



Frequently Asked Questions on the PCBs Elimination Network (PEN)

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Rationale of the PEN

Q. What are the objectives of the PCBs Elimination Network?

The objective of the PEN is to promote and encourage the environmentally sound management of PCBs oils and equipment containing PCBs from identification to disposal toward the achievement of the 2025 and 2028 goals of the Stockholm Convention. The PEN will support its members to achieve these aims and provide them with various benefits including information exchange, networking and capacity building. The beneficiaries of the PEN will be the various stakeholders that wish to participate in its activities, namely governments, owners of PCBs, PCBs related service industries, experts, Intergovernmental Organizations, NGOs and donors.

Q. What is the added value of having a PCBs Elimination Network?

The PEN is designed to address the shortcomings of the current global situation for the Environmentally Sound Management (ESM) of PCBs by:

- Facilitation of information exchange through its dedicated website on the Clearing House Mechanism of the Stockholm Convention;
- Provision of incentives to achieve ESM of PCBs;
- Support for countries to achieve the aims of the Stockholm Convention related to PCBs;
- Offering equal participation for all stakeholders;
- Fostering collaboration and cooperation between members for improved efficiency;
- Promotion of ESM practices and destruction techniques.

The Clearing House Mechanism (CHM) of the Convention is a platform on which projects are established that will actively accomplish the goals of the CHM. The PEN will add value to the role of the CHM as it is a programmatic example of how the CHM will achieve the goals established in its strategic plan. By attracting entities from the various sectors that have interest in the ESM of PCBs, the PEN will promote the growth of membership in the CHM network.

Q. How does the PEN relate to the Clearing House Mechanism of the Stockholm Convention?

The PEN is the first of a series of projects that will be pro-actively used as the means of achieving this goal of the Clearing House Mechanism. The second goal of the strategic plan for establishing procedures for the operation of the Clearing House Mechanism under the Stockholm Convention is the establishment of a global network of information providers, users and institutions, having common needs of sharing information and expertise on POPs. The purpose of the Clearing House Mechanism is to develop a framework for efficient interaction among those involved in POPs information exchange. The strategy involves considering multi-disciplinary and multi-sectoral approaches in addition to thematic or like-minded groups to avoid compartmentalization and to stimulate creativity and innovation.

The PCBs Elimination Network is intended to promote and nurture membership and partnership, by:

- (a) Attracting like-minded entities across sectors within the arena of the ESM of PCBs;
- (b) Ensuring satisfaction;
- (c) Rewarding valuable contributions and initiatives.

The activities of the PEN will be built upon the existing platform of the CHM as a separate project with its own funding requirements. This model presents a programmatic example of how the CHM will be activated to achieve the goals established in its strategic plan. While the PEN will primarily use the CHM of the Convention as its hub for information exchange, the Network will offer a bond among its members that will foster collaboration, induce funding for national and regional projects and will encourage others involved in the use of PCBs to join in the effort to manage PCBs in an environmentally sound manner.



Q. How will the PEN be financed?

The cost implications of the PEN for the Stockholm Convention for the first four years will be USD 536,750. The details of the budget for the PEN for the period of 2009-2012 are outlined in table 1 below.

Table 1: Budget and workplan for 2009-2012 for the establishment of a PCBs Elimination Network.

Activities for 2009-2012	Cost (USD\$)	Duration
1. Convene a global meeting of the Advisory Committee	20,000	2009
2. Initiate and facilitate the work of the thematic groups	200,000	2010-2012
3. Develop and implement an information exchange programme	180,000	2010-2012
4. Initiate an incentive scheme to promote the participation of Network members in activities of the PEN	50,000	2010-2012
5. Administrative expenses and incidentals	25,000	2009-2012
SUM	475,000	
<i>Programme support costs (13%)</i>	<i>61,750</i>	
TOTAL	536,750	

The finances of the PEN are based on voluntary contributions by its members and other donors. It is expected that the funds described in the budget above will be raised by the various stakeholders of the PEN, including the Stockholm Convention. The contributions of the Stockholm Convention are geared towards initiating the work of the PEN. Most of the costs will be to support members from developing countries and countries with economies in transition to have representation at the first set of meetings of the PEN. Other members of the PEN are expected to fund their own involvement in the PEN and to support its activities on a voluntary basis.

Q. What is the current global situation on the Environmentally Sound Management (ESM) of PCBs?

PCBs are the most distributed Persistent Organic Pollutant (POP) in use globally. There is an estimated quantity of 3 million tonnes of PCB oil and contaminated equipment worldwide. This POP presents a serious risk to the environment and to human health if these stocks are not managed in an environmentally sound manner. Many developing countries and countries with economies in transition suffer from limited financial and technical capacity to handle and store PCBs and equipment containing PCBs in an environmentally sound manner. The disposal of PCBs is a costly activity and owners of PCBs especially in developing countries may find it costly to introduce the ESM of PCBs. Furthermore, national regulations in some countries make it difficult to allow for the import and export of PCBs wastes, even for the purpose of environmentally sound waste disposal.

Work to achieve the ESM of PCBs is already ongoing. Intergovernmental Organizations (IGOs) are implementing projects in countries across the globe to identify and inventory PCBs containing equipment, increase the capacity to introduce ESM and provided assistance on the destruction of waste PCBs. However, these activities could benefit from greater cooperation and collaboration between projects.



Membership in the PEN

Q. How does one apply for membership in the PEN?

Membership in the PEN is open to governments, PCBs related service industries, holders of PCBs, Intergovernmental Organizations (IGOs), donor organizations, international experts, research institutions and Nongovernmental Organizations (NGOs). The application form for becoming a member of the PEN is available in the six UN languages at the PEN website www.pops.int/pen or from the Secretary of the PEN at pen@pops.int. Please fill in all the information and specify to which “category” of stakeholder you belong. Beside basic information on a prospective member, each member will also be asked to sign a declaration that you are willing to make determined effort toward achieving environmentally sound management (ESM) of PCBs.

Q. Which “category” of stakeholders do I belong to?

When filling in the application form for becoming a member, prospective members have to specify to which category of stakeholders they belong to. Please choose your category according to the following explanation:

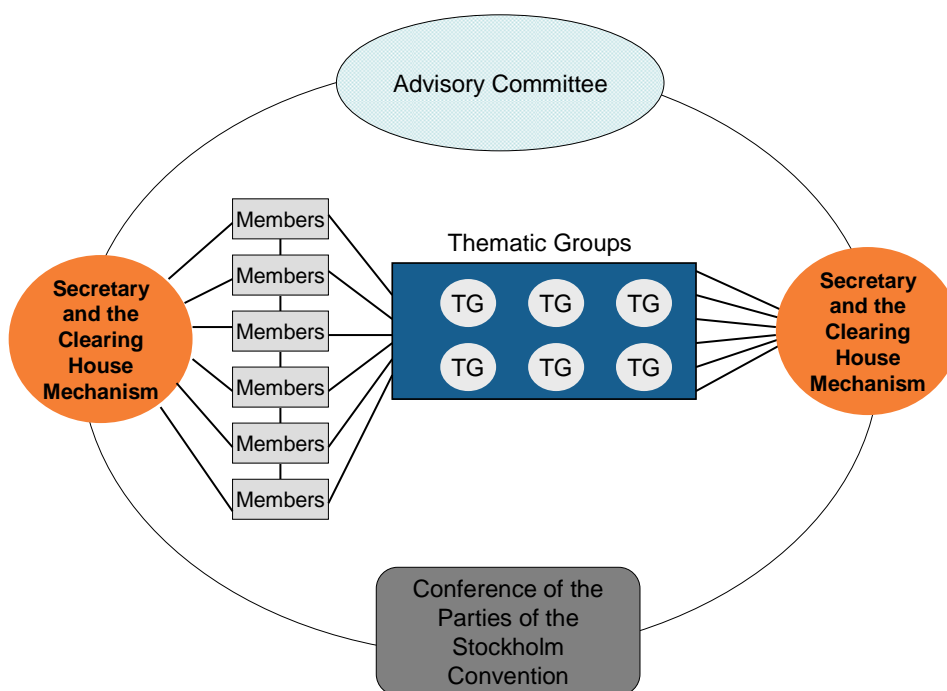
Category	Explanation
Governments	Ministries, environmental inspectorates and agencies, etc. from Parties and Non-Parties to the Stockholm Convention:
PCBs related service industry	Manufacturers of transformers, equipment suppliers, enterprises involved in research and development related to PCBs, providers of alternatives, replacement or maintenance services, companies offering destruction and treatment of PCBs, companies involved in the transport, handling and storage of PCBs
Holders of PCBs	Private or state enterprises such as utility or mining companies holding contaminated equipment or oils
IGOs	IGOs working on the ESM of PCBs, such as the implementing agencies of the Global Environment Facility and related initiatives such as the Secretariat of the Basel Convention or the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM)
Donor organizations	Entities providing financial support for activities on the ESM of PCBs
International experts	International experts, consultants, interested individuals and Regional Centres working in the field of PCBs
NGOs	NGOs working on PCBs-related issues
Research	Academia and other research institutes working on PCBs-related issues

Structure and organs of the PEN

Q. What is the structure of the PEN?

The PEN is a voluntary organization with all members enjoying equal status. The organs of the PEN include the Advisory Committee, the Secretary and the Thematic Groups.

Diagrammatic structure of the PEN:



Q. What are the tasks of the Advisory Committee?

The Advisory Committee organizes the work of the PEN and takes decisions on the activities of the PEN. It reviews and endorses workplans proposed by the Secretary, endorses the establishment of Thematic Groups and the budget of the PEN. The Advisory Committee also endorses the report of activities of the PEN that is presented to the Conference of the Parties (COP) of the Stockholm Convention. Finally, the Advisory Committee also steers resource mobilization and the incentives and awards programme of the PEN.

Q. Who are the members on the Advisory Committee of the PEN?

The Advisory Committee is composed of 16 representatives from the different categories of stakeholders in the PEN. The box below shows the number of representatives from the various stakeholders:

Members	Number of representatives
Governments	10 (2 per region)
PCBs related service industry	1
Holders of PCBs	1
IGOs	1

Members	Number of representatives
Donors	1
Experts	1
NGOs	1
SUM	16

The duration of office for members of the Advisory Committee is four years but members may be re-selected for extended service. The first term of office will start in 2009.

Q. How can I become a member of the Advisory Committee?

Selections of the members of the Advisory Committee take place every 4 years, starting in 2009. In order to become a member of the Advisory Committee, you need to be a member of the PEN and belong to one of the categories of stakeholders mentioned above.

Government representatives will be selected by the Regional Bureau members from nominations received from Party countries. If a Party wishes to be represented on the Advisory Committee, its nomination should be



forwarded to the relevant Regional Bureau member for consideration. The process will be repeated every 4 years.

In the other categories, in order to facilitate the initiation of the PEN, the Secretary will invite selected members of the PEN to serve on the Advisory Committee for the first period of four years. Thereafter, members will volunteer to serve on the Advisory Committee. If there is more than one offer per member group, the selection is made by a simple majority vote among the members of each group respectively.

Q. How does the Advisory Committee work?

The Advisory Committee is headed by a chair, who will be elected by the members of the Committee at the first advisory committee meeting. The term of office of the chair is four years. The Advisory Committee meets once every year to consider past and upcoming activities and to endorse the budget of the PEN. The Secretary will facilitate the organization and implementation of these meetings and prepare reports for the consideration of the Advisory Committee as required.

Based on these reports, the Advisory Committee takes decisions on future activities and the budget of the PEN. The Advisory Committee endorses the report of activities of the PEN that is presented to the Conference of the Parties (COP) of the Stockholm Convention. The Advisory Committee also takes decisions on the incentives and awards programme of the PEN.

Q. What are the tasks of the Secretary and who will execute them?

The Secretariat of the Stockholm Convention will host the website of the PEN through its Clearing House Mechanism and act as its Secretary. The Secretary supports the Advisory Committee by preparing reports on activities carried out by the PEN, preparing workplans as required and by establishing arrangements for meetings and information exchange.

Q. What exactly are the Thematic Groups?

Thematic Groups cover specific issues related to the ESM of PCBs. The Thematic Groups are established on a regional basis with organisations or individuals that have a specific interest in one area of work. The four Thematic Groups that have been established so far are: Inventories of PCBs, Maintenance of PCBs equipment, Disposal of PCBs and PCBs in open applications. Members of the Thematic Groups can interact through the website of the PEN or through personal contact. Every second month, thematic fora are conducted electronically and on a regional basis. Annually, through the website of the PEN, internet-based global fora are held on specific issues that mirror the Thematic Groups. Members may participate in more than one Thematic Groups.

Q. How can I become a part of a Thematic Group?

A member may join any Thematic Group. Each member of the PEN can align to thematic activities by participating in the information exchange, discussions, meetings, providing financial contributions, donating to the awards, providing expertise, etc. Most of the thematic activities will be carried out in the regions.

Activities of the PEN

Q. What are the activities of the PEN?

The PEN is carrying out the following activities:

- Facilitate information exchange between the members of the Network;
- Provide a link between members and promote local networking;
- Actively promote and engage the participation of the private sector in the activities of the PEN;
- Publish a PEN magazine annually with information on activities of the PEN and ESM of PCBs;
- Organize an annual awards function to honour outstanding efforts towards the ESM of PCBs and provide incentives for members to achieve ESM;
- Promote the use of available guidance material on PCBs and ascertain need for further guidelines;



- Encourage research and development on Best Available Techniques and Best Environmental Practice for alternatives to PCBs;
- Raise awareness on successful ESM of PCBs;
- Promote the transfer of environmentally sound technologies to developing countries and countries with economies in transition;
- Coordinate and support ongoing national and regional efforts to achieve ESM of PCBs.

Q. Where can I find the website of the PEN?

The information exchange mechanism will be established through the website of the Stockholm Convention in July 2010. On this dedicated webpage, members will be able to interact and to gain information on other members, relevant guidance and awareness raising material, ongoing and planned activities, as well as available funding and recent updates on the work of the Thematic Groups. The website of the PEN will introduce up-to-date communication tools including blogs, discussion fora and newsletters. In the interim, information on the PEN is available at www.pops.int/pen.

Q. What is the PEN magazine?

The PEN magazine provides pertinent information on the ESM of PCBs in the six languages of the United Nations (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish) on an annual basis. The objective is to exchange knowledge and expertise on issues related to the environmentally sound management of PCB oils and contaminated equipment.

The magazine is composed of articles provided by the members of the PEN. Please check the PEN website (www.pops.int/pen) or contact the Secretary (pen@pops.int) to find out the current stage of development of the magazine and requirements for submitting articles for the next issue of the magazine.

Q. When does the PEN meet?

During the initial stages, regional meetings will be held to kick-start the PEN. Thematic Groups will implement discussion workshops, projects, research, technical assistance, etc. as deemed necessary.

A key feature of the PEN is the use of internet-based (virtual) meetings. Every second month, thematic fora are conducted electronically on a regional basis to discuss relevant topics in each Thematic Group. Annually, through the website of the PEN, internet-based global fora are held on specific issues that mirror the thematic groups.

Q. What is the incentives and awards programme of the PEN?

The aim of the incentives and awards programme is to provide reward and recognition for members that have made exceptional effort towards the ESM of PCBs. The programme includes the public posting of a list of achievements attained by the winning members. Award ceremonies will be held at each sitting of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Stockholm Convention to make use of wide media coverage and stimulate members to strive for greater success in managing PCBs in an environmentally manner. The awards will be conferred based on the contribution to the ESM of PCBs.

Q. How are the winners of the awards chosen?

Nominees for the awards can be proposed by any member of the PEN. The Advisory Committee will develop further guidance on how to choose the nominees for the awards.

For more information, please visit the PEN website (www.pops.int/pen) or contact the Secretary of the PEN at pen@pops.int, Tel.: +41 22 917 87 29, Fax: +41 22 917 80 98
