



**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 (j) of the provisional agenda*

**Matters for consideration or action by the Conference of the Parties:
effectiveness evaluation**

Global monitoring plan for effectiveness evaluation**

Note by the Secretariat

1. Article 16 of the Stockholm Convention requires the Conference of the Parties to evaluate the effectiveness of the Convention commencing four years after its date of entry into force and regularly thereafter. The evaluation is to be based on available scientific, environmental, technical and economic information, including monitoring reports on the levels of persistent organic pollutants (POPs) in environment.
2. At its second meeting, the Conference of the Parties adopted decision SC-2/13 on effectiveness evaluation, in which it, among other things, decided to implement the elements for a global monitoring plan as proposed in the annex to that decision and to review at its fourth meeting the arrangements, including the global monitoring plan, used for providing the Conference of the Parties with the information for effectiveness evaluation as implemented for the first report.
3. At its third meeting, the Conference of the Parties adopted decision SC-3/19 on effectiveness evaluation by which, among other things, the Conference of the Parties: adopted on a provisional basis the amended global monitoring plan for persistent organic pollutants¹ and the amended implementation plan for the global monitoring plan for persistent organic pollutants for the first effectiveness evaluation;² established regional organization groups and a coordination group with the mandates and terms of reference specified in the annex to that decision; agreed that the amended preliminary version of the guidance on the global monitoring plan for persistent organic pollutants provided an appropriate basis for the Parties to implement the global monitoring; requested the Secretariat, within available resources, to support training and capacity-building activities to assist countries in implementing the

* UNEP/POPS/COP.4/1.

** Mandate for the action described in the present note contained in: Stockholm Convention, Article 16; report of the Conference of the Parties on the work of its second meeting (UNEP/POPS/COP.2/30), annex I, decision SC-2/13 and report of the Conference of the Parties on the work of its third meeting (UNEP/POPS/COP.3/30), annex I, decision SC-3/19.

1 UNEP/POPS/COP.3/22/Rev.1, annex II

2 UNEP/POPS/COP.3/23/Rev.1.

global monitoring plan for the first effectiveness evaluation and to work with partners and other relevant organizations to undertake the implementation activities;

4. The Conference of the Parties further requested the Secretariat in paragraph 7 of decision SC-3/19 to bring the work undertaken in accordance with that decision to the attention of the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting and to request its assistance in the provision of relevant information;

5. In response to this request, the Secretariat facilitated the establishment and operation of regional organization groups through inception and drafting workshops held in four of the five regions: Nairobi, Kenya (29–31 October 2007), Lomé, Togo (25–27 February 2008) and Nairobi (14–16 July 2008) for the African region; Beijing, China (17–19 September 2007) and Doha, Qatar (16–18 June 2008) for the Asia and Pacific region; Prague, Czech Republic (15–17 October 2007) and Brno, Czech Republic (17–20 April 2008) for the Central and Eastern Europe region; and Mexico City, Mexico (14–16 January 2008) and Guadalupe, Costa Rica (25–28 August 2008) for the Latin American and Caribbean region. The Western European and other States group had corresponded through teleconferences. A workshop to facilitate and harmonize drafting of the regional monitoring reports was held from 19 to 23 May 2008 in Geneva.

6. Strategic partnership arrangements have been established to overcome the limitations in the capacity to collect monitoring data on POPs in the core media, for air in particular, with support from existing programmes in other countries or regions and the Secretariat. A milk survey was implemented throughout the regions in collaboration with the World Health Organization and with the support of the Secretariat. Not all of these data were available during the time of preparation of the global monitoring report.

7. Regional monitoring reports have been produced by the regional organization groups and are provided in document UNEP/POPS/COP.4/INF/19.

8. The Secretariat also facilitated the establishment of a coordination group. The coordination group met in November 2008 in Geneva and produced the global monitoring report, which comprised executive summaries of the five regional reports, a matrix comparing the main findings from those reports and conclusions and recommendations drawn from a comparative analysis of the reports.

9. The global monitoring report is made available as document UNEP/POPS/COP.4/33, while the report of the meeting is set out in document UNEP/POPS/COP.4/INF/20. The report of the co-chairs of the coordination group, Mr. Vincent Madadi (Kenya) and Mr. Ramon Guardans (Spain), may be found in the annex to the present note. These reports contain recommendations regarding the continued implementation of the global monitoring plan.

10. The Secretariat sent information on work undertaken in accordance with decision SC-3/19 to the Executive Secretary of the Antarctic Treaty Secretariat and requested assistance in the provision of relevant information. The Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting considered this letter at its XXXI meeting held from 1 to 13 June 2008 in Kyiv and addressed the issue in paragraphs 312–314 of the final report of the Antarctic Treaty Committee for Environmental Protection.

Possible action by the Conference of the Parties

11. The Conference of the Parties may wish:

(a) To take note of the report of the meeting of the coordination group and consider the report of the co-chairs of the coordination group;

(b) To take note of the global monitoring report and request the Secretariat to integrate data that will become available to prepare an amended report for consideration by the Conference of the Parties at its fifth meeting;

(c) To adopt the global monitoring plan for persistent organic pollutants that was provisionally adopted at its third meeting;³

(d) To adopt, with any amendments deemed necessary, the revised terms of reference and mandate of the regional organization groups and the global coordination group set forth in the appendix to the annex to the present note;

3 UNEP/POPS/COP.3/22/Rev.1, annex II.

(e) To amend the implementation plan for the global monitoring plan for persistent organic pollutants for the first effectiveness that was adopted by the Conference of the Parties at its third meeting, so that it can be made use of in future effectiveness evaluations and to include the revised terms of reference referred to above;

(f) To request the Secretariat to support the global coordination group in updating the guidance document by additional chapters on long-range transport, specimen banking and the impact of adding new POPs to the Convention;

(g) To remind Parties of the need to engage actively in the implementation of the global monitoring plan and the effectiveness evaluation;

(h) To request the Secretariat, within available resources, to continue supporting training and capacity-building activities to assist countries in implementing the global monitoring plan for subsequent effectiveness evaluations and to work with partners and other relevant organizations to undertake the implementation activities;

(i) To request the financial mechanism of the Stockholm Convention and invite other donors to provide sufficient financial support to further step-by-step capacity enhancement, including through strategic partnerships, to sustain the new monitoring initiatives, which provided data for the first monitoring report;

(j) To invite Parties to engage actively in the implementation of the global monitoring plan and the effectiveness evaluation, in particular:

- (i) To continue to monitor the core media of air and human breast milk or human blood in support of future evaluations;
- (ii) To support the establishment and long-term implementation of the global monitoring plan if in a position to do so.

Annex

Report by the co-chairs of the coordination group on the global monitoring plan

Introduction

1. At its third meeting, held in May 2007, the Conference of the Parties of the Stockholm Convention, by decision SC-3/19 on effectiveness evaluation, provisionally adopted the amended global monitoring plan for persistent organic pollutants (UNEP/POPS/COP.3/22/Rev.1, annex II) and the amended implementation plan for the global monitoring plan for the first effectiveness evaluation (UNEP/POPS/COP.3/23/Rev.1), in addition to agreeing that the amended preliminary version of the guidance on the global monitoring plan for persistent organic pollutants (UNEP/POPS/COP.3/INF/14/Rev.1) provided an appropriate basis for the Parties to implement the global monitoring plan. Decision SC-3/19 also established a regional organization group for each of the five United Nations regions to facilitate regional implementation of the global monitoring plan, and a coordination group comprising three members from each of the regional organization groups with mandate and tasks set out in the annex to the decision.

2. The coordination group was to meet once prior to the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to perform the following tasks:

- (a) Facilitating preparation of the global monitoring report, which is an integration of regional reports;
- (b) Assessing regional work with the aim of achieving consistency between regions;
- (c) Identifying impediments to the implementation of the global monitoring plan;
- (d) Promoting:
 - (i) Experience sharing within and between regions;
 - (ii) Capacity-strengthening to address gaps in coverage for the core media where possible;
- (e) Evaluating the first phase of the global monitoring plan and developing recommendations for consideration by the Conference of the Parties at its fourth meeting, including:
 - (i) Continued coordination and oversight of the global monitoring plan for subsequent evaluations, taking into account the work already achieved;
 - (ii) Updating the amended preliminary version of the guidance on the global monitoring plan for persistent organic pollutants, taking into account technical developments and possible supplementation of the core data with data from other media;
 - (iii) Further capacity-enhancement for Parties on a regional basis;
 - (iv) The role, membership and activities of the coordination group in support of subsequent effectiveness evaluations;
 - (v) Compiling a global synthesis of the regional organization groups' experiences in identifying regional capacity-building needs and preparing proposals to address such needs.

3. The coordination group held informal discussions during the workshop to facilitate drafting of the regional monitoring reports, held in Geneva from 19 to 23 May 2008, and subsequently held a meeting in Geneva from 10 to 12 November 2008. The report from the coordination group meeting is set forth in document UNEP/POPS/COP.4/INF/20.

I. Outcome of the coordination group work

A. Review of the current situation

1. Assessment of the regional work

4. In mid-2007, members of the regional organization groups were identified, selected and invited to begin their work. Except for the Western Europe and others region, which had corresponded through teleconferences, the regions held inception workshops between September 2007 and January 2008. The groups reviewed the data that were required for the first evaluation and the availability of such data in their region. Except for the Western Europe and others region, limited data could be used for the evaluation. Partnerships were established with existing programmes (the Global Atmospheric Passive Sampling network (GAPS); the Research Centre for Environmental Chemistry and Ecotoxicology, Faculty of Science, Masaryk University (RECETOX) programme; the POPs monitoring project in East Asian countries initiated by Japan; and the World Health Organization (WHO)) to obtain data on levels of persistent organic pollutants (POPs) in air and humans.

5. Members of the regional organization groups were assigned lead responsibility to liaise with specific countries and facilitated data collection. Regional groups compiled the available data and regional monitoring reports were made available to the coordination group prior to the meeting held in November in Geneva.

6. Air monitoring data collected through these partnerships are available and can serve as a baseline for future evaluations. Human milk data are not yet completely available, given the impediments described in paragraph 8. They should, however, become available in the course of 2009 and can assist in serving as a baseline for future evaluations.

2. Global monitoring report

7. The workshop to facilitate drafting of regional reports held in May 2008 provided an opportunity to obtain a common understanding of the content and approach for the regional reports and the global monitoring report. A standard structure for regional reports and their summaries was developed. The coordination group members integrated the results of the regional work during their meeting in November 2008 and provided an overall assessment of the adequacy of the available data to form a baseline for future effectiveness evaluations, reflected in the approach taken to provide monitoring report for the first effectiveness evaluation, and made recommendations for future effectiveness evaluations, including capacity-building required for a cost-effective programme. The global monitoring report, which includes an overview of the main findings and summaries of the five regional monitoring reports, is set forth in document UNEP/POPS/COP.4/33.

3. Impediments to the implementation of the global monitoring plan

8. A number of impediments to the implementation of the global monitoring plan were identified, including a lack of adequate capacity or expertise (both technical and organizational), limited financial resources, a lack of ability or commitment to on-ground establishment, a lack of ability to service a monitoring programme and constraints in data storage. In addition, some data from the newly initiated activities were not available or complete owing to a lack of resources or delays in the implementation of activities or projects. These delays can be attributed to difficulties in communication, the time required to obtain responses and commitments to proposals and, occasionally, a lack of response to or rejection of the invitation to participate in initiatives.

4. Capacity-building to fill gaps in coverage by core media data

9. At the regional inception workshops, regions identified areas that needed to be strengthened to ensure that all regions were capable of producing the necessary data for the effectiveness evaluation. The needs in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Central and Eastern Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean were similar and included the need to enhance the skills and knowledge of those who had to undertake the monitoring and analysis of POPs, to improve quality assurance and quality control measures to ensure that the data obtained were of sufficient quality to be considered in an evaluation and the need for some support to ensure that laboratories had adequate equipment and supplies.

10. Several monitoring programmes have built strategic partnerships with programmes in other regions to overcome their limitations in capacity to collect monitoring data on POPs in the core media. That support was obtained through collaboration with RECETOX and GAPS for air data in Africa,

Central and Eastern Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean and the Pacific. The POPs monitoring project in East Asian countries, initiated by Japan, helped to generate air data in eight countries. Human milk data was generated in collaboration with WHO. The United Nations Environment Programme, the Global Environment Facility and the Secretariat facilitated and supported some of these activities.

5. First phase of the global monitoring plan

11. The first phase of the global monitoring plan was performed in compliance with the global monitoring plan and the implementation plan for the first effectiveness evaluation as adopted in decision SC-3/19. At its second meeting, the Conference of the Parties decided that, at its fourth meeting, it would review the arrangements, including the global monitoring plan, used for providing the Conference with the information for the effectiveness evaluation as implemented for the first report and decide on future arrangements, including the intervals of subsequent effectiveness evaluations.

12. Having been accorded its mandate, the coordination group evaluated the first phase of the global monitoring plan and concluded that the amended global monitoring plan for persistent organic pollutants (UNEP/POPS/COP.3/22/Rev.1, annex II) and the amended implementation plan for the global monitoring plan for the first effectiveness evaluation (UNEP/POPS/COP.3/23/Rev.1) adopted on a provisional basis in decision SC-3/19 on effectiveness evaluation provided a good framework for the implementation of the first phase of the global monitoring plan and could provide an appropriate basis also for future evaluations.

13. The coordination group evaluated the first phase of the global monitoring plan, discussed elements of implementation of the global monitoring plan for subsequent effectiveness evaluations as requested in its mandate and put forward recommendations for consideration by the Conference of the Parties as outlined in section II.

II. Conclusions and recommendations

A. Coordination and oversight of the global monitoring plan for subsequent evaluations

14. The coordination group agreed that there was no need to amend the current structure of the regional organization groups and coordination group, but that the terms of reference would require modification to tackle the issues outlined below. The coordination group prepared draft revised terms of reference for consideration by the Conference of the Parties at its fourth meeting, which are set out in the appendix to the present report.

15. The coordination group concluded that the regional organization group members should be appointed for a minimum of one six-year term and that each term would begin after the effectiveness evaluation performed by the Conference of the Parties and end with reporting on each subsequent evaluation at the relevant meeting of the Conference. Members who could not fulfil their mandates would be replaced by new members selected in consultation with the regional bureau members according to the procedure outlined in decision SC-3/19.

16. The coordination group urged that efforts be made to extend the mandate of the current members of the regional organization groups to ensure continuity and benefit from the institutional memory and experience gained during the first evaluation phase.

B. Guidance on the global monitoring plan

17. The coordination group concluded that the guidance document had served the first evaluation well but that it should be updated in view of the evolution of the Convention. It was suggested that, rather than review the guidance document completely, appendices or annexes could be prepared on new topics such as long-range transport and climate variability (in particular with regard to the interpretation of temporal trends), specimen banking, the impact of including new POPs in the Convention and the selection of new core media, if appropriate.

C. Intervals for future evaluations

18. The coordination group concluded that an interval of four to five years between evaluations would be a minimum to obtain optimal results while remaining cost-effective. Six years would enable a substantial body of information to accumulate from contributing programmes and would also enhance statistical interpretation. A lesser period would not be cost-effective in terms of the effort involved while a longer period would leave the Conference uninformed of important information on environmental levels.

19. Activities between evaluations should be continuous; in particular there should be continuous air monitoring and data assessment and a minimum of one human milk survey. Interim activities could also include developing additional programmes for core media to fill the main gaps, identifying possible partnerships and further work on long-range transport, including how to assist regions with assessing regional long-range transport issues by air and water.

D. Global monitoring plan media

20. Participants concluded that ambient air and human milk or blood were suitable core media for evaluating changes in POPs levels over time on a global scale. For future evaluations, all regions should continue monitoring and reporting POPs levels in the current core media (see paragraph 31 for other media).

E. Capacity-building for Parties on a regional basis

21. Although baseline levels of POPs are partially available from all United Nations regions, sustained monitoring programmes are lacking in most subregions and even whole continents. In several subregions, baseline levels are not available owing to lack of capacity and, sometimes, insufficient institutional support. To maintain monitoring activities, future programmes should include continued collaboration between strategic partners in all regions and the establishment of a network of regional laboratories using harmonized protocols to monitor POPs. Opportunities for cross-regional cooperation, in particular for geographic regions that encompass several United Nations regions (e.g., the Mediterranean), should be explored.

22. New activities already initiated need to be sustained, in particular through partnerships, capacity-building and the gradual increase of national commitment. At the national level, cooperation and partnerships with the health sector were particularly vital, as was raising awareness of the issue to focal points, decision makers, the general public and relevant national institutions. It was also suggested that in the long term countries should be encouraged to take national ownership of the monitoring programmes.

23. Monitoring activities should be initiated in subregions where data gaps have been identified. Expanding the air monitoring arrangements using passive air samplers to improve the regional coverage is a cost-effective approach to resolve regional gaps in air data. The long-term goal is to build up all regions to sample adequately the core media and test all POPs so that all regions have the capacity to participate fully in the evaluation.

24. The coordination group agreed that the minimum requirement for monitoring for the purpose of the effectiveness evaluation was ideally 10–15 sampling sites for air quality monitoring and around eight sites for human sampling, per United Nations region. Initially, and for regions where there were no existing programmes, this minimum requirement might be only the few sampling points that had reported baseline data for POPs for the first evaluation. Regions should ensure that at least these efforts are sustainable and capable of producing data for the purpose of investigating temporal trends in subsequent evaluations.

25. Further capacity-building should continue to follow the step-wise approach and build on that foundation. That approach might include improved resolution of sampling in space and time with careful consideration being given to the guidance for the global monitoring plan, including the added value of additional sampling points. The coordination group emphasized the need to focus on existing programmes and to develop long-term evaluations that were cost-effective. In regions where data were contributed from existing programmes, maintaining the longevity of these programmes was a priority. It was suggested that regional laboratories should be identified where capacity-building could be undertaken to enable progress in POPs analysis.

26. There is already some analytical capacity available in countries and, with targeted training and upgrading, laboratories could be brought up to standard to serve the global monitoring and evaluation needs. The main needs include provision of some essential spares and consumables, training of laboratory personnel and participation in future inter-laboratory comparison studies.

27. While efforts are already under way to fill some of these gaps through partnerships with existing programmes, there is need for continued support to ensure that these initiatives are able to contribute also to the next evaluation cycle. Some regions have submitted proposals to the Global Environment Facility for medium-sized projects that are anticipated to begin in 2009. These will be an additional step to filling these gaps. There is an opportunity to develop a large multi-year Facility project and countries are encouraged to endorse and participate in it when it is developed.

F. Issues related to the various outputs

1. Adequacy of the baseline information

28. The coordination group concluded that adequate baseline levels of POPs in air and human milk or blood, together with information about current trends, were available from a relatively small number of existing national and international programmes. In some regions the baseline levels were provided by new, nationally supported POPs monitoring activities. In several regions where major data gaps had been identified, initial air monitoring and human milk data had been generated through strategic partnerships with established monitoring programmes in the framework of project activities; however, continuation of those monitoring activities would depend on further capacity-building and support. The human milk data that would become available in the course of 2009 should be included in the regional monitoring reports and considered in the global monitoring report.

2. Long-range transport

29. The coordination group concluded that knowledge on long-range transport was key to assessing changes in POPs levels over time and the effectiveness of the Convention. The physical-chemical properties of each chemical defined how it was transported over long distances – whether they were “flyers” through air or “swimmers” through water. Overall persistence defined how long a compound would remain in the environment. Compounds that were persistent and capable of being transported over long distances would be expected to last a long time in remote areas and make it difficult to determine the effectiveness of the Convention. Some POPs that might be included in the Convention could be more water soluble and as such marine transport by ocean currents could merit examination in the future.

30. The absence of data on long-range transport would hinder efforts at a comprehensive effectiveness evaluation of the Convention. Modelling exercises of long-range transport have already been undertaken in some regions and that information could be used in examining trends. Given that long-range transport spanned all regions, a plan or process to develop a coordinated cross-regional approach to assess long-range transport is needed. Future evaluations of changes in POPs levels over time should include information on regional and global environmental transport and a coordinated cross-regional approach to analysis and assessment of data to meet that objective should be established. The issue of long-range transport is also linked to variable climate and meteorology discussed later in paragraph 36.

3. Other media

31. The coordination group concluded that the core media – ambient air and human milk or human blood – should continue to be used, as currently that was the most appropriate and cost-effective option. Valuable data from other media were available in many existing programmes that could also be used to establish temporal trends. It was agreed that when additional data on levels in other media were available, they could be used in the evaluation to help to assess trends, provided that they met the requirements for acceptance as defined in the guidance for the global monitoring plan and in annex I to the implementation plan. The coordination group concluded that it would be necessary to review the core media when including new POPs in the Convention.

4. New POPs

32. When the Conference of the Parties decides to add new substances to the annexes of the Convention, those new POPs will need to be included in the effectiveness evaluations and monitoring will need to be initiated as soon as possible so that effective baselines can be established. It was stressed that the inclusion of additional POPs would likely require modifications or amendments to the current guidelines for global monitoring and the implementation plan. It was confirmed that existing monitoring programmes that have monitored the core media would be able to provide useful data, however some new requirements might need to be added to the guidelines. Meeting such requirements would undoubtedly increase the cost of the monitoring programmes.

33. When the Conference of the Parties agrees to list new substances, the coordination group and the Secretariat should, as soon as practicable, consider whether there is a need to and how to amend the guidance document on the global monitoring plan, for example: how to incorporate monitoring for the new listed substances into regional monitoring activities (noting that in some cases they may already be included); the capacity implications; and how to address the capacity for monitoring the new substances.

5. Comparability issues

34. The WHO-coordinated human milk survey, which uses a harmonized sampling protocol and a single laboratory, provides data sets that are comparable over time and between regions.

35. Participants concluded that, to interpret POPs concentrations in air, programmes had to remain consistent in their methods over time and thus ensure that the data collected within a programme remained comparable and suitable for assessing changes in levels over time. It was confirmed that arrangements to gather data should be implemented using existing programmes and mechanisms to the extent possible. Existing programmes contained procedures to ensure data comparability within the programme, taking into account constraints related to the use of various analytical laboratories. It was noted, however, that it would be extremely difficult to achieve comparability between the various programmes given the many sources of variability, including the use of several laboratories and differing sampling methods or analytical protocols. While comparability across programmes and regions would assist in a global assessment of trends, priority should be placed on internal comparability within a particular programme or region over time.

36. Some of the physical and chemical properties of POPs are temperature-dependent and levels of POPs may be influenced by year-to-year variability in climate and meteorology. This variability may also affect long-range transport pathways and the transport of POPs to air sampling sites and hence influence the observed trends (see also paragraph 30). Improved understanding of these influences is essential to ensure that data are interpreted correctly. The Conference of the Parties should ensure that this factor is adequately addressed in future evaluations. The coordination group suggested that collaboration with the Task Force on Hemispheric Transport of Air Pollution of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution or any other body studying the transport of POPs could be a way to achieve that and assist in the proper assessment of trends.

6. Specimen banking

37. Participants acknowledged the value of specimen banking and emphasized the importance of maintaining rigorous records, including details on monitoring methods, sample preparation and history of specimens. In general, specimen banking can support capacity-building initiatives, as samples can be stored and then analysed once a region's laboratory capacities had been enhanced. A primary role of specimen banks was to maintain environmental monitoring samples for future analysis. Such storage could serve to reveal temporal and spatial trends of newly identified pollutants promptly and thereby assist in the development of appropriate regulation or control measures and could also reveal temporal and spatial trends of pollutants using more advanced techniques so that previously unobtainable information could be acquired.

38. Specimen banking could be a useful tool for developing countries to collect baseline samples for future effectiveness evaluations by enabling Parties to begin or continue sampling immediately until the appropriate capacity-building or enhancement takes place and an analysis can be carried out. Such a supporting tool could also be used on an anticipatory basis in the event that new POPs are added to the Convention. This would enable the creation of baseline levels for candidate compounds at an early stage. Samples of such POPs kept in a specimen bank have been used for retrospective analysis and this

could be done whenever a chemical is included in the Convention. Retrospective analyses of archived samples would enable faster investigation of temporal or spatial trends of new POPs.

7. Ensuring sustainability of the arrangements and partnerships for the global monitoring plan

39. While data are currently available to use as a baseline, it is equally important that monitoring programmes continue so that data are available in future to compare with this baseline. Long-term monitoring programmes need to consider the minimum data required to investigate temporal trends for effectiveness evaluation as described in the guidance on the global monitoring plan. For regions lacking programmes, this minimum requirement could include continuous monitoring at the sampling points that provided the baseline data for POPs. The milk survey should be conducted at least once during the evaluation period.

40. The regional reports and the data therein constituted a warehouse of information that could serve as a useful resource for policymakers and researchers and should be placed on the Convention website in the light of the Secretariat's role as a clearing house for POPs information.

41. Financial assistance should be sought actively from international funding agencies such as the Global Environment Facility and other donors to ensure the sustainability of the global monitoring plan for effectiveness evaluation and related activities.

G. Recommendations to the Conference

42. Future effectiveness evaluations should use the current global monitoring plan, implementation plan and guidance document as their foundation. The terms of reference of the regional organization groups and coordination group should be amended as proposed in the appendix to the present report. Appendices should be elaborated to the guidance document on long-range transport, specimen banking and the impact of adding new POPs to the Convention.

43. Effectiveness evaluations should take place at six-year intervals with a report to the Conference of the Parties at the end of the period.

44. Regional organization group members should be appointed for a minimum of one six-year term, which would begin after the Conference of the Parties has considered the report of an evaluation and would end after the results of the following evaluation are considered by the Conference.

45. Parties need to be reminded to engage actively in the implementation of the global monitoring plan and the effectiveness evaluation, which would include ensuring that the official contact points have the support needed to fulfil their duties, keeping the Secretariat informed of any changes in names or addresses of contact points, making the relevant groups within their country aware of the Convention, its objectives and benefits, and encouraging the mobilization of national resources to support the implementation of the Convention at the national level.

46. A coordinated cross-regional approach should be established to analyse and assess data on regional and global environmental transport to understand the significance of changes in POPs levels over time and enable a comprehensive effectiveness evaluation of the Convention. Studies of year-to-year climate influences on levels of POPs in various environmental media should be encouraged.

47. Efforts should be placed on internal consistency of the methods and comparability of the data within a particular programme over time. Comparability between air monitoring programmes should be assessed and improved to support modelling and assessment of the global long-range transport of POPs.

48. Further step-by-step capacity enhancement through strategic partnerships should receive sufficient support from the financial mechanism of the Stockholm Convention and other donors in order to build on the new monitoring initiatives that have contributed baseline data for the first monitoring reports, to expand on them to fill the identified gaps in geographic coverage, and to make them more sustainable. At the same time gradually increasing national commitment and support should be encouraged.

49. For future evaluations, all regions should continue monitoring and reporting POPs levels in the current core media. The best available additional data on levels in other matrices can be used in the evaluation to help to assess trends.

50. Established national and international monitoring programmes and newly initiated activities that have contributed baseline data for POPs in core media should be maintained. Newly initiated activities should be transformed to sustainable programmes through stable strategic partnerships, strengthening of capacity and gradual increase of national commitment and support.

51. The initial focus of any capacity-building should be on establishing a continuous monitoring programme based on already initiated monitoring activities that focuses on a few sampling sites to produce data that can be used for future effectiveness evaluations. The minimum requirements should be 10-15 sampling sites for air quality monitoring and around eight sites for human samples per region. Once the sustainability of such a programme is achieved, further strengthening could build on this foundation in a step-by-step approach, which could include improved resolution of sampling in space and time with careful consideration given to the guidance on the global monitoring plan and the added value of additional sampling points.

Appendix

Draft revised terms of reference and mandate of the regional organization groups and the global coordination group

Regional organization groups

1. Regional organization group members should be appointed for a minimum of one six-year term, which would begin after the Conference of Parties has considered the report of an evaluation and would end after the results of the following evaluation are considered by the Conference. Three members from each of the regional organization groups would be appointed to the global coordination group.
2. The tasks of each regional organization group will include, among other things:
 - (a) Coordinating and overseeing the implementation of the regional monitoring plan, taking into account the work already achieved;
 - (b) Identifying where existing suitable monitoring data are and are not available;
 - (c) Promoting and updating as necessary the regional strategy for implementation of the global monitoring plan;
 - (d) Promoting and helping to maintain regional, subregional and interregional monitoring networks and extending them as necessary to improve geographic coverage;
 - (e) Coordinating with Parties involved in sampling and analytical arrangements;
 - (f) Ensuring compliance with protocols for quality assurance and quality control, noting the examples described in the guidance on the global monitoring plan for persistent organic pollutants for sample collection and analytical methodologies; for data archiving and accessibility; and trend analysis methodologies to ensure quality and allow comparability of data;
 - (g) Ensuring and improving internal consistency of the methods and comparability of the data within a particular programme over time;
 - (h) Maintaining the interaction with other regional organization groups and the Secretariat, as appropriate;
 - (i) Identifying further capacity-building needs in its region;
 - (j) Assisting, for the purpose of filling gaps, in the preparation of project proposals, including strategic partnerships;
 - (k) Preparing a summary of experiences in implementing the duties assigned in subparagraphs (h) and (i) above for transmittal to the coordination group via the Secretariat;
 - (l) Preparing regional reports including, where appropriate, information from Antarctica;
 - (m) Encouraging transparency of communication and information dissemination within and between regions, noting the need for stakeholder involvement.

Global coordination group

3. The global coordination group will comprise three members from each region, nominated by the respective regional organization group, and will meet at least twice during the evaluation period, to perform the following tasks:
 - (a) Assist the Secretariat in coordinating and overseeing the implementation of the global monitoring plan, taking into account the work already undertaken;
 - (b) Assessing regional work with the aim of achieving consistency between regions;
 - (c) Identifying impediments to the implementation of the global monitoring plan and actions to tackle them;
 - (d) Updating of the guidance on the global monitoring plan for persistent organic pollutants as required by the Conference of the Parties; with the assistance of invited experts, as necessary;

- (e) Establishing a coordinated cross-regional approach to analyse and assess data on regional and global environmental transport, considering current international efforts;⁴
- (f) Promoting:
 - (i) Experience-sharing within and between regions;
 - (ii) Capacity-building to fill gaps in coverage for the core media where possible;
 - (iii) Comparability between air monitoring programmes in support of modelling and assessment of the global long-range transport of POPs;
 - (iv) Distribution of the results;
- (g) Reporting on the results of the global monitoring plan, including:
 - (i) Compilation of the results from the regional monitoring reports;
 - (ii) Evaluation and assessment of changes in POPs levels over time;
 - (iii) Assessing long-range transport and the effect of variable climate/meteorology on observed trends for POPs.
- (h) Evaluating the global monitoring plan and developing recommendations for consideration by the Conference of the Parties at the end of each evaluation phase, and reporting on the following matters:
 - (i) Role, membership and activities of the regional organization groups and the coordination group in support of subsequent effectiveness evaluations;
 - (ii) Media;
 - (iii) Need for further updating of the global monitoring plan, the implementation plan and the guidance on the global monitoring plan for persistent organic pollutants in view of evolution of the Convention;
 - (iv) Need for further capacity-building of Parties on a regional basis;
 - (v) Any other issues relevant for the implementation of further evaluations.

⁴ For example, the Task Force on Hemispheric Transport of Air Pollution of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution or any other body studying global transport of POPs.