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Conference of the Parties to the Stockholm   
Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants

Eighth meeting

Geneva, 24 April–5 May 2017

Item 5 (f) of the provisional agenda[[1]](#footnote-1)\*

Matters related to the implementation of the Convention: technical assistance

Stockholm Convention regional and subregional centres for capacity-building and the transfer of technology

Note by the Secretariat

I. Introduction

1. In paragraph 11 of decision SC-7/17, on Stockholm Convention regional and subregional centres for capacity-building and the transfer of technology, the Conference of the Parties to the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants requested the Stockholm Convention regional and subregional centres to submit to the Secretariat:
   1. Their workplans for the period 1 January 2016–31 December 2019 by 30 September 2015;
   2. Their activity reports for the period 1 January 2015–31 December 2016 by 31 December 2016.
2. In paragraph 12 of the same decision, the Conference of the Parties requested the Secretariat, among others things:
3. To prepare a report on the activities of the regional and subregional centres, for consideration by the Conference of the Parties at its eighth meeting, including an assessment of how to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the network of centres;
4. To consider possible adjustments to the methodology for evaluating regional centres adopted by the Conference of the Parties,[[2]](#footnote-2) taking into account lessons learned, the views of the centres and the views of Parties.
5. In paragraph 17 of the same decision, the Conference of the Parties invited all regional and subregional centres undertaking activities on mercury-related issues under the Convention to provide information on those activities to the Secretariat, which was requested to forward it to the interim secretariat of the Minamata Convention on Mercury for possible consideration by the intergovernmental negotiating committee to prepare a global legally binding instrument on mercury at its seventh session.
6. In paragraph 18 of the same decision, the Conference of the Parties requested the Secretariat, among things, to continue to organize meetings every two years between the directors of regional centres and the Secretariat.

II. Implementation

A. Workplans and activity reports of the regional centres

1. As at 31 December 2016, 15 of the 16 regional and subregional centres had submitted their workplans for the period from 1 January 2016 to 31 December 2019 to the Secretariat.[[3]](#footnote-3)
2. As at 23 January 2017, 11 regional and subregional centres had submitted their activity reports for the period from 1 January 2015 to 31 December 2016.[[4]](#footnote-4)
3. A report prepared by the Secretariat on the activities of the regional centres, including an assessment of how to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the network of centres, is set out in document UNEP/CHW.13/INF/29/Rev.1-UNEP/POPS/COP.8/INF/26/Rev.1.

B. Possible adjustments to the methodology for evaluating the regional centres

1. On 20 April 2016, the Secretariat sent a letter to the regional centres and to all Parties inviting their views on possible adjustments to the methodology for evaluating the centres.[[5]](#footnote-5) As at 13 July 2016, the Secretariat had received views from the Governments of Colombia, Costa Rica, Mauritius, and Serbia, and from the European Union and its member States, as well as from the Stockholm Convention regional centres in Brazil and Spain.[[6]](#footnote-6)
2. Taking into account the views received and based on the experience gained from the previous two evaluations, undertaken in 2013 and 2015, the Secretariat recommends that at this time no adjustments to the methodology for evaluating regional centres are needed because the methodology in its current form strikes an acceptable balance between the accuracy of the evaluation results obtained and the resources expended to collect the information needed to achieve those results.

C. Activities to facilitate the work of the Basel and Stockholm Convention regional centres[[7]](#footnote-7)

1. Online and other meetings

1. Between January 2015 and December 2016, the Secretariat organized a total of 23 online meetings and webinars to support the work of the regional centres. Their objectives were to prepare for the 2017 meetings of the conferences of the Parties to the Basel and Stockholm conventions; to prepare the joint meetings of regional centres in 2015 and 2016; to explore possibilities for advancing the United Nations Industrial Development Organization-United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Global Network for Resource Efficient and Cleaner Production; and to identify synergistic activities with the chemicals and waste subprogramme coordinators located in UNEP regional offices. The Secretariat also provided support to four of the regional centres in the use of a webinar platform for the implementation of certain activities. Further information on activities carried out by regional centres is provided in document UNEP/CHW.13/INF/29/Rev.1-UNEP/POPS/COP.8/INF/26/Rev.1.
2. Two annual joint meetings of the directors of the regional centres of the Basel and Stockholm conventions were held in Geneva, one from 5 to 8 October 2015 and one from 31 October to 2 November 2016, with the objective of enhancing the performance of regional centres and fostering cooperation and collaboration among them. Reports of both meetings are available on the Stockholm Convention website.[[8]](#footnote-8)
3. On 10 December 2015, the Secretariat organized a meeting of the representatives of the permanent missions in Geneva of the countries that host Basel and Stockholm Convention regional centres to discuss, among other things, ways to facilitate the activities of those centres and to enhance their national and regional visibility. One outcome of the meeting was agreement that representatives of the permanent missions would be invited to participate as observers in the annual meetings of regional centres.
4. The Secretariat has continued to carry out technical assistance activities through regional centres, thanks to generous financial support provided by the European Union and the Governments of Germany, Norway and Switzerland in 2015 and 2016. A report on capacity-building and training activities undertaken and planned by the Secretariat is set out in document UNEP/CHW.13/INF/34-UNEP/FAO/RC/COP.8/INF/24-UNEP/POPS/COP.8/INF/22.
5. The report on the review of the synergies arrangements (UNEP/CHW.13/INF/43-UNEP/FAO/RC/COP.8/INF/29-UNEP/POPS/COP.8/INF/46) presents a number of findings relevant to regional centres, technical assistance and capacity-building. Among other things, the report recommends that the Secretariat work with each regional centre to produce a gap analysis and action plan to ensure that the centre is “appropriately resourced and skilled” to fulfil its role in the delivery of technical assistance. The Secretariat will take this recommendation into account, subject to availability of resources, when undertaking activities to facilitate the work of the centres.

2. Selection of regional centres

1. The autonomous non-profit organization Centre for International Projects (ANO-CIP), serving as the *de facto* Basel Convention Regional Centre for the Commonwealth of Independent States in the Russian Federation since 1996, was nominated in 2008 by the Central and Eastern European region to serve as a Stockholm Convention regional centre and was endorsed as such in 2011 by the Conference of the Parties at its fifth meeting, in its decision SC-5/21.
2. In a note verbale dated 9 June 2015, the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation in Geneva informed the Secretariat that the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment had assigned the Russian State Scientific Research Institution “VNII Ekologia” to perform the functions of the Basel Convention Regional Centre in lieu of ANO-CIP. In a subsequent note verbale dated 16 March 2016, the Permanent Mission provided the Secretariat with a feasibility study concerning the capacity of “VNII Ekologia” to serve as a Basel Convention regional centre for the Commonwealth of Independent States.
3. Acknowledging receipt of that information, the Secretariat on 23 July 2015 sought clarification as to whether this development was intended to have any consequences with regard to the Stockholm Convention Regional Centre for the Central and Eastern European region and reminded the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation of the process for establishing a regional centre under the Basel Convention. In a further note verbale dated 24 June 2016, the Permanent Mission informed the Secretariat that the Ministry of Natural Resources was preparing a decree on establishing a national coordination centre for the implementation of the Stockholm Convention, which would be presented to the Conference of the Parties at its eighth meeting in support of its nomination of an entity to serve as the Stockholm Convention regional centre for the Central and Eastern European region.[[9]](#footnote-9)
4. The Secretariat informed the bureaux of both the Basel and the Stockholm conventions of these developments during their meetings on 11−12 July and 28−29 June 2016, respectively. As at 15 November 2016, no further information had been received from the Russian Federation.

D. Mercury-related activities undertaken by the regional centres

1. The Secretariat sent a letter to the regional centres on 22 December 2015 inviting them to provide information on any mercury-related activities undertaken by them. In response to that request, ten regional centres provided information, which was subsequently forwarded to the interim secretariat of the Minamata Convention and made available for the seventh session of the intergovernmental negotiating committee on mercury.[[10]](#footnote-10)

E. Effectiveness evaluation pertaining to the Stockholm Convention regional and subregional centres

1. The main findings, conclusions and recommendations pertaining to regional centres may be found in paragraphs 136 and 137 of the executive summary of the report on the effectiveness evaluation of the Convention.[[11]](#footnote-11)

III. Proposed action

1. The Conference of the Parties may wish to adopt a decision along the following lines:[[12]](#footnote-12)

*The Conference of the Parties*

1. *Takes note* of:

(a) The workplans for the period from January 2016 to December 2019[[13]](#footnote-13) and activity reports for the period from January 2015 to December 2016[[14]](#footnote-14) submitted by the Stockholm Convention regional and subregional centres;

(b) The report on the activities of the regional and subregional centres;[[15]](#footnote-15)

1. *Requests* the Stockholm Convention regional and subregional centres to submit to the Secretariat for consideration by the Conference of the Parties at its ninth meeting:

(a) Their workplans for the period from 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2023 by 30 September 2019;

(b) Their activity reports for the period from 1 January 2017 to 31 December 2018 by 31 December 2018;

1. *Requests* the Secretariat to prepare a report on the activities of the Stockholm Convention regional and subregional centres for consideration by the Conference of the Parties at its ninth meeting;
2. *Takes note* of the information provided by the Secretariat pertaining to the selection of regional centres;[[16]](#footnote-16)
3. *Invites* Parties, observers and other financial institutions in a position to do so to provide financial support to enable Stockholm Convention regional and subregional centres to implement their workplans with the aim of supporting Parties in their efforts to meet their obligations under the Convention.

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1. \* UNEP/POPS/COP.8/1. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Decision SC-6/16, annex III. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Available at <http://chm.pops.int/Partners/RegionalCentres/Workplans/tabid/482/Default.aspx>. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Available at <http://chm.pops.int/Partners/RegionalCentres/ActivitiesReport/tabid/4112/Default.aspx>. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. The methodology is set out in annex III to decision SC-6/16. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. See http://chm.pops.int/Partners/RegionalCentres/Performanceevaluationreports/tabid/4456/Default.aspx. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. The activities described in the present section are undertaken in accordance with joint activity 19 of the 2016‑2017 programme of work, on coordination of and support to the regional centres under the Basel and Stockholm conventions and coordination and cooperation between the centres. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. See <http://synergies.pops.int/Default.aspx?tabid=4624> (2015 meeting) and <http://synergies.pops.int/Default.aspx?tabid=5281> (2016 meeting). [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. The communications received from the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the United Nations in Geneva are available from <http://chm.pops.int/?tabid=600>. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. UNEP(DTIE)/Hg/INC.7/INF/9. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. UNEP/POPS/COP.8/22/Add.1. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. At its meeting held on 11and 12 July 2016, the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention agreed that for agenda item 4 (d), pertaining to technical assistance, the outcome of the discussion of the three related agenda sub-items would be presented as one omnibus decision of the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention on technical assistance. To that end, the Conference of the Parties to the Stockholm Convention may wish to consider a similar approach, adopting the draft decision set out in document UNEP/CHW.13/17-UNEP/FAO/RC/COP.8/17-UNEP/POPS/COP.8/17, on technical assistance and capacity-building for the implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, as part I of an omnibus decision on technical assistance and the draft decision set out in the present document as part II of such an omnibus decision. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Available at <http://chm.pops.int/Partners/RegionalCentres/Workplans/tabid/482/Default.aspx>. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Available at http://chm.pops.int/Partners/RegionalCentres/ActivitiesReports/tabid/4112/Default.aspx. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. See UNEP/CHW.13/INF/29/Rev.1-UNEP/POPS/COP.8/INF/26/Rev.1. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. See UNEP/POPS/COP.8/16/Rev.1. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)