



Special Programme on the Institutional Strengthening at the national level for the implementation of the Basel, Stockholm and Rotterdam conventions, the Minamata Convention and the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM)

15 October 2016

English only

Report of the 1st Executive Board meeting, 2 to 3 February 2016, Geneva, Switzerland

1. Opening of the meeting

The meeting was opened at 9:10 a.m. by Mr. Achim Halpaap, Head of the Chemicals and Waste Branch of DTIE. He highlighted the importance that UNEP attaches to the Special Programme, as part of the integrated approach to financing sound management of chemicals and waste, in particular the importance of implementation at national level (ref UNEA-1 decision 1/5). The Special Programme promotes and supports synergies at the national level and hence contributes to the synergies mandates of the Basel, Rotterdam, Stockholm and Minamata Conventions, SAICM and UNEP. Its successful implementation will contribute to the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020, as well as the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). He further informed the meeting of an upcoming expert meeting on the SDGs and Chemicals and Waste from 8 - 11 April 2016 in Geneva.

Jacob Duer, Principal Coordinator of the Special Programme, welcomed participants attending the meeting. He assured the meeting that the Secretariat would continue to provide their support to the work of the Executive Board in operationalizing the Special Programme. He welcomed Germany as the latest donor to the Special Programme joining Finland, Sweden, the United States and the European Union, and the representative from Germany will be represented on the Executive Board. He thanked the Executive Board members from recipient countries and the Observers that have come from far to attend the meeting and wished the participants a fruitful and successful meeting.

2. Organizational matters

(a) Election of officers

Ms. Letícia Reis de Carvalho, Brazil and Mr. Niko Urho, Finland were elected Co-Chairs of the Executive Board representing a recipient country and a donor country respectively. The Co-Chairs thanked the Executive Board for putting trust in them in taking forward this important work and looked forward to working with the Board over the coming years.

It was noted that among the Executive Board members, the member representing the Asia-Pacific region has not yet been selected to date. Given this extraordinary circumstance, the Executive Board adopted a special procedure for its first meeting, as follows:

(a) Allow the full participation of the representatives of the three countries that are candidates from the Asia-Pacific region, namely Iran, Pakistan and Philippines (see participants list for contact

details) for the post of the Executive Board member in the proceedings of the meeting, without the right to vote. This proposal was agreed by the Executive Board members;

(b) During the first meeting, the Executive Board would take decisions ad interim. These decisions will take effect as final as of 4 March 2016, if no objection is submitted to the secretariat by any member of the Executive Board, including the member from the Asia-Pacific region, during the period between 4 February and 3 March 2016. In case a member raises objection to certain decision, the members of the Executive Board will meet, including through telecommunication, within 30 days from the date on which such objection is submitted to the secretariat, to address the issue in question on which such objection is raised, with a view to reaching agreement.

Finally, a tour de table was undertaken, and all Executive Board members, the Observers and the Special Programme Secretariat introduced themselves. The list of participants is available as Annex I to this present report.

(b) Adoption of the agenda

The provisional agenda and the provisional annotated agenda as set out in documents SP/EB.1/1 and SP/EB.1/1/Add.1 respectively were adopted without any modifications.

(c) Organization of work

The Co-Chairs stated that the meeting will be for 2 days, on Tuesday, 2 February and Wednesday, 3 February 2016, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.. The meeting would be conducted in English only. It was noted that the Co-Chairs will invite Observers to provide comments and inputs as appropriate. The Co-Chairs noted that the meeting documents had been subject to two rounds of review by the Board members, and so the meeting should focus on getting as much agreement and endorsement to enable the Secretariat to initiate the first call of applications. It was proposed and agreed by the meeting that the report of the meeting will be prepared for the first day, and a summary in the form of bullet points on agreement and next steps will be provided for adoption under agenda item 6 on Wednesday, 3 February p.m. The Secretariat in consultation with the Co-Chairs will then circulate a full meeting report to the Executive Board members for comment following the meeting.

3. Rules of procedure for the operation of the Special Programme

The Secretariat presented document SP/EB.1/2 "Draft rules of procedure for the Executive Board of the Special Programme". The Co-Chairs went through the draft rules of procedure section by section and sought the comments and inputs from the Executive Board and the Observers.

The Executive Board included a definition of "Implementing agencies" to include IOMC organisations and any other organisations involved in the implementation of projects under the Special Programme. It was noted that the 'other organisations' should be those who have a role in implementing and so should be left flexible for invitation. The Board also recognized that the selection of the Implementing Agency should be up to the applicant. It was noted that the IOMC members would support the process of review or provision of information relevant to the project applications if requested.

The Rules of Procedure for the Executive Board were approved ad interim, as set out in Annex I of this present report.

4. Project application procedures for the Special Programme

The Secretariat presented document SP/EB.1/3 "Issues for possible consideration in the development of project application procedures for the Special Programme". The Co-Chairs went through the document section by section and sought the comments and inputs from the Executive Board and the Observers.

The Executive Board believed that a simple approach should be applied to the project application process, noting that adjustments can be made based on the lessons learned. They agreed the first round of applications would be considered as a pilot phase. Whilst the initial proposal was to have around 10 projects approved, it was agreed that a pilot phase should possibly have to be limited to 3 to 5 projects, and that this will also depend on the quantity and quality of the applications received.

It was also mentioned that there is a need to distinguish between the application guidelines, appraisal criteria and information requested in the forms to allow the applicant country to provide relevant information.

The Executive Board subsequently discussed and agreed on the following main areas for the project application procedures. These are all included in the project application guidelines and related forms (see attachments to this report).

During the discussions, several issues were raised for possible consideration by the Executive Board, including:

- (i) The arrangements for official focal points;
- (ii) The sharing of information publicly through the website;
- (iii) The suggestion to have the Executive Board meeting report available in all 6 UN languages;
- (iv) The process for reconsideration of unfunded applications;
- (v) The process when more funds are available than project applications.

4.1 Eligibility criteria, appraisal criteria and other considerations

The Executive Board discussed and agreed on the following elements:

- 1. The eligibility criteria as stipulated in the Terms of Reference of the Special Programme, include the following:
 - (i) Developing countries, taking into account the special needs of least developing countries and small island developing States, and for countries with economies in transition, with priority given to those with least capacity;
 - (ii) Party to one of the relevant conventions or have demonstrated that they are in the process of preparing for ratification of any one of the conventions;
 - (iii) Identification of the associated domestic measures to be taken to ensure that the national institutional capacity by the Special Programme is sustainable in the long term.
- 2. A list of criteria was developed to support the Executive Board to appraise and approve projects and it was agreed that these criteria would include the following, taking into account that the assessment of the information provided by the applicant would have to be done on a case by case basis:
 - (i) Proposal of measures within the objective of the Special Programme;
 - (ii) Sustainability of the project outcome(s):
 - (iii) Contribution of resources equal to the value of at least 25 per cent of the total allocation requested in the application¹ (including footnote referring to the text from the terms of reference);

¹ The proportion of resources contributed, commensurate with consideration of the specific national circumstances, capacity constraints, gaps and needs of the applicant (ref Special Programme terms of reference).

- (iv) Performance targets to measure progress achieved by the Special Programme;
- (v) Identification of mainstreaming of the sound management of chemicals and waste in various sectors;
- (vi) Participation and commitment of relevant actors and sectors, including agriculture, environment, health, labour, industry and other sectors in the implementation of the measures proposed;
- (vii) Project intervention on more than one instrument;
- (viii) Identification of the conventions to which the applicant country is a Party and/or of actual participation in SAICM.
- 3. Other considerations discussed by the Executive Board, which could be considered during the appraisal phase, taking into account that the assessment of the information provided by the applicant would have to be done in line with the objective of the Special Programme include:
 - (i) Determination of cumulative allocations to a country, based on the contributions received and the needs expressed in the applications submitted;
 - (ii) Account should be taken of reports on earlier projects involving countries applying for the second time and whether the project implementation was considered satisfactory considering the approved timeframe and budget allocation;
 - (iii) It may be sought to avoid duplication of projects in the same country, however consideration may be given towards replicating a successful project(s) for other countries;
 - (iv) Whether the project promotes enhanced coordination and cooperation at the national level to implement the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, the Minamata Convention and the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management;
 - (v) Whether the project builds upon previous initiatives and institutional mechanisms already established;
 - (vi) Whether the project proposes regional activities, provided that these are in line with the objective of the Special Programme.
 - (vii) Gender considerations/mainstreaming;

It was agreed that these elements will be included in the guidelines and application forms as appropriate.

4.2 Financial support

The Secretariat provided an overview of financial pledges to the Special Programme received to date that constitute altogether approximately 14 million USD.

Against this background, the Executive Board considered the project funding levels. It was agreed that the projects would have the following funding range: US\$50,000 to US\$250,000 with a maximum of US\$500,000 for proposed projects to support a comprehensive and overarching programme of the applicant country for institutional strengthening at the national level.

The Board requested that the Secretariat prepare a funding strategy, which should include consideration of support of non-traditional donors for the operationalization of the Special Programme.

4.3 Project duration

In terms of duration of a project, it was noted that based on the experience of the Quick Start Programme the maximum duration of a project would be for 3 years, and would start upon signature of the agreement between the Secretariat of the Special Programme and the government entity.

The Executive Board agreed that the first round of applications would be a pilot phase of a limited number of projects (e.g. 5), to enable the application process up and running as soon as possible. Lessons learned from this pilot phase would subsequently be reflected in revised guidelines and application procedures.

4.4 Appraisal processes

The Executive Board agreed on some preliminary appraisal processes including:

- 1. The Secretariat would acknowledge receipt of the application package no later than 1 week following receipt.
- 2. The Secretariat would notify applicants whether their proposals are eligible for consideration by the Executive Board. This procedure may be reviewed at a future Board meeting once the application guidelines is deemed final.
- 3. For in-between meeting approval on minor project amendments from the approved documents, including project activity amendments, budget revisions, and project management arrangements, including project extensions, the Board agreed that the Co-Chairs can assume the responsibility with the support of the secretariat for approval of such project amendments arrangements.

4.5 Project management arrangements

The Executive Board agreed on some preliminary project management arrangements including:

- 1. The Executive Board agreed that for openness and transparency that a list of projects and approved funding under the Special Programme would be made available to the public in the form of a regular report that would be available on the Special Programme website.
- 2. The Executive Board will further consider the project management arrangements and whether to use UNEP's existing implementation arrangements, which enables UNEP and the relevant authority to enter into a legal instrument (a Small Scale Funding Agreement (SSFA) or other relevant instruments). The Secretariat will prepare an analysis of the options available for implementing arrangements, including the possibility of developing a separate template for use by the Special Programme.

4.6 Project application guidelines and application forms

Following this general overview, the Co-Chairs went through the following documents section by section: SP/EB.1/3/Add.1 Project application guidelines; SP/EB.1/3/Add.2 Draft application form I; SP/EB.1/3/Add.3 Draft application form II; and SP/EB.1/3/Add.4 Draft application budget form; and inputs and suggestions provided by the Executive Board were included in the revised guidelines and related forms (see attached documents).

5. Other matters

The Co-Chairs noted that in UNEA Decision 1/5 Section II: Integrated approach to financing sound management of chemicals and waste, para 9 states "Requests the Executive Board of the Special Programme, in the light of the experience of the Programme and the lessons learned by recipient countries, to review the effectiveness of the operational arrangements for the Programme set out in the terms of reference and to provide a report on the review, to be considered by the United Nations Environment Assembly at its third session in 2018, with a view to its making adjustments, if necessary, to the operational arrangements for the Special Programme".

The Co-Chairs noted however, that pending decision by UNEA-2 in June 2016, there is a possibility of a change in the UNEA cycle, resulting in UNEA-3 being held in 2017, which will have to be taken into account in the report to be delivered to UNEA-3.

6. Adoption of the meeting report

It was agreed that the Secretariat in consultation with the Co-Chairs will finalise the report and circulate it to Executive Board members for comments in mid-February 2016. The meeting report would then be formally adopted at the next meeting of the Executive Board. The issue of rapporteur was raised, however it was noted that the only formal officers in accordance with the terms of reference are the Co-Chairs of the Executive Board.

The following indicative next steps were agreed by the Executive Board for the operationalization of the Special Programme in its first year.

Indicative dates	Activities
3 March 2016	Final approval of the Rules of Procedure for the operations of the Executive
	Board of the Special Programme; and the application guidelines and forms
5 April 2016	1st round of applications launched
4 July 2016	Deadline for applications
July – Aug 2016	Appraisal by the Secretariat, including consultation with the internal task team
	comprising of BRS, Minamata and SAICM and UNEP regional offices
	(including possible consultation with governments on the applications)
Sept 2016	Submission of appraisal report and meeting documentation to the Executive
	Board (in preparation for the 2 nd Executive Board meeting)
Oct 2016	2 nd Executive Board meeting (exact dates and venue to be determined)
Nov 2016	Contingency for consultation with governments on the applications following
	guidance from the Executive Board
Nov 2016 – Feb 2017	Preparation of implementation arrangements (through UNEP's SSFA or other
	relevant instruments)
March 2017	Start of project implementation, upon signature of the agreements

7. Date and venue of the next meeting

The Secretariat will provide the Executive Board tentative dates in October 2016 for the 2^{nd} meeting of the Board, noting that these tentative dates would depend on whether the project applications are ready for approval.

With regards to the venue, the Board requested the Secretariat to explore low-cost options for convening the meeting. Geneva would always be the back-up option.

Finally, it was agreed that a teleconference could be convened in early March once the nomination of the Asia and the Pacific Board member take place. The Secretariat will consult the Board on their availability.

8. Closure of the meeting

The Co-Chairs closed the meeting at 4:30 p.m. thanking all the Executive Board members, Observers and the Secretariat for all their hard work in achieving a good outcome of the meeting.

Annex I: List of participants

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