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INTERGOVERNMENTAL NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE FOR AN  
INTERNATIONAL LEGALLY BINDING INSTRUMENT  
FOR IMPLEMENTING INTERNATIONAL ACTION ON  
CERTAIN PERSISTENT ORGANIC POLLUTANTS

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Item 5 of the provisional agenda\*

**Preparations for the Conference of the Parties**

**WORK PLAN AND BUDGET FOR THE INITIATION AND MAINTENANCE OF  
A CLEARING-HOUSE MECHANISM FOR INFORMATION EXCHANGE ON  
PERSISTENT ORGANIC POLLUTANTS\*\***

**Note by the secretariat**

**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 in previous Committee documents such as UNEP/POPS/INC.3/INF/5, INC.4/INF/4 and INC.6/INF/7.

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\* UNEP/POPS/INC.7/1.

\*\* See Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, article 9, paragraph 4; decision INC-6/7 (in document UNEP/POPS/INC.6/22, annex I).

3. The importance of having a clearing-house mechanism for information on persistent organic pollutants that would assist countries in the implementation of the Stockholm Convention was recognized by the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee at its sixth session in decision INC-6/7, in which it invited Governments to submit, by 31 October 2002, questions and comments related to the design, development, operation and scope of the clearing-house mechanism for information exchange on persistent organic pollutants and requested the secretariat to prepare, taking into account those submissions, a detailed work plan and budget for the initiation and maintenance of such a clearing-house mechanism for consideration by the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee at its seventh session.

#### I. COMMENTS RECEIVED

4. In response to the invitation referred to in paragraph 3 above, 11 Governments have submitted comments. The submissions themselves are reproduced in document UNEP/POPS/INC.7/INF/16. The comments made included the following:

(a) Design and implementation should take into account the activities of the clearing-house mechanisms maintained by UNEP itself and by the secretariats of the Basel Convention on the Transboundary Movement of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal and the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, and also by the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety through its Information Exchange Network on Capacity Building for the Sound Management of Chemicals (INFOCAP) as described in document UNEP/POPS/INC.6/INF/21;

(b) A pilot phase might be a good approach for testing and implementing the clearing-house mechanism, and should serve to overcome initial obstacles occurring during the ratification and implementation process;

(c) The secretariat should serve as the “global centre” for gathering, managing and disseminating information related to persistent organic pollutants in the context of the Stockholm Convention;

(d) The initial design and implementation of the clearing-house mechanism should be limited and cost-effective, with relatively more costly elements undertaken later;

(e) The clearing-house mechanism should include information on: best available techniques and best environmental practices for managing chemicals listed in Annex C of the Convention; alternatives to persistent organic pollutants, including environmental impact and risk and also economic and social costs; research on and monitoring of persistent organic pollutants; national implementation plans; case studies; the DDT register; and toxic chemicals that are not subject to the Convention;

(f) Information dissemination should include a hard-copy circular for those without access to the Internet to ensure that all Parties have equal opportunity to be informed;

(g) Technical assistance should be provided for institutional capacity-building on a national level and for national plans for the reduction and elimination of persistent organic pollutants; and

(h) A network should be developed that includes all Parties to the Convention and might include also regional and subregional centres.

## II. INFORMATION SCOPE, MANAGEMENT TOOLS AND DELIVERY MECHANISMS

5. The secretariat drafted the present note taking into account the aforementioned comments on the clearing-house mechanism.
6. The working definition of a clearing-house mechanism used in the present note is a managed process to facilitate the exchange of information between sources and users of a given scope of information (see document UNEP/POPS/INC.3/INF/5).
7. The sources of information to be included in the clearing-house mechanism include Governments, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations including industry, environmental and public interest groups, and academic institutions with relevant information on persistent organic pollutants. Those sources are also users of information contained in the clearing-house mechanism, as are the public.
8. The scope of information in the clearing-house mechanism could include:
  - (a) Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee and Conference of the Parties meeting and information documents;
  - (b) Registration and reporting documentation under the Convention;
  - (c) National focal point listing and contact information;
  - (d) Calendar of events;
  - (e) Workshop proceedings;
  - (f) A database of information on alternatives to persistent organic pollutants;
  - (g) National implementation plans;
  - (h) Monitoring data on persistent organic pollutants and links to monitoring programmes delivering such data;
  - (i) National activities to address persistent organic pollutants;
  - (j) The needs of Parties for technical or financial assistance to implement the Convention;
  - (k) Sources of potential technical and financial assistance to help meet such needs, and information on how to request it;
  - (l) Guidance documentation designed to assist Parties in implementing the Convention; and
  - (m) Other information on persistent organic pollutants relevant to the Convention.
9. The management tools for storing, organizing and facilitating access to the information contained in the clearing-house mechanism include:
  - (a) Identification of users and their needs for information on persistent organic pollutants;
  - (b) Electronic storage of all electronically available documentation;
  - (c) Hard-copy storage or scanning into electronic format of all other documents;
  - (d) Databases (with increasing levels of sophistication, integration and user-friendliness);

- (e) Data collection through hard copy requests and by electronic submission;
- (f) A process and the resources for regularly updating existing information;
- (g) Overall integration and management of information contained in the clearing-house mechanism;
- (h) Identification of information gaps and ways to fill them, including regular literature searches; and
- (i) Other tools to maximize the effectiveness of the information contained within the clearing-house mechanism.

10. The mechanisms for delivery to users of the information in the clearing-house mechanism can be divided into two groups: the physical machinery used, and products designed for specific groups of users.

11. The physical machinery includes:

- (a) Mailing and distribution at meetings of documents and other relevant information in hard-copy, diskette, CD-ROM or DVD form;
- (b) E-mail, including list servers;
- (c) Web sites;
- (d) Workshops;
- (e) Brokering between Parties with expressed needs for technical and financial assistance with potential donor institutions;
- (f) National focal points; and
- (g) Subregional and regional centres.

12. User-specific products include:

- (a) Newsletters;
- (b) A circular cataloguing available information and highlighting new items for users, including those without good Internet access;
- (c) Materials for children;
- (d) Materials for broad audiences, such as a beginners' guide to the Convention; and
- (e) Special publications.

13. As some Governments do not have good or reliable access to the Internet, it will be necessary to continue to provide clearing-house information by post. To assist Governments in establishing and maintaining access to information available on the Internet, particularly on chemicals management, the Chemicals Information Exchange Network (CIEN) project provides the equipment, services and training needed to do so. CIEN is a joint project of the United Nations Environment Programme and the United States Environmental Protection Agency. Such projects reduce reliance on postal distribution of clearing-house information.

### III. STATUS QUO

14. The current clearing-house mechanism maintained by the secretariat includes all meeting and information documents of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies, collection-of-information activities including those requested by the Committee at its sixth session; the address list of national focal points; the status of signature and ratification of the Convention; the calendar of events; correspondence to and from the interim secretariat; national implementation plans; workshops and their proceedings relating to the implementation of the Convention; information on the general steps to be taken to ratify or accede to the Convention; guidance documents; and other background information. Most can be found at the Stockholm Convention website, [www.pops.int](http://www.pops.int).<sup>1</sup> The existing clearing-house mechanism was developed in an ad hoc manner in response to the information exchange requirements that arose over the course of the negotiations and the interim implementation of the Convention. As such, the mechanism is not systematic or comprehensive in its design or content and updating is not carried out on a regular basis. Delivery of information to users is effected primarily through the Internet web site, training workshops and hard-copy and CD-ROM mailings.

15. The total estimated costs for operating the existing clearing-house mechanism in 2003<sup>2</sup> can be summarized as follows:

<b>Cost category</b>	<b>Amount (\$)</b>
Personnel costs	67,560
Administrative support	72,000
Staff travel	1,500
Subcontracts for consultancy and translation	51,000
Equipment and premises	28,500
Miscellaneous (publishing, communication)	28,500
<b>Total direct costs</b>	<b>249,060</b>
Administrative fee (13%)	32,378
<b>Total costs</b>	<b>281,438</b>

More detailed information on the budget of the existing clearing-house mechanism is provided in annex to the present document.

### IV. MEDIUM- AND LONG-TERM PLANNING

16. The design and implementation of the clearing-house mechanism over the medium term will need to concentrate initially on central functions, such as effective collection, management and dissemination of information from the central location where the mechanism is housed within the Convention secretariat. Those functions can be decentralized over the long term as Convention subregional and regional centres are established and national focal points develop the necessary capacity. The increase in costs from a centralized clearing-house mechanism to a more decentralized model involving national, subregional and regional nodes may be very significant depending on design and on where costs are attributed, for example, to the clearing-house mechanism or to other projects. The suggested approach is to build the centralized functions over the next two years and in the years that follow begin to develop more decentralized delivery mechanisms using existing and recently established entities required under the Convention.

<sup>1</sup> This site is distinct from the web site of the UNEP Persistent Organic Pollutants Programme at [www.chem.unep.ch/pops](http://www.chem.unep.ch/pops).

<sup>2</sup> These estimates are from the budget noted by the Committee at its sixth session, as reflected in paragraph 49 of the report of the session (UNEP/POPS/INC.6/22), with some minor modifications.

17. In the medium term, the focus would be on meeting the needs of the primary customers for clearing-house mechanism information: Convention Parties and national focal points. In the long term, the clearing-house mechanism would seek to expand to meet the needs its secondary customers, non-Party Governments, non-governmental organizations, intergovernmental organizations and the public.

#### V. PROPOSED PLAN OF WORK FOR 2004 AND 2005

18. Over the two-year period from 1 January 2004 to 31 December 2005, the centralized functions of the clearing-house mechanism would be established according to the following schedule.

##### Phase 1: Analysis of existing elements and requirements

19. From 1 January to 31 August 2004, the following would be undertaken and completed:

- (a) Analysis of requirements for information exchange and management requirements under the Convention;
- (b) Analysis of the information exchange needs of Parties to the Convention;
- (c) Identification of missing elements and those that need modification to meet the requirements of the Convention and the needs of Parties; and
- (d) Development of a plan to remodel the existing clearing-house mechanism to meet the requirements of the Convention and the needs of Parties in a manner that effectively integrates information, is sufficiently comprehensive and is relatively easy to maintain and update.

##### Phase 2: Restructuring and strengthening the existing clearing-house mechanism to meet requirements

20. From 1 September 2004 to 30 April 2005, the following would be undertaken and completed:

- (a) The existing clearing-house mechanism would be redesigned and upgraded according the plan developed during Phase 1;
- (b) All existing information would be incorporated into the new clearing-house mechanism;
- (c) All databases for registration and reporting requirements would be established;
- (d) Technical information databases would be established; and
- (e) Capacity-assistance components would be established for facilitating the exchange of information on needs for technical and financial assistance with organizations that are potential sources of such assistance.

##### Phase 3: Provisional operation, pilot testing, evaluation and fine tuning

21. From 1 May to 31 December 2005, the following would be undertaken and completed:

- (a) The secretariat would operate the new clearing-house mechanism on a provisional basis;
- (b) The secretariat would distribute a questionnaire designed to obtain feedback from users of the clearing-house mechanism as to its effectiveness in meeting their information needs;
- (c) The secretariat would conduct pilot studies in a number of countries to see how well the clearing-house mechanism worked for them and how it might be improved;

(d) The secretariat would prepare an evaluation of the clearing-house mechanism for consideration by the Conference of the Parties.

#### VI. PROPOSED BUDGET FOR 2004 AND INDICATIVE BUDGET FOR 2005

22. The annex to the present note includes a proposed budget for 2004 of \$569,608 and an indicative budget of \$616,279 for the design, development and initial operation of the clearing-house mechanism.

#### VII. POSSIBLE ACTION BY THE COMMITTEE

21. The Committee may wish to take note of the above information and to consider:

- (a) Providing comments on the proposed plan of work and budget; and
- (b) Adopting the proposed budget for 2004 for the clearing-house mechanism, as amended, for inclusion in the overall budget of the secretariat for that year.

## Annex

BUDGET FOR 2003 FOR THE EXISTING CLEARING HOUSE MECHANISM, AND  
PROPOSED BUDGET FOR 2004 AND INDICATIVE BUDGET FOR 2005  
FOR THE REDESIGNED AND UPGRADED CLEARING-HOUSE MECHANISM

		Total 2003	Work- years	Total 2004	Work- years	Total 2005	Work- years
<b>Project Personnel Component</b>							
1100	<b>Nr.</b>	<b>Personnel Title</b>					
	1101	Clearing House Mechanism Manager (P-3)					
	1102	Technical support (P-3)					
	1103						
	1199	Total					
		67,560		172,278		175,724	
1200	<b>Nr.</b>	<b>Consultants</b>					
	1201	Design and development of information products					
	1202	Data collection, editing, formatting, report preparation					
	1203	Pilot Testing of the Clearing House Mechanism					
	1204						
	1299	Total					
		45,000		90,000		140,000	
1300	<b>Nr.</b>	<b>Administrative support (General Service staff)</b>					
	1301	Administrative assistant (G-7) <sup>a</sup>					
	1302	Administration for website management (G4/5)					
	1303	Secretary/Administrative support (G-4/5)					
	1304						
	1399	Total					
		72,000	0	142,800	0	145,656	
1600	<b>Nr.</b>	<b>Travel on official business</b>					
	1601	Staff travel					
	1602						
	1699	Total					
		1,500		3,000		3,000	
1999	Component total			186,060		408,078	464,380
<b>Subcontract Component</b>							
2100	<b>Nr.</b>	<b>Subcontracts (cooperation agencies)</b>					
	2101						
	2102						
	2199	Total					
		0		0		0	
2200	<b>Nr.</b>	<b>Subcontracts (supporting organizations)</b>					
	2201	Translation					
	2202						
	2299	Total					
		6,000		12,000		12,000	
2300	<b>Nr.</b>	<b>Subcontracts (for commercial purposes)</b>					
	2301	Technical support for information systems					
	2302						
	2399	Total					
		0		0		0	

<sup>a</sup> Cost funded from overhead charges (13% administrative fee).



2999	Component total	6,000	12,000	12,000
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**Subcontract Component**

3300	Nr.	<b>Meetings conferences (Title)</b>			
	3301	Meetings			
	3302	Workshops			
	3303				
	3399	Total	0	0	0
3999	Component total		0	0	0

**Equipment and Premises Component**

4100	Nr.	<b>Expendable Equipment</b>			
	4101	Office equipment: Hardware and Software	15,000	15,000	0
	4102				
	4199	Total	15,000	15,000	0
4200	Nr.	<b>Non-expendable equipment</b>			
	4201	Office equipment: paper, toner, diskettes, CD-ROMs	4,500	8,000	8,000
	4202				
	4299	Total	4,500	8,000	8,000
4300	Nr.	<b>Premises (rent)</b>			
	4301	Office space, utilities	9,000	15,000	15,000
	4302				
	4399	Total	9,000	15,000	15,000
4999	Component total		28,500	38,000	23,000

**Miscellaneous Component**

5100	Nr.	<b>Operation and maintenance of equipment</b>			
	5101	Maintenance of office equipment			
	5102				
	5199	Total	0	0	0
5200	Nr.	<b>Reporting cost</b>			
	5201	Web publishing	1,500	3,000	3,000
	5202	Other electronic media publishing	3,000	6,000	6,000
	5203	Printing costs	3,000	6,000	6,000
	5204				
	5299	Total	7,500	15,000	15,000
5300	Nr.	<b>Sundry</b>			
	5301	Communications: Mailing/Dispatching	3,000	6,000	6,000
	5302	Communications: Internet connection	18,000	25,000	25,000
	5303				
	5399	Total	21,000	31,000	31,000
5400	Nr.	<b>Hospitality and entertainment</b>			
	5401				
	5402				
	5499	Total	0	0	0
5999	Component total		28,500	46,000	46,000
	<b>Total Direct Project Cost</b>		<b>249,060</b>	<b>504,078</b>	<b>545,380</b>
	Administrative fee (13 %)		32,378	65,530	70,899
	<b>Total Costs</b>		<b>281,438</b>	<b>569,608</b>	<b>616,279</b>

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