



**Stockholm Convention
on Persistent Organic
Pollutants**

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**Conference of the Parties of the Stockholm
Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants
Fourth meeting**

Geneva, 4–8 May 2009

Item 5 (f) of the provisional agenda*

**Matters for consideration or action by the Conference of the Parties:
information exchange**

**Clearing-house mechanism for information exchange on persistent
organic pollutants****

Note by the Secretariat

I. Introduction

1. Paragraph 4 of Article 9 of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants states that the Secretariat shall serve as a clearing-house mechanism for information on persistent organic pollutants, including information provided by Parties, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations.
2. The concept of a clearing-house mechanism for the exchange of information on persistent organic pollutants was discussed by the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for an International Legally Binding Instrument for Implementing International Action on Certain Persistent Organic Pollutants at its third, fourth, sixth and seventh sessions, on the basis of documents UNEP/POPS/INC.3/INF/5, UNEP/POPS/INC.4/INF/4, UNEP/POPS/INC.6/INF/7 and UNEP/POPS/INC.7/12.
3. Having discussed the first draft of the strategic plan for establishing procedures for the clearing-house mechanism, the Conference of the Parties by decision SC-2/17 approved the pilot-phase information-exchange activities under the clearing-house mechanism.

* UNEP/POPS/COP.4/1.

** Mandate for the action described in the present note contained in: Stockholm Convention, Article 9; report of the Conference of the Parties on the work of its first meeting (UNEP/POPS/COP.1/31), paragraph 45; on the work of its second meeting (UNEP/POPS/COP.2/30), annex I, decision SC-2/17; and on the work of its third meeting (UNEP/POPS/COP.3/30) annex I, decision SC-3/10.

4. By decision SC-3/10, the Conference of the Parties took note of the progress made in implementing the pilot phase of the clearing-house mechanism, recommended that the Secretariat, Parties and other interested stakeholders use the strategic plan¹ for the further development of information exchange activities and projects pursuant to Article 9 of the Convention and approved the budget for the clearing-house mechanism activities to be carried out by the Secretariat during the biennium 2008–2009.²

5. A progress report on the clearing-house mechanism activities undertaken in 2008 and planned for 2009 is set out in chapter II of the present note.

6. In addition, decision SC-3/10 requested the Secretariat to prepare a proposal for discussion by the Conference of the Parties at its fourth meeting on the possible role of the clearing-house mechanism at the national and regional levels, taking into account the terms of reference for regional and subregional centres, relevant decisions adopted by the Conference of the Parties and the goal of promoting synergies with the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade and the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal. The proposal is set out in document UNEP/POPS/COP.4/20.

7. The Secretariat has analysed Parties' information exchange needs and priorities and the Secretariat's needs and priorities³ for the biennium 2010–2011 and prepared a workplan and budget accordingly, in line with the clearing-house mechanism strategic plan.⁴ The workplan and budget are presented in annex I to the present note.

II. Progress report

8. Significant progress has been made in the implementation of the clearing-house mechanism. A new and revamped website was launched on 19 May 2008 and features an improved document management system, a meetings database and interactive tools with graphical presentations of data, among other things.

9. The following table provides a summary report of the progress made to date in the implementation of clearing-house mechanism activities for the biennium 2008–2009.

<i>Activity</i>		<i>Progress</i>
(a) Information capital component (information content)		
	Persistent Organic Pollutants Review Committee web corner	Version 1 completed. A more functional version is being designed.
	Effectiveness evaluation web corner	To be implemented in the second half of 2009.
	Inventory of all clearing-house mechanism information products and their target audiences	In progress
	Web database application and questionnaire to collect and track user information needs and gaps (web pools) ^a	In progress

a. These are tools to collect user feedback by completing a simple questionnaire when users have searched for particular information but have been unable to find it. It is a mechanism to identify information gaps.

1 UNEP/POPS/COP.3/INF/9.

2 UNEP/POPS/COP.3/30, annex I, decision SC-3/10.

3 UNEP/POPS/COP.3/INF/10.

4 UNEP/POPS/COP.3/INF/9.

Activity	Progress
(b) Operational capital component (tools, products and services)	
Design, development and deployment of the electronic reporting system for Article 15 ^b	Completed in all six United Nations official languages.
Design, development and deployment of a contacts database for messaging (part 1) and meeting management (part 2) ^b	Completed
Design, development and deployment of the Convention's electronic document repository, including internet access ^b	Completed
Retooling of the Convention website as a publishing vehicle ^b	Completed
Electronic reporting system for DDT	To be implemented in the second half of 2009.
Clearing-house mechanism required add-ons for the core system platform. This includes: helpdesk forum, web pools, inventories of tools, standards, information technology used, the questionnaire and evaluation data recording subsystem	In progress
Query-response database, including frequently asked questions (FAQs)	A feedback mechanism has been implemented in the website. A compilation of FAQs will follow.
A system to track information products distribution (for printed materials, CD-ROMs, etc.)	Simple system implemented. Integration with the website will follow.
(c) Human capital component (network development)	
Review network member categories, including roles and responsibilities	This activity is being implemented in steps, beginning with official contact points and national focal points. Other categories will be reviewed in the second half of 2009.
Processing of network member nominations	A total of 121 official contact points for official communications and 120 national focal points for information exchange pursuant to Article 9 have been received and stored in the system. Other network categories will follow.
Foster agreements with partner institutions and initiatives that should be affiliated to the information exchange activities of the Secretariat	In progress
Clearing-house mechanism e-newsletter	To be undertaken during 2010–2011.
User satisfaction web pools and rewarding tool	To be implemented in the second half of 2009.
Development of the clearing-house mechanism brokering database enabling Parties, observers and the Secretariat to exchange information. The system covers the following topics: provision of expertise; donor/funding brokering; technology transfer brokering; capacity-building and capacity assistance; tracking partnerships and agreements; sound measures; alternatives and their social and economic impacts.	To be implemented in the second half of 2009.
(d) Clearing-house mechanism management component	
Analysis of Parties' and Secretariat's information exchange needs and priorities for 2010–2011	See document UNEP/POPS/COP.3/INF/10.
Workplan and budget for 2010–2011	See the annex to the present note.
Midterm evaluation of the first phase (2008–2009)	To be carried out at the end of 2009.

b. Activity carried over from pilot phase in 2007.

III. Next steps

10. The Secretariat will finalize all pending 2008–2009 activities by the end of 2009. This will enable the workplan to begin in 2010–2011.

11. A draft costed workplan for 2010–2011 is provided in the annex to the present note. This includes the resources necessary to complete the first phase (2008–2011) of clearing-house mechanism implementation. This workplan provides a further breakdown of activities 18, 32 and 33 as presented in the programme of work for the biennium 2010–2011.⁵

IV. Possible action by the Conference of the Parties

12. The Conference of the Parties may wish:

- (a) To take note of the progress made in the implementation of the clearing-house mechanism and invite Parties and other stakeholders to continue their support to the Secretariat in its development;
- (b) To invite Parties and other stakeholders that are undertaking information exchange activities and projects pursuant to Article 9 of the Convention to use the strategic plan developed by the Secretariat and endorsed by the Conference of the Parties at its third meeting with the aim of guaranteeing compatibility between various activities and initiatives;
- (c) To approve the activities and budget for the biennium 2010–2011, as set out in the annex to the present note;
- (d) To invite Parties and other interested stakeholders to promote and contribute to the clearing-house mechanism and encourage active participation in the clearing-house mechanism network;

Annex

Draft workplan for the implementation of the clearing-house mechanism for the biennium 2010–2011

Activity		Deadline	Development costs (United States dollars) ¹	
			2010	2011
(a) Information capital component (information content)				
1	Persistent Organic Pollutants Review Committee web corner. Version 2 to include intersessional work	March 2010	–	–
2	Further development of effectiveness evaluation web corner and analysis tools to include any available monitoring data	August 2010	–	–
3	Legal information web corner	June 2010	–	–
4	Development of training and audio visual materials for the use of the electronic reporting system pursuant to Article 15	December 2010	5 000	–
5	Develop training materials for the use and participation in the clearing-house mechanism jointly with Basel and Rotterdam conventions	December 2010	10 000	6 000
(b) Operational capital component (services and tools)				
6	Software maintenance costs for existing tools	Continuous	34 000	34 000
7	Further development of electronic reporting system for Article 15	August 2010	30 000	30 000
8	Development of guidance materials for regional and national clearing-house mechanism implementation	October 2011	16 000	8 000
9	Query-response database on legal issues, including FAQs	June 2011	10 000	15 000
10	PCB Elimination Club web tools	December 2010	15 000	–
11	Electronic forum to collect and debate on Parties' needs for technical assistance	November 2011	10 000	10 000
12	Database and web application on alternatives to pesticides, including DDT	December 2011	–	10 000
13	Roster of experts application and database	November 2010	20 000	–
14	Knowledge base tool for scientific factual data on POPs	December 2011	–	22 000
(c) Human capital component (network development)				
15	Review network member categories, including roles and responsibilities	Continuous	–	–
16	Processing of network member nominations	Continuous	–	–
17	Foster agreements with partner institutions and initiatives that should be affiliated to the information exchange activities of the Secretariat	Continuous	–	–
18	Training programme: develop and implement a programme to increase the capacity of Parties to access and use electronic information and reporting mechanisms available under the Convention. Jointly developed with Basel and Rotterdam conventions.	December 2011	210 000	192 000

(d) Clearing-house mechanism management component				
19	Analysis of Parties and Secretariat information exchange needs and priorities for 2012–2014	October 2011	–	–
20	Preparation of work plan and budget for 2012–2014	November 2011	–	–
21	Final evaluation of the first phase (2008–2011)	November 2011	–	10 000
	Total cost		360 000 ²	337 000 ²

¹ These costs do not include staff time, which includes:

- Information manager (P-4)
- Webmaster (G-5)
- Data entry and quality control clerk (G-4)

² These figures are the sum of non-staff costs of activities 18, 32 and 33 as presented in the programme of work for the biennium 2010–2011 in document UNEP/POPS/COP.4/37/Add.1.