

Strengthening coordination and collaboration between biodiversity and chemicals and waste clusters

Online workshop, 23, 24 and 27 September 2021

This synthesis is not intended as a full summary of workshop discussions and will not include every point you raised. It is a presentation of some of the key threads that have run through our discussions, together with a few issues that we think warrant further attention. It has been put together to provide a 'kick start' for discussion on the final day of the workshop and is not intended to constrain that discussion. If you want to spend more time on another issue already discussed, or to raise something new, please do so.

Purpose of the session

Drawing on your own ideas and experiences brainstorm further on how to go about strengthening coordination and collaboration between the biodiversity and chemicals and waste clusters.

Considerations

1. There is broad agreement that:
 - a) MEAs and SAICM play a significant role in triggering national action to address international concerns.
 - b) In both biodiversity and chemicals and waste clusters, goals and targets are not being met.
 - c) Further effort is therefore necessary, as evidenced by the post-2020 and beyond 2020 processes.
 - d) Increased coherence in implementation across the clusters would be valuable in a range of ways.
 - e) These include greater understanding of mutual dependencies between the two clusters.
 - f) And meeting the broader objectives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
2. Key characteristics of the current situation are that:
 - a) At both national and international levels, work within clusters is generally well underway but this is rather less the case between clusters.
 - b) The existence of a great number of MEAs is a challenge in terms of coherent communication to outsiders and in coordinating implementation work at the national level.
 - c) Increased knowledge and understanding are needed on the nexus areas of biodiversity and chemicals and waste, so that countries can effectively address the interlinkages in practice.
 - d) Efforts to deliver the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs illustrate the importance and urgency of an integrated approach.
 - e) Some issues are likely to be easier to coordinate across MEAs (such as communication), other issues may be less easy to coordinate.
 - f) There are multiple 'entry points' for seeking to make changes towards a more integrated approach, including with respect to different actors, different MEAs/processes, and different topics.
3. Characteristics of a successful approach to strengthening coordination and collaboration across clusters:
 - a) Strengthens implementation, and increases coherence, efficiency and cost-effectiveness.
 - b) Led by those responsible for implementation at the national level, with appropriate international support.
 - c) Breaks down into manageable actions, using pragmatic approaches for addressing identified needs.
 - d) Identifies mutual dependencies, common issues and targets in order to focus action more effectively.
 - e) Respects legal autonomy of the different instruments, and avoids politically charged discussions.

Key issues that may warrant further discussion

4. Each of the following points came up in more than one discussion, and participants may want to explore the issue further with respect to both national and international action:
 - a) Leveraging the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to catalyse cooperative action and increase funding, and to facilitate cross-cluster cooperation and collaboration.
 - b) Increasing coordination and cooperation with respect to communication could be an 'easy win', with shared and consistent messaging reaching a larger audience and having more impact.
 - c) Identifying major area of focus such as human health or pollinators, which are relevant to both clusters, and can provide a valuable focus for both communication and action at all levels.
 - d) Aligning targets, indicators and national plans more effectively, so that there is more of a common framework to support implementation and promote complementary.
 - e) Building biodiversity more effectively into existing chemicals and waste institutions, projects and initiatives, and vice versa.
 - f) While strengthening cooperation and coordination is valuable, successful implementation needs both technical and financial resources.
 - g) Importance of engaging the scientific community and building a science-policy interface that effectively informs both decision and action at all appropriate levels.
 - h) Key limitations include differences in language and terminology between the two clusters.

Potential for supporting action at the international level

5. Most of the following points came up in more than one discussion, and participants may want to explore the issues further:
 - a) Importance of increasing focus on nexus issues, improving understanding of the ways in which key issues and key sectors are related and raising political awareness on the interlinkages.
 - b) MEA/SAICM secretariats and UNEP have a role to play in identifying opportunities and potential modalities for cooperation, as does the GEF. This includes facilitating the sharing of experience among countries.
 - c) Possibility of shared decisions across MEA governance bodies concerning issues of common interest (as already happens in the BRS COPs).
 - d) Potential for utilizing UNEA as the convening universal body to facilitate cooperation between the biodiversity and chemicals and waste clusters.
 - e) Regional collaboration provides a 'safe space' for discussion and coordinated action as a result of similar challenges and shared environment.
 - f) Importance of building links through the ongoing post-2020 and beyond 2020 negotiation processes, and subsequently aligning implementation.

Practical examples

6. The following practical examples were contributed by one or more participants or were referred to in discussions. Participants may want to comment further on these or add other examples:
 - a) Regular meetings of all national focal points, whether formally or informally.
 - b) National committees or similar bringing together national focal points and key stakeholders.
 - c) Coordination of all MEAs from a single office or ministry.
 - d) Tools such as DART used to facilitate national reporting to multiple conventions and processes.
 - e) Multi-stakeholder platforms and partnerships.