

Thematic Workshop on Synergies for Capacity Building under International
Agreements Addressing Chemicals and Waste Management
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Experience and Lessons Learned from German Technical Cooperation

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Germany provides technical assistance for the implementation of the chemicals related conventions in the context of sustainable development strategies based on Agenda 21 and the WSSD Plan of Action. The primary goal of bilateral cooperation is to increase the productivity of the people and organisations in the partner countries. It is crucial to the sustainable development of a country that e.g. the health of the working population is not impaired by workplace accidents and poisoning, no need arises for costly clean-up and disposal measures, and exported products are not rejected because of chemical contamination.

Many developing countries and countries with economies in transition have not yet developed efficient structures for environmentally sound chemical management. Chemicals related conventions are excellent starting points for capacity building and introducing concrete tools for chemical safety under conditions prevailing in the different countries. However, conventions tackle always only one or a few aspects of chemical safety and chemical management. From the countries perspective it is important not to focus only on one problem but to build up systematic chemical safety schemes and to connect this to the overall national strategy for sustainable development.

Some examples from German technical cooperation are described in the following:

Zambia:

Zambia is a land-locked country without own chemical production, all chemicals used in the country are imported. One of the most important control mechanism is import and transit/export control. To strengthen border control of chemicals a coordinated approach of all responsible authorities was initiated, including e.g. the Environmental Council of Zambia, the PIC-DNA, POPs Focal Point, Ozon Officer, and customs office. The activity is carried out in the context of a national chemical management strategy developed with assistance and guidance from UNITAR. Import/export control is coordinated with neighbouring countries on a regional basis. Related bilateral and regional technical cooperation projects are involved from the beginning to make the best use of resources available in different countries for this regional approach.

Thailand:

The country has banned all POPs pesticides since many years. The only problem with the implementation of the Stockholm Convention are the industrial chemicals and by-products; until Thailand joined the international discussion on POPs there

was no awareness in the public on the problem with these substances. GTZ supported awareness raising activities and initiation of the dialog with the related stakeholders, to build up understanding of the problem with dioxins and furans and to convince e.g. plant owners to start introducing emission reduction measures (1). Practicable implementation measures have to be developed including a careful economic analysis. One of the most powerful driving forces is to identify a win-win situation when introduction of modern, more efficient and environmentally sound technology brings also an economic benefit to the plant.

Argentina:

Establishment of poison control centres in all regions of the country are important to support physicians in primary health care. The centres have to be able to inform about pesticides, industrial and household chemicals, but also about all other poisons, e.g. from plants and animals. Focussing only on special groups of chemicals, e.g. PIC or POPs chemicals, would be too narrow and not helpful to the country. GTZ supports the development of the poison control centres network in the country and in the region, and at the same time connects WHO, PAHO and the PIC secretariat to the activities, to ensure information flow from the country to international programmes, e.g. information of pesticides dangerous under conditions of use is relevant for the PIC procedure (2).

Indonesia:

Dangerous chemicals are used in many cases in small and medium size local enterprises. If not forced by law, these enterprises will not invest in environment protection measures if they are not economically feasible. Implementation of environmental laws in the country has to be seen in the overall economic context and is most successful if economically interesting alternatives can be offered. GTZ developed a Chemicals Management Guide for Small and Medium Size Enterprises describing practical solutions for safe and economic use of chemicals at workplace which can easily be implemented by the plant managers and workers (3). The amount of money saved can directly be calculated. After introduction of the Guide in pilot training, now train-the-trainers workshops are held and more and more companies are interested in using the Guide.

In 2001 an Information Workshop on Technical Implementation Aspects Common to International Conventions Related to Chemicals Management was held in Namibia with participants from African countries (4). The participants discussed which elements were common to the implementation of the conventions at a national level, and then suggested some possible next steps.

From developing country perspective a number of institutional and technical matters were highlighted, e.g.:

Coordination:

- Implementation of the conventions is bound to institutions, not to personnel. This is the case with respect to all environmental conventions, not only MP, PIC and POPs, but also Basel Convention and Kyoto Protocol.

- There has to be a coordinating body, which should ensure that all environmental issues are coordinated within a country.
- A steering committee should look at the technical matters within the country.
- Focal points for individual conventions are necessary.
- Governmental authorities should closely exchange views and work together before taking any action.

Legislation and policies:

- Implementation plans for existing legislation have to be developed.
- Periodic review of implemented program is needed.

Monitoring:

- Ensure that the compliances set in the conventions are monitored.
- There has to be a systematic compilation of problems related to the chemicals.
- Evaluate the efficiency of implementation.
- Define an assessment system for trade stakeholders.
- Monitor imports and exports.

The workshop participants identified a number of possible next steps:

- Roundtable discussions should be initiated at national levels with all stakeholders for the implementation of the different conventions.
- A coordinating body at national level could tackle common elements of all chemicals related conventions.
- Discussion should be initiated to coordinate the implementation of related regulations and national action plans for chemical products relevant to different conventions.
- The harmonisation of customs training should be promoted to include all conventions issues.
- After roundtable discussions have occurred at national levels, it will be necessary to coordinate them at a regional level, too.
- Support is needed from national site, GEF, Secretariat to the Montreal Fund and bilateral donors to achieve an effective and coordinated approach.

The recipient countries perspective can be supplemented by the donors perspective:

- Donors follow development assistance strategies and recognize conventions as tools for international structural policy. Bilateral technical assistance normally is not bound to specific convention mandates, but must integrate conventions related activities to ongoing bilateral projects and programmes in the “classical” assistance areas like poverty reduction, health care, education, sustainable natural resource management, etc.
- It is necessary that international projects and programmes focussing on specific conventions establish contacts to the people implementing bilateral development assistance projects. Both levels are important, the international discussion of UN-organizations and convention secretariats with international donors and donor organizations (e.g. WB, ADB, GEF, OECD-DAC), and at local level contact between convention focal points and related bilateral projects. In both cases it is

necessary to describe clearly to value-added of introducing the chemical safety aspects into already established development assistance priority area.

Chemical safety is a cross-cutting issue, chemical conventions focus only on specific aspects of chemical management. Implementation of conventions and chemical safety measures will not be successful if initiated in an isolated manner. It is the role of the UN-organizations, convention secretariats and the focal points in the countries, to approach the people organizing the development assistance in the recipient countries, and find a way, not to change development assistance priorities in the direction of chemical management, but to integrate chemical safety on a routine basis as a necessary and very efficient tool for sustainable development in existing projects and programmes.

References:

- (1) Report – Thailand Dioxin and Sampling Analysis (2001)
(http://www.gtz.de/chs/englisch/02hg_04pe.htm see [Thai_Report.ZIP](#))
- (2) GTZ Chemical Safety Programme in Argentina
(http://www.gtz.de/chs/englisch/03akt_03_1e.htm)
- (3) GTZ Hazardous Substance Management for Small and Medium-size Enterprises in Indonesia (http://www.gtz.de/chs/englisch/03akt_03_8e.htm)
- (4) GTZ Proceedings of the Information Workshop on Technical Implementation Aspects Common to International Conventions Related to Chemicals Management, Namibia (2001) (http://www.gtz.de/chs/englisch/02hg_04pe.htm see [NamibiaRep-e.ZIP](#))