreements**

Although the national priority setting workshop does not deal exclusively with the implementation of international agreements, providing the national focal points of international agreements with an opportunity to present relevant ongoing activities is considered important. Such presentations could briefly outline the main provisions of relevant international agreements, as well as respective ongoing or planned implementing activities or projects in preparation. Understanding existing activities will create the basis for identifying opportunities to strengthen the overall infrastructure for chemicals management and to identify synergies for capacity building, as outlined in further detail below.

Prior to the workshop, the organizing committee should identify national focal points and decide which international agreements are relevant to the workshop. Some countries may want to focus on multilateral environmental agreements concerned with chemicals management, while others may see a benefit in casting the net widely and include all relevant agreements, such as those dealing with dual purpose chemicals or narcotic drugs. In this context it may be valuable to prepare a brief information document referencing international agreements that the country has subscribed to and describing relevant national implementing activities. Where the relevant chapters of the National Profile are already complete, preparing such a paper may not be necessary.

At the workshop itself, the following questions could be addressed:

- Which international agreements have already mobilized significant resources and could therefore serve as foundations for more general capacity building covering all dangerous chemicals?
- Is national co-ordination concerning the implementation of international agreements functioning well?
- Are national focal points informing each other regularly about international meetings and other relevant international activities?
- Through what mechanisms could co-ordination of a national position for SAICM be ensured?

### **3.3 Identifying Priorities for Strengthening the National Chemicals Management Infrastructure**

Identifying priorities is a challenging and important aspect of the workshop. Countries that have organized National Priority Setting Workshops in the past have chosen different types of entry points. Types of priorities selected ranged from specific

elements of a national chemicals management system (as outlined in Programme Area E), specific chemical management instruments (e.g. a pesticide registration system), or specific chemicals or groups of chemicals. In selecting an appropriate approach for priority setting, countries with a strong chemicals management infrastructure in place may want to consider focusing on specific chemicals or groups of chemicals causing concern. However, countries with a weak infrastructure may consider it more important to focus on developing the infrastructure elements of a national chemical management system. Finally, countries in which the National Profile identified a number of overlapping activities across various ministries may want to focus on identifying synergies for capacity building based on existing activities.

In order to get a good sense about potential priorities, the workshop organizing committee may want to commission the preparation of a discussion paper based on the National Profile. This paper could also include the views of various government agencies and stakeholder groups as to what priority action is considered most important towards building national capacity for the sound management of chemicals. The analysis could feature a review of how comprehensively the overall elements of a national chemicals management infrastructure, as outlined in Programme Area E of Chapter 19, are currently implemented. In those areas where significant weaknesses are identified, more specific opportunities for action could be identified in advance of the workshop as a basis for further discussion. Such an analysis could be presented on the first day of the workshop in order to stimulate discussion about the specific areas that may require targeted capacity building. At the same time, flexibility should be maintained to allow new views and perspectives to emerge at the workshop.

In selecting priorities, the following criteria/questions may prove to be of value:

- Is an agency ready to facilitate/drive the process of implementing the priority?
- Are there specific areas where development of synergies for capacity building is possible? (e.g. two or more ministries would work together or might be ready to pool resources)
- What is the likelihood that national and/or international funding is available to implement the priorities?
- Do any “low hanging fruit” exist, i.e. achieving maximum impact with a minimum of resources?
- Is the priority supported and endorsed by non-governmental stakeholders, including industry?
- Are specific initiatives already in place on which possible new initiatives can be built?

Once a coherent set of priorities has been identified, participants may wish to begin thinking about the core elements of action plans to achieve those objectives. However, since developing action plans requires detailed consideration of the specific issue,

countries may choose to limit these more specific discussions in order to allow time for full consideration of the workshop's wider objectives.

### **3.4 Strengthening National Co-ordination and Information Exchange**

The collaboration undertaken through the National Profile has already brought government sectors and stakeholders together. The workshop can provide an excellent opportunity to build on the momentum generated through the National Profile process, and strengthen the national collaborative framework for the sound management of chemicals.

#### ***Strengthening Inter-ministerial Co-ordination***

Inter-ministerial co-ordination provides an opportunity among government bodies to exchange information and relevant experience and to co-ordinate important policy decisions.<sup>4</sup> It thus allows for the identification of synergies between activities and facilitates collaboration, whenever appropriate. When considering whether or not to formally establish an inter-ministerial co-ordinating committee, countries may wish to hold a meeting between the representatives of the different ministries prior to the workshop. This would allow them to consider what form an inter-ministerial co-ordinating committee would take, and to determine the members, procedures and role of such a committee. Committing to the establishment of a committee will also require political will in various government sectors, access to resources and the identification of a ministry willing to take on a secretariat function.

A ministerial representative may then wish to present the plan to stakeholders at the workshop and receive some feedback on the proposed form and function of the mechanism, specifically on how the mechanism may also serve stakeholder needs. For example, at regular intervals the co-ordinating committee may invite stakeholders to an open discussion, or organize a National Chemical Safety Forum which would allow for an open discussion.

#### ***Sustaining National Information Exchange***

The exchange of information at the national level allows those involved in chemicals management to learn about the relevant activities of government sectors and stakeholders.<sup>5</sup> The National Profile and the National Chemical Safety Website represent important tools for the facilitation of such information exchange.

The workshop can provide an opportunity to discuss progress made in developing the website and to explore opportunities for sustaining national information exchange beyond the project. It is suggested that the host agency responsible for developing the website present their work in progress, including presentation of the website structure

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<sup>4</sup> UNITAR held a Thematic Workshop on "Strengthening Inter-ministerial Co-ordination for the Sound Management of Chemicals" in Geneva, Switzerland on 29-30 August 2002. A final report is available at <[http://www.unitar.org/cwm/publications/current/tw/tw\\_6\\_report.pdf](http://www.unitar.org/cwm/publications/current/tw/tw_6_report.pdf)> .

<sup>5</sup> UNITAR held a Thematic workshop on "Strengthening National Information Systems and Information Exchange for the Sound Management of Chemicals in Geneva, Switzerland on 2-4 September 1998. A final report is available at <[http://www.unitar.org/cwm/publications/current/tw/tw\\_1\\_report.pdf](http://www.unitar.org/cwm/publications/current/tw/tw_1_report.pdf)>.



and content. The host agency can then receive feedback both on content and design from stakeholders, who represent the website's users and contributors.

Questions relevant to this context include the following:

- What can be done to ensure that all affected and interested sectors and stakeholders may be able to contribute information to the website?
- Would it be beneficial to develop a national information exchange charter that is signed by relevant government bodies and stakeholder groups?
- How can government and stakeholder commitment to providing regular input to the website be ensured?
- What types of additional information would government and stakeholders like to see included in the website?
- How can the sustainability of the website be ensured by the host agency, once catalyzing funding is used up?

### **3.5 Establishing a National Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals**

A number of countries have taken steps to link their chemical management capacity activities and projects within a national “programmatic” framework for the sound management of chemicals. A core feature of a programmatic approach is that it represents a long-term commitment to chemicals management, where relevant government sectors establish and participate in a national chemical safety co-ordinating mechanism, while maintaining their independence to execute individual activities within their mandate. Development of a national programme for the sound management of chemicals also allows countries to conduct a strategic evaluation of progress made and challenges faced at the national level towards reaching the WSSD 2020 goals and targets established by SAICM.

Establishment of a national “programmatic” framework for the sound management of chemicals requires the identification of overarching goals, timeframes, resources, and the allocation of responsibility to specific ministries or implementing agencies. While setting up such a programme may go beyond what can be achieved at the workshop, countries may want to discuss the potential opportunities and challenges of establishing a national programmatic framework. The workshop could also allocate responsibility for its further development to a specific body, depending on the workshop outcomes.

Discussions at the workshop could address the following questions:

- What are the potential benefits of a national programme for the sound management of chemicals? What are the challenges to establishing and sustaining it?

- How can a national programme assist in the national implementation and monitoring of SAICM recommendations?
- What overarching goals and objectives might be established as part of a national programme?
- Is there sufficient support in government for a national programme?
- How will non-governmental stakeholders participate in the national programme and how can the equal participation of all stakeholders be ensured?

### **3.6 Integrating Chemicals Management within the National Development Framework**

Identifying how chemical safety relates to wider development objectives can prove beneficial in securing the commitment of a range of ministries, as well as providing leverage when seeking to access funding at the national level.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, international organizations, donors, and others that provide support for chemicals-related capacity building activities are calling for such activities to be reflected in a country's overall national development priorities. Such priorities can be reflected in a number of ways, for example, through their appearance in a national sustainable development strategy or national poverty reduction strategy paper. Prior to the workshop, the organizing committee should therefore identify ministries or agencies that are engaged at the national level in implementing the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), as adopted by the General Assembly of the UN in September 2000, as well as those funding bodies that support such activities.

At the workshop, national efforts to achieve implementation of the MDGs could provide the background for a discussion session to identify linkages between the sound management of chemicals and the national development objectives pursued by different ministries. It may prove helpful to select a number of MDGs and discuss how improved chemicals management can contribute to the achievement of relevant goals. Links may exist, for example, between the management of chemicals and reducing child mortality, improving maternal health, providing safe drinking water, or improving the lives of slum dwellers. Countries may wish to summarize workshop discussions in a brief document that could then be used to support funding applications and to inform all relevant ministries.

At the workshop further discussions could address the following questions:

- Where and how might activities to manage chemicals offer direct benefits to national development objectives?
- What can be done to alert ministries not directly concerned with chemicals management (e.g. ministry of planning and ministry of finance) to the importance of chemicals management for sustainable development?

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<sup>6</sup> UNITAR held a Thematic Workshop on "Strengthening Financial Resource Mobilization for the Sound Management of Chemicals" in Geneva, Switzerland on 19-20 November 2002. A final report is available at < [http://www.unitar.org/cwm/publications/current/tw/tws\\_7\\_report\\_final.pdf](http://www.unitar.org/cwm/publications/current/tw/tws_7_report_final.pdf)>.

- How can linkages between chemicals management and sustainable development be emphasized and integrated with national development planning, as well as with long-term frameworks for bilateral and multilateral development assistance?

**Box 1: Development of a Workshop Resolution**

In addition to preparing a report for the workshop, countries may consider it valuable to develop a concise resolution that can be brought to the attention of national decision makers, the media, and potential donors. The resolution could highlight the importance of sound management of chemicals for sustainable development and summarize key outcomes of the workshop.



#### **4. Practical Steps in Organizing a National Workshop**

This section provides an overview of the practical steps towards organizing a workshop at the national level. Firstly, early establishment of a **workshop organizing committee** allows preparations for the workshop to begin in a timely fashion. Where the committee includes representatives of the various parties of interest, members of the organizing committee are able to keep their constituencies informed of the objectives and plans for the workshop. The organizing committee will probably find it useful to appoint a **task manager** who will be responsible for co-ordinating the various planning and preparatory activities of the group.

It is suggested that the organizing committee hold a planning meeting, or series of meetings, in order to define workshop objectives, identify resource needs, and allocate practical tasks towards organizing the workshop. In order to ensure smooth organization of the workshop, it is important to define at the outset what tasks need to be undertaken, when, and by whom. A sample work plan for the organization of a national workshop is provided in Box 2 below. The organizing committee may wish to use this or a similar format for developing its own work plan. A more comprehensive checklist of suggested activities that may be undertaken in preparation for the workshop is included in Annex II to this note.

As well as taking decisions regarding a number of logistical issues, the organizing committee would develop the workshop agenda. An example of a draft agenda is included in Annex III. The draft agenda reflects the suggestions for workshop priorities put forward in section 3 of this guidance note. Countries may wish to amend or adjust this sample agenda according to their needs and priorities.

The committee would also consider what information participants require in order to prepare for the workshop. It can be productive to stimulate early thinking amongst participants with the provision of the workshop agenda and a background note outlining the scope and objectives of the workshop.

A few days prior to the workshop, it may be useful to hold a meeting among workshop organizers, presenters, chairpersons, facilitators, and rapporteurs to run through all of the details of the event and to ensure that all are clear on their expected roles. During this pre-workshop meeting, the task manager should lead the group through a detailed review of the agenda and clarify roles, responsibilities and procedures, as necessary. The meeting could also be used to identify any potential problems or issues that might arise, and to ensure that all organizational and procedural aspects are in place.

The committee may also wish to consider whether to invite the media to the workshop in order to raise the public profile of the event. A decision would then need to be taken regarding the level of access that the media would have to workshop discussions and materials.

Perhaps the most important determinant of a workshop's long-term impact is the degree to which follow-up and implementation activities receive priority attention. The first step after the workshop is to prepare and distribute the workshop report to decision makers and participants, as well as to relevant international/bilateral

organizations, so that the workshop conclusions and recommendations can be used as a basis for follow-up action.

**Box 2: Sample Work Plan for the Workshop Organizing Committee**

<b>Task/Activity</b>	<b>Month 1</b>	<b>Month 2</b>				<b>Month 3</b>				<b>Month 4</b>			
Establish organizing committee													
Convene meeting of organizing committee; develop work plan													
Identify/obtain necessary resources													
Find a workshop venue													
Develop draft agenda and discussion papers													
Send out invitations and background note													
Identify facilitators, chairpersons, rapporteurs and presenters													
Contact external resource persons													
Arrange for on-site equipment, catering, etc.													
Finalize agenda and discussion papers; distribute to participants													
Prepare list of participants, name cards, registration forms													
Organize pre-workshop meeting													
National Workshop													
Prepare/disseminate workshop report													





**Annex I: Summary Table of National Capacity Requirements under International Agreements**

<b>Chapter 19, Agenda 21: Elements for sound chemicals management</b>	<b>Issue<sup>7</sup></b>	<b>Aarhus</b>	<b>Basel</b>	<b>CWC</b>	<b>FAO Code</b>	<b>GHS</b>	<b>ILO 170</b>	<b>ILO 174</b>	<b>Rotterdam</b>	<b>Stockholm</b>	<b>VC/ MP</b>	<b>UN Narcotics</b>
<b>(A) Adequate Legislation</b>	Generic Legislation	+++	+++	+++	++	+	+++	+++	+++		+++	+++
	Import/Export Control Legislation		+++	+++					+++	+++		
	Enabling Legislation for Chemical Use Restrictions/Bans		+++							+++		+++
<b>(B) Information Gathering and Dissemination</b>	Development of chemical lists and/or inventory		+		++		+++	+++	++	+++		
	Emissions reporting	+++								+++	+++	
	National information systems/exchange	+++		+++	++	+	+	+++	+++	+++		+++
	International information exchange	+++	+++	+++	+	+	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++
	Hazard data generation				++	+						
	Data confidentiality	+		+++		+	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++	++
	Access to information	+++		+	++	+	+++	+++	+++	+++		
<b>(C) Capacity for Risk Assessment and Interpretation</b>	Hazard assessment / classification		+	+	++	+	+++	+++	+++	+		
	Hazard / risk communication (e.g. labeling)	+++	+++		++	++	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++

<sup>7</sup> **Key:** +++ Specific Obligation; ++ Specific Recommendation; + General Reference

Chapter 19, Agenda 21: Elements for sound chemicals management		Issue <sup>7</sup>	Aarhus	Basel	CWC	FAO Code	GHS	ILO 170	ILO 174	Rotterdam	Stockholm	VC/ MP	UN Narcotics
		Risk assessment				++	+	+++	+++	+++	+++		
(D) Establishment of Risk Management Policy		Packaging requirements		+++		++	+	+++		+			
		Capacity for risk management decision- making				++		+++	+++				
		Chemical-specific use restrictions/bans			+++	+		+++		+++	+++	+++	
		Life-cycle management		+		+	+	+		+++	+		
		Precautionary principle/approach							+++		+	+	
(E) Capacity for Implementa- tion and Enforcement	General Implementation Issues	Focal points		+++	+			+	++	+++	+++		+
		Inter-ministerial Co- ordination				++							
		Stakeholder Involvement	+++			++		+++	+++		+++		
		Resource Mobilization		++	+++	++				++	+++	+++	
		Technical assistance		+++	+++	++	+			+++	+++	+++	+++
		Training / Skills building		+		++	+	+++	+++	++	+++	+++	+++
		Technology transfer		+++		++				+	+++	+++	
		Development of alternatives			+	++				+++	+++	VC ++ MP +++	
		Evaluation of Implementation	+++	+	+++	++	++		+++	+++	+++	+++	+++

Chapter 19, Agenda 21: Elements for sound chemicals management		Issue <sup>7</sup>	Aarhus	Basel	CWC	FAO Code	GHS	ILO 170	ILO 174	Rotterdam	Stockholm	VC/ MP	UN Narcotics
	Enforcement	Capacity for chemical analysis/monitoring			+	++	+	+++			+++		+++
		Enforcement of regulations/decisions		+++	+++	++			+++		+++	+++	+++
		Access to Justice	+++					+++					
(F) Capacity for Rehabilitation of Contaminated Sites and Poisoned Persons						++			+++		+++		
(G) Effective Education programmes			+++	+	+		+	+++			+++	+++	+
(H) Capacity to Respond to Emergencies				++	+++		+	+++	+++				



## **Annex II: Checklist for Organizing a National Workshop**

To assist the organizing committee in thinking through all of its tasks, the following is an annotated checklist of actions to be undertaken in preparing for a national workshop:

### √ *Securing the necessary resources*

The types of resources likely to be needed for a national workshop include financial resources, administrative support, staff time, substantive expertise and information, logistical resources, any necessary equipment such as audio-visual equipment and computers, and means of communication. Transportation costs may also need to be figured in, for those coming from far regions of the country or those who otherwise may not be able to participate due to lack of resources (e.g. representatives of community groups).

The organizing committee should develop a list of anticipated resource needs at the outset, and where appropriate, seek additional support from governmental agencies, industry and non-governmental stakeholder groups.

### √ *Selecting the Workshop Venue*

Size, cost, comfort, suitability, and convenience of location are some issues to consider in selecting the workshop venue. If participants will be traveling to attend the workshop, using the conference facilities at the hotel where most participants will be staying may be a good choice. Alternatively, conference facilities of a government agency, industry or academic/research institute might be considered.

### √ *Developing a workshop agenda*

Once a detailed list of topics has been compiled and decisions have been made regarding the type of format to be used in each case, the organizing committee should develop a draft workshop agenda. The sample agenda included in Annex III may provide some ideas of items to include. It is recommended that a draft agenda be distributed at least two weeks before the event. When sending the agenda to those who will be taking an active part in the workshop (e.g. presenters or facilitators), it is useful to bring to their attention in a cover letter the specific sessions for which they will be responsible.

### √ *Generating interest and informing participants*

Invitations should be sent out to all potential participants at least six weeks in advance. It is also useful to include a background note describing the main objectives of the workshop and providing relevant background information. Sending the note out in good time provides stakeholder groups with the opportunity to provide input into the process and can stimulate thinking on how to identify priorities. Where Programme Area E of Chapter 19 is adopted as a framework for priority setting, the background note can explain the rationale behind this choice and outline the eight elements of a national system

for the sound management of chemicals, as defined in Programme Area E. The possibility of using the workshop to identify synergies between ongoing activities and the potential for win-win benefits may also be introduced in the background note.

Depending upon the format of the workshop, it may also be useful to develop discussion papers for each of the various break-out working group sessions. These papers can help to focus the working groups on the topics at hand, and provide some structure for the discussions. Where possible, the discussion papers can be sent out to participants in advance of the workshop, again to stimulate early thinking.

√ *Arranging for Workshop Presentations*

Individuals who will give presentations during the workshop need to be briefed on their expected roles, and their participation confirmed well in advance of the event. It is recommended that alternative speakers/experts also be identified in case of last minute cancellations.

It may be useful for workshop organizers to develop some guidelines for presenters in order to help them to prepare for their role in the workshop. Such guidelines might address the content, length, scope, and level of detail of the presentation; the expected role of the presenter in subsequent workshop discussions (e.g. question-and-answer sessions or panel discussions); and the type and level of detail of supporting information to be provided by the presenter to workshop participants (e.g. copies of transparencies and/or speech, background information on the topic).

√ *Identifying Workshop Chairpersons, Facilitators and Rapporteurs*

Appropriate chairpersons and/or facilitators should be identified and their participation confirmed well in advance of the workshop. For plenary sessions involving formal presentations, it is important to have an effective chairperson whose job it is to introduce the presenters, keep the presentations and question-and-answer sessions within the allotted time frame, and facilitate questions from the floor. It may be advisable to have rotating chairpersons, so that each stakeholder group has an active role to play in the workshop.

Facilitators are most often used in sessions that are designed to be interactive and from which specific concrete outcomes are expected, such as break-out working group sessions. The main role of the facilitator is to keep discussions focused and flowing smoothly, to spark discussion and solicit input from participants, and to summarize discussions.

In addition, one or several rapporteurs should be designated for each of the workshop sessions. The job of a rapporteur is to take detailed notes in order to facilitate preparation of interim and final reports, and to make note of action items, key points and themes that emerge from the discussions.

√ *Defining the Role of Outside Resource Persons*

Aside from the UNITAR representative, there may be a number of outside persons, e.g. from international, regional or bilateral organizations, that will participate in the workshop as resource persons. The role and contribution of these external resource persons should be clarified at the start in order to make most effective use of the information and input they can provide, while ensuring that the workshop remains a country-driven process. For example, resource persons might be asked to provide brief presentations on specific programmes or technical issues, to provide relevant information during the course of workshop discussions, and/or to serve as facilitators for selected working group sessions.

√ *Publicizing the Event*

Depending upon the purpose of the workshop, generating publicity can be an important aspect of workshop preparations. Press releases issued to the media and public announcements can be used to publicize the event, raise awareness of the issues to be addressed, and generate political momentum for action. Linking the workshop to broader national development issues can help to generate interest among the media and the public and raise the profile of chemicals issues on the national agenda.

Publicizing the event can have drawbacks and benefits. The workshop organizers should carefully consider the implications of having members of the press and the general public in attendance at the workshop, including the potential impact on the depth and transparency of the discussions.

√ *Defining Procedures to be Used during the Workshop*

It is important to think through beforehand the procedures to be used during the workshop, e.g. how decisions will be made, how input from participants will be solicited and addressed, how to manage contention, the mechanism to be used in drafting workshop recommendations and conclusions, etc. For example, it should be clear from the outset whether consensus will be sought on specific issues, or if the workshop will serve mainly to gather a wide range of input and ideas. It is recommended that a set of workshop procedures be developed by the organizing committee and shared with workshop chairpersons and facilitators prior to the event. Participants should also be briefed on the procedures at the start of the workshop.

√ *Establishing Guidelines for Report Preparation*

The workshop report can be an important vehicle for sharing the results of the workshop with relevant decision makers and can serve as a mandate for follow-up action. In addition to having capable rapporteurs who have been briefed on their expected role, it is also useful to provide a standard format for workshop reports. Particularly if there will be a number of rapporteurs recording various sessions, a standard reporting format will help to ensure

comprehensive and well organized reports, thereby greatly simplifying the task of the secretariat in compiling the final workshop report.

√ *Arranging for On-site Support Facilities*

The task manager and organizing committee will need to ensure that support facilities will be available on-site throughout the workshop, e.g. computers and printers, photocopying facilities, secretarial staff, telephones, a fax machine, etc. Workshop organizers should make sure that overhead projectors, slide projectors, computers (e.g. for demonstration of software, etc.), flip charts and microphones are available for use by workshop presenters, chairs and facilitators, as required.

√ *Arranging for Translation of Workshop Discussions and Documents*

In countries with multiple languages, it may be necessary to arrange for interpretation of workshop presentations and discussions, as well as translation of printed workshop materials. Ensuring that all participants are able to understand and actively contribute to discussion is very important. Thus, although hiring interpreters may add significantly to the cost of the workshop, it may be a wise investment in order to enable full and equal participation among all participants and stakeholder groups.

√ *List of Invited Participants*

It is useful to make available a list of invited participants, including the organizations or groups they represent and their contact information. This list can be distributed either in advance of the workshop along with the invitation and/or agenda, or at the registration table at the start of the workshop. Such a list can be useful during the workshop, and can also facilitate interaction and follow-up among participants after the workshop.

√ *Workshop Registration Forms*

Workshop organizers may find it useful to have participants fill out workshop registration forms upon their arrival. Such a form can be used to gather up-to-date addresses, position titles, etc. of workshop participants, and to collect any other relevant information such as sign-ups for working group topics.



### **Annex III: Sample Agenda**

This sample agenda is intended to serve as an example only. Countries may adapt the agenda to reflect the workshop objectives that they have selected, in terms of both the sessions included and the length of the sessions. Where participants have restricted availability, workshop organizers may find it necessary to reduce the number of days in order to secure full attendance.

#### **NATIONAL PRIORITY SETTING WORKSHOP AGENDA**

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##### **Day 1**

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##### **OPENING SESSION AND INTRODUCTORY PRESENTATIONS**

- Opening Statements
  - National Project Co-ordinator
  - UNITAR Representative
  - Key Ministerial Representatives
- Introduction of Participants
- Workshop Context, Objectives and Methodology
  - National Project Co-ordinator
  - UNITAR Representative

##### **SESSION 1: TAKING STOCK OF ON-GOING ACTIVITIES**

This session would review activities undertaken in the context of the project on *National Profile Preparation, Priority Setting and Information Exchange for Sound Chemicals Management*, as well as activities to implement international agreements that are ongoing at the national level, in order to take stock and increase awareness among workshop participants.

- Review of the National Chemical Management Profile
  - Presentation of National Profile
  - Analysis of gaps in national chemicals management infrastructure
  - Discussion
- National Activities to Implement International Agreements
  - Rotterdam Convention (Designated National Authority)
  - Stockholm Convention (NIP Co-ordinator)
  - Basel Convention (Focal Point)
  - Chemical Weapons Convention (Focal Point)
  - Bahia Declaration (IFCS Focal Point)
  - Etc.

- Developing a National Chemical Safety Webpage
  - Presentation of the draft Webpage
  - Discussion

## **SESSION 2: IDENTIFYING PRIORITY AREAS FOR STRENGTHENING THE NATIONAL CHEMICAL MANAGEMENT INFRASTRUCTURE**

This session would introduce the eight elements of Programme Area E of Chapter 19 as key elements of a national chemicals management infrastructure, and explain how they can be used to facilitate the priority setting process. Following discussion in plenary, participants could emerge from this session with four elements identified as priority areas for further discussion in working groups.

- Introductory Presentation of Chapter 19, Programme Area E and Synergies for Capacity Building under International Agreements
- Identification of Strategic Priority Areas Requiring Action
  - Background presentation
  - Discussion and priority setting

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## **Day 2**

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## **SESSION 3: IDENTIFYING SPECIFIC PRIORITIES FOR ACTION – WORKING GROUPS**

This session would take place in parallel working groups to discuss the selected priority areas in more detail. This provides an opportunity to cluster priorities under each element and to plan actions accordingly.

- Introduction to Working Group Discussion in Plenary
- Discussion in Parallel Working Groups - Priority Areas 1 and 2

Tasks of each of the two working groups may include:

- A brief review of gaps
  - The identification of priorities for action
  - The allocation of responsibility for action
  - Access to resources
  - Assessing opportunities for collaboration
- Presentation of Working Group Results and Discussion in Plenary

## **Lunch**

- Discussion in Parallel Working Groups - Priority Areas 3 and 4

- Presentation of Working Group Results and Discussion in Plenary

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**Day 3**

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**SESSION 4: DEVELOPING A NATIONAL PROGRAMMATIC FRAMEWORK FOR THE SOUND MANAGEMENT OF CHEMICALS**

This session would explore opportunities for generating sustained commitment to sound chemicals management, through the establishment of formal mechanisms. Participants might consider how a programmatic framework could enhance national efforts towards reaching the WSSD 2020 goals and targets established by SAICM.

- Introductory Presentation
- Discussion

**SESSION 5: INTEGRATING CHEMICALS MANAGEMENT IN THE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENDA**

During this session participants may consider how planned activities might contribute to the wider national development agenda. This can then stimulate discussion on how to develop an effective resource mobilization strategy for chemicals activities, reflecting the benefits that sound chemicals management offers to other development objectives.

- Introductory Presentation on Linking Chemicals Management with MDG Implementation and Poverty Reduction
- Discussion

**SESSION 6: REVIEW OF WORKSHOP RESOLUTIONS**

During the final session, workshop participants would review the main recommendations emerging from the workshop (or workshop resolution) in terms of national level programme development, as well as considering the emerging priorities and planned actions.







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- To carry out a wide range of training programmes in the field of social and economic development which include:
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  - b. Environmental and Natural Resource Management Training Programmes;
  - c. Training Programme on Debt and Financial Management with special emphasis on the Legal Aspects;
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