



Guidance on the scope of the Special Programme

Eighth round of applications

Call for Applications opens: **24 April 2024**

Application Deadline: **23 August 2024**

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1. Introduction

In 2011, the 26th Governing Council of UNEP requested Executive Director of UNEP to facilitate an inclusive, country-driven, consultative process on the challenges to and options for further enhancing cooperation and coordination in the chemicals and wastes cluster in the long term. Following two rounds of consultations in 2013 and 2014, the outcome of the consultative process, which included an integrated approach to address the financing of the sound management of chemicals and waste established under [decision GC/27/12¹](#), was presented to the first session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA). The Special Programme is one of two key complementary elements of dedicated external financing under the integrated approach, with the Global Environment Facility (GEF) being the second element.

The terms of reference for the Special Programme, as outlined in annex 1, were adopted under [UNEA resolution 1/5²](#) with the aim of supporting developing countries and countries with economies in transition in strengthening institutional capacity for the implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam, and Stockholm Conventions, the Minamata Convention and the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management³. The Governments in resolution 1/5 welcomed the integrated approach, comprising: 1) mainstreaming; 2) industry involvement; and 3) dedicated external financing. These components are mutually reinforcing and are all important for the long-term and sustainable financing of the sound management of chemicals and waste.

The objective of the Special Programme is to support country-driven institutional strengthening at the national level, in the context of an integrated approach to address the financing of the sound management of chemicals and wastes, taking into account the national development strategies, plans and priorities for each country, to increase sustainable public institutional capacity for the sound management of chemicals and wastes throughout their life cycle. Institutional strengthening under the Special Programme will facilitate and enable the implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, the Minamata Convention and the Strategic Approach.

For the purposes of the Special Programme, institutional strengthening is defined as **enhancing the sustainable institutional capacity of Governments to develop, adopt, monitor and enforce policy, legislation and regulation, as well as to gain access to financial and other resources for effective frameworks for the implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, the Minamata Convention and the Strategic Approach for the sound management of chemicals and wastes throughout their life cycle.**

In March 2022 UNEA in [resolution 5/7⁴](#) reaffirmed the relevance and importance of the integrated approach to financing of the sound management of chemicals and waste.

¹ Decision 27/12 is contained in the report of the meeting of the Governing Council available at <https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/17292/K1350945.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y>

² <https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/17285/K1402364.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y>

³ In 2023 the ICCM-5 meeting created the Global Framework on Chemicals that replaces Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM). Except for the official excerpts of texts dating before the existence of the new framework, this document refers now to the Global Framework on Chemicals.

⁴ <https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/39755/K2200739%20-%20UNEP-EA.5-Res.7%20-%20ADVANCE--.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

The resolution noted that the Special Programme plays an important role in supporting developing countries, taking into account the special needs of least developed countries and small island developing States, and of countries with economies in transition, with priority given to those with least capacity, in establishing and maintaining the sustainable national capacity for sound management of chemicals and waste; and finally decided to extend the duration of the Special Programme for a period of five years, in accordance with paragraph 24 of the terms of reference adopted in Environment Assembly resolution 1/5, and to include the Strategic Approach and the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020 in the Special Programme.

The resolution encouraged the Executive Board of the Special Programme to review the procedures for application for funding in the light of the needs and challenges expressed by developing countries, including those related to operating costs, with a view to promoting an effective and efficient application of the eligibility criteria in line with the terms of reference of the Special Programme, without jeopardizing the ability of the Special Programme to receive funding from existing sources.

This guidance aims to assist applicants in understanding the scope of the Special Programme and the proposed projects to support institutional strengthening at the national level for implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam, and Stockholm Conventions, the Minamata Convention and the Global Framework on Chemicals.

The application guidelines are structured as follows:

Chapter 2 describes the Special Programme and provides logistical facts about the submission of a project proposal. This chapter also describes the next steps once the project application is submitted to the Special Programme Secretariat.

Chapter 3 provides information on possible areas on which projects can focus within the context of the terms of reference of the Special Programme and taking into account national priorities and information obtained following preparatory national consultations prior to developing the project proposal.

Chapter 4 provides an overview on gender considerations and UNEP safeguard standards that should be considered when drafting and implementing Special Programme projects.

Chapter 5 provides a summary of considerations relating to monitoring and evaluation.

Chapter 6 provides links to additional resources that can be used by applicants.

Annex I sets out the terms of reference of the Special Programme.

Annex II provides an overview of the possible scope of projects.

Annex III summarizes the appraisal criteria which are used to inform the decision-making by the Special Programme's Executive Board.

The application guidance supersedes the previous application guidance launched during previous rounds of applications. The "*Guidance on the scope of the Special Programme*" for this round of funding was updated as follows:

- References to SAICM, when applicable, have been replaced by the recently created Global Framework on Chemicals.
- Updated link to the UN WESP Report and OECD DAC list
- Invitation to liaise with the national GEF focal point to ensure that the specific areas described as possible areas to be funded by the SP do not fall into the mandate of the GEF in a specific country was further developed in section 2.1 of the document that focuses on "What measures and activities can be funded?"

- Reference removed to send the applications in paper to the SP postal address in addition to the digital format.
- Sections on the BRS Conventions, the Minamata Convention were updated by the respective Secretariats. A new section for the Global Framework on Chemicals was developed by the Secretariat of the Global Framework on Chemicals.

2. What is the Special Programme?

Strengthening sound management of chemicals and wastes in the long term is essential for sustainable development. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals were adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in September 2015. The integration of sound management of chemicals and waste⁵ into the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is a major achievement. Therefore, by linking the Special Programme with the economic, environmental and social development agenda, it creates an incentive to facilitate the implementation of the international chemicals and waste related multilateral environmental agreements, specifically the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, and the Minamata Convention, as well as the Global Framework on Chemicals.

The objective of the Special Programme is to support country-driven institutional strengthening at the national level, in the context of an integrated approach to address the financing of the sound management of chemicals and wastes, taking into account the national development strategies, plans and priorities of each country, to increase sustainable public institutional capacity for the sound management of chemicals and wastes throughout their life cycle. Institutional strengthening under the Special Programme will facilitate and enable the implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, the Minamata Convention and the Global Framework on Chemicals.

The expected outcome of the Special Programme is to strengthen the capacities of national institutions to do the following:

- (a) Develop and monitor the implementation of national policies, strategies, programmes and legislation for the sound management of chemicals and waste;
- (b) Promote the adoption, monitoring and enforcement of legislation and regulatory frameworks for the sound management of chemicals and waste;
- (c) Promote the mainstreaming of the sound management of chemicals and waste into national development plans, national budgets, policies, legislation and implementation frameworks at all levels, including addressing gaps and avoiding duplication;
- (d) Work in a multisectoral, effective, efficient, transparent, accountable and sustainable manner in the long term;
- (e) Facilitate multisectoral and multi-stakeholder cooperation and coordination at the national level;
- (f) Promote private sector responsibility, accountability and involvement;
- (g) Promote the effective implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, the Minamata Convention and the Global Framework on Chemicals;

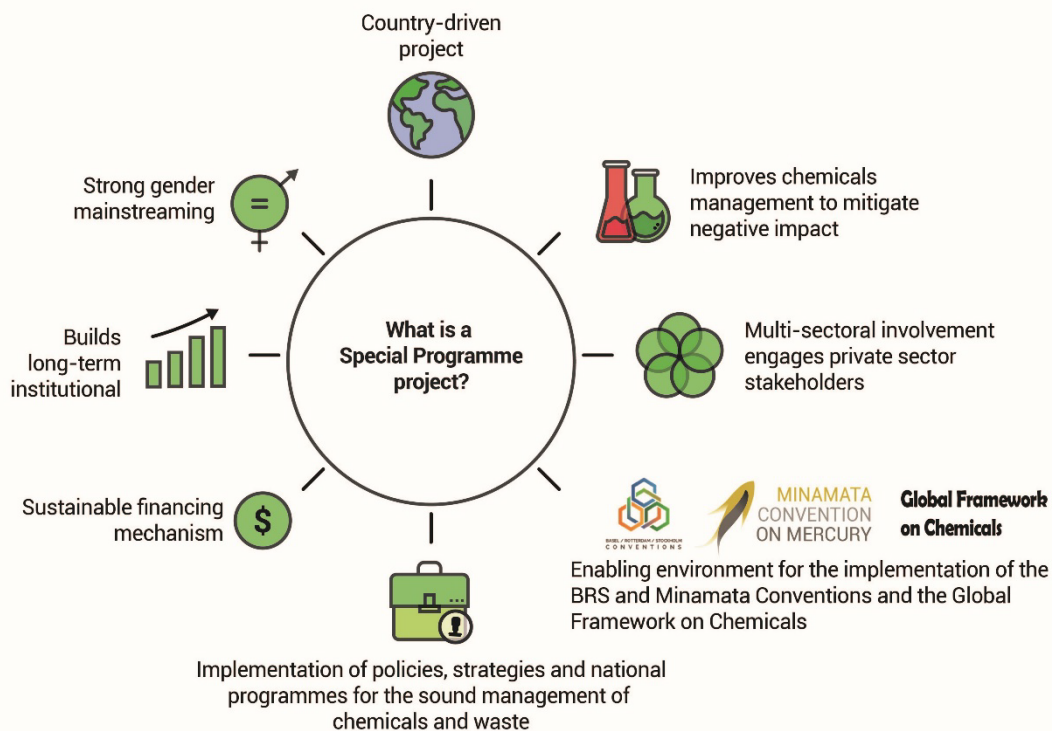
⁵ Here understood as hazardous waste. Nuclear waste, biological waste, sanitation waste and other such types of waste are not included.

- (h) Promote cooperative and coordinated implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam, and Stockholm Conventions, the Minamata Convention and the the Global Framework on Chemicals at the national level.



2.1. What is a Special Programme project?

A Special Programme project:	A project is NOT a Special Programme project if it:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Is a <i>country-driven project</i> that is conceived and implemented by the applicant ○ Builds <i>long-term capacity</i> in the relevant ministry or ministries ○ Has a sustainable financing mechanism or a plan for ensuring long-term <i>sustainability</i> ○ Focuses on <i>multi-sectoral</i> involvement ○ Improves <i>chemicals and waste management</i> to mitigate negative impact ○ Engages with <i>private sector</i> stakeholders ○ Promotes an enabling environment to foster the ratification and implementation of the <i>Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions</i>, the <i>Minamata Convention</i> and implementation of the Global Framework on Chemicals <i>in a cross-cutting approach</i>. ○ <i>Coordinates the implementation</i> of policies, strategies and national programmes for the sound management of chemicals and waste ○ Has a <i>gender mainstreaming</i> component and promotes consideration of gender and UNEP safeguards standards ○ Emphasizes gender-disaggregated data collection where relevant ○ Creates synergies with other related initiatives in the country in the context of the ongoing reform of the United Nations Development System 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Focuses on short term activities that do not contribute to long term institutional strengthening ○ Funds proposed measures beyond the duration of the project ○ Is primarily driven or implemented by an organization other than the Government ○ Engages only one relevant sector when others may also be relevant ○ Focuses only on dealing with the aftermath of mismanagement of chemicals and waste ○ Only focuses on building private sector capacity ○ Focuses activities on only one of the four conventions, that is the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions and the Minamata Convention, or implementation of the Global Framework on Chemicals, when others may also be relevant ○ Does not provide coordination between relevant ministries ○ Includes multiple applications from the same country in the same application cycle, as that can be indicative of a lack of coordination ○ Operates in isolation from other related initiatives in the country



2.2. Who can apply for funding from the Special Programme?

Eligible Governments can apply to the Special Programme.

“**Governments**” specifically refers to the national government ministry or department in charge of the chemicals and waste agenda at the national level. Affiliations of Governments and local governments are not eligible.

Countries should refer to paragraph 6 of the Terms of Reference for eligibility which states that “Support from the Special Programme will be available for developing countries, taking into account the special needs of least developed countries and small island developing States, and for countries with economies in transition⁶, with priority given to those with least capacity”.

Note that a number of donors have strict policies of funding only applications that meet the eligibility requirements of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) list of Official Development Assistance (ODA)⁷ at the time of application.

It is strongly encouraged that the Applicant Government only submits one application from the country based on the issue(s) identified as the most important national priorities for possible funding from the Special Programme Trust Fund. In cases where there may be more than one proposal at the national

⁶ See United Nations World Economic Situation and Prospects Report available at https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/wp-content/uploads/sites/45/WESP_2024_Web.pdf

⁷ <https://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-standards/daclist.htm>

level, the Official Focal Point should coordinate among the proponents to enable the Applicant Government to submit one proposal.

It is expected that the Government making the application will implement the project. However, the Applicant Government may nominate a delivery organization to implement the project⁸. In such cases, the administrative costs dedicated to the delivery organisation cannot exceed 5 percent.

Please note that the application form differentiates between the “Applicant Government”, which refers to the Government submitting the application and the “Official Focal Point”, who is the lead contact person on behalf of the Applicant Government, responsible for the application and all interaction with the Secretariat.

The official focal point is required to endorse the application on behalf of the Government. An endorsement letter from the official focal point should be sent to the Secretariat at the time of submission of the application.



2.3. Does the Special Programme accept regional/multi-country projects?

Yes, in 2021 the Executive Board approved to consider applications for regional/multi-country projects.

Several governments can jointly submit a sub-regional, regional or inter-regional (i.e. multi-country) project. This may be an optimal approach for implementation issues affecting a number of countries, which are best addressed in a coordinated manner. For projects of this nature, it is a requirement that one Government is specified as a project lead.

Countries should refer to paragraph 6 of the Terms of Reference for eligibility which states that “Support from the Special Programme will be available for developing countries, taking into account the special needs of least developed countries and small island developing States, and for countries with economies in transition⁹, with priority given to those with least capacity”.

Note that a number of donors have strict policies of funding only applications that meet the eligibility requirements of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) list of Official Development Assistance (ODA)¹⁰ at the time of application.

The application and budget forms that will be used for the submission of regional/multi-country projects are the same as those that are used for the submission of individual country projects. The

⁸ It is understood that the applicant's organization, agency or ministry is the implementer of the project, since it will have the overall responsibility and will be the main coordinator of the project. Applicants may, however, choose to transfer this responsibility to another organization, agency or ministry. In compliance with UN financial rules, profitmaking companies cannot serve as project delivery organizations.

⁹ See United Nations World Economic Situation and Prospects Report available at https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/wp-content/uploads/sites/45/WESP_2024_Web.pdf

¹⁰ <https://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-standards/daclist.htm>

lead government applying – which would take the coordinating role for the implementation of the project - should fill out the main application form. In addition, the co-applicant government(s) should provide the relevant information by filling out the Annex III of the application form on “Additional information for multi-country applications”. The additional appraisal criteria for regional/multi-country projects are listed in Annex III item 1.7 of the current Guidance document.

Note: Specific considerations that relate to the drafting of regional/multi-country projects are highlighted in grey boxes throughout this document.



2.4. What measures and activities can be funded?

The objective of the Special Programme is to support country-driven institutional strengthening at the national level, in the context of an integrated approach to address the financing of the sound management of chemicals and wastes, taking into account the national development strategies, plans and priorities of each country, to increase sustainable public institutional capacity for the sound management of chemicals and wastes throughout their life cycle. Institutional strengthening under the Special Programme will facilitate and enable the implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, the Minamata Convention and the Global Framework on Chemicals.

In line with this objective, the activities funded under the Special Programme may encompass the following areas.

The terms of reference stipulate that the Special Programme should avoid duplication and proliferation of funding mechanisms and associated administration and should fund activities that fall outside the mandate of the GEF. This is applicable to both individual country projects and regional/multi-country projects.

To ensure that these areas do not fall under the mandate of the GEF in your country please liaise with the GEF operational focal point in your country to obtain the confirmation before starting to develop your application. What falls under the mandate of the GEF can vary from country to country. Additional information is available under Annex II section 1.2.

- (a) Identifying national institutional capacity, weaknesses, gaps and needs, as well as strengthening the institutional capacity to do so, where required;
- (b) Strengthening institutional capacity to plan, develop, undertake, monitor and coordinate the implementation of policies, strategies and national programmes for the sound management of chemicals and wastes;
- (c) Strengthening institutional capacity to improve progress reporting and performance evaluation capabilities;
- (d) Promoting an enabling environment to foster the ratification of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions and the Minamata Convention;
- (e) Enabling the design and operation of institutional structures dedicated to the promotion of the sound management of chemicals and wastes throughout their life cycle;

- (f) Strengthening institutional capacity to promote measures to support all aspects of the sound management of chemicals and wastes, including more specific nationally identified thematic areas covered by the Instruments.



2.5. What aspects need to be considered from past Special Programme projects?

When preparing an application, an important step is to consult the compendium of lessons learned from past Special Programme projects. The compendium will help the applicants to take specific aspects into consideration that could strengthen the application. The compendium covers the following aspects: management structure, coordination, communication and awareness raising, project elements, financing, and specific circumstances. Please find the compendium of lessons learned by clicking [here](#).



2.6. What amount of support is available?

The Special Programme Trust Fund may provide support from US\$ 50,000 to US\$ 275,000 per individual country project proposal, including inception workshop, possible administration fees, costs for monitoring and evaluation and financial audit. In certain circumstances, an applicant country may request up to a maximum of US\$ 500,000. Projects requesting more than US\$ 275,000 should fulfil the following additional criteria:

- (a) All relevant sectors are involved in project implementation, for example environment, health, agriculture, customs and labour. The roles and responsibilities of the relevant sectors in project implementation should be clearly defined and letters of support from the relevant ministries should be included as part of the application package;
- (b) Institutional stakeholders including, but not limited to, the private sector and civil societies are involved. Roles and responsibilities of the relevant stakeholders in project implementation should be clearly defined. Letters of support from these stakeholders should be included as part of the application package;
- (c) Projects are based on circular or green economy initiatives. The project should demonstrate how the outcomes and outputs of the project encourage sustainable consumption and efficient use of resources, as well as how the project aims to achieve sustainable development;
- (d) Links with investment and development banks for investment opportunity are highlighted at the national, regional and global levels, as appropriate. Information should be provided showing the ways in which these investment opportunities can foster long-term sustainability of the Special Programme project;
- (e) Mainstreaming and overall integration at the national level should be demonstrated, as should the ways in which the efforts can be scaled up at the regional level in a synergistic manner. The project should list activities that can be scaled up from national to regional level, and areas of cooperation at the regional level that are or could be synergistic;
- (f) Builds on existing projects from other programmes and obligations under the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, the Minamata Convention and the Global

Framework on Chemicals. The project should demonstrate how it builds upon the outcomes of previous or ongoing projects as appropriate, and how these outcomes will enhance the objectives of the Special Programme project.

For regional/multi-country projects: Regional/multi-country applications may request up to a maximum of US\$ 550,000. Applicants may wish to consider allocating funds that are dedicated to project coordination. In this regard, a maximum of 10 per cent for operating/coordination costs could be considered within the project maximum of \$550,000.



2.7. Are there any budget limits or caps that I should be aware of?

Yes – according to the relevant financial rules and regulations there are recommended caps on a few budget classes.

1. Personnel and contractual services costs (combined) – 50 per cent of total budget;
2. Specialised and technical equipment – 10 per cent;
3. Administrative fees – maximum of 5 per cent; and
4. Monitoring, evaluation and audit (combined)– should not exceed USD 15,000 in total.

See “Further notes on budget classes” in section 3 of the application Guidelines.

For regional/multi-country projects: Governments may wish to consider allocating funds that are dedicated to project coordination. In this regard, a maximum of 10 per cent for operating/coordination costs could be considered within the project a maximum of \$550,000.



2.8. Are cumulative allocations permitted?

Yes. Countries that have successfully applied for funding from the Special Programme Trust fund can apply for funding in subsequent rounds of application following the completion of their initial project. Cumulative allocations to a country are decided by the Executive Board, based on the contributions received and the needs expressed in the applications submitted.



2.9. What is the maximum duration of a project?

Projects should be fully completed within three years.



2.10. In what language should I submit my application?

While the application Guidelines and Guidance are available in 5 of 6 official UN languages, the Executive Board of the Special Programme works in English and **all project applications must therefore be submitted in English.**



2.11. Where do I find the application forms?

The complete set of application forms can be downloaded from the website of the Special Programme <https://www.unep.org/topics/chemicals-and-pollution-action/chemicals-management/special-programme/applying-funding>



2.12. How do I apply?

A complete application package consists of the following documents:

1. Form A - Project Application Form
 - a. Annex 1: Contact Details
 - b. Annex 2: Other Relevant Information
 - c. Annex 3: Additional Information for Multi-Country Applications
2. Form B – Project Budget

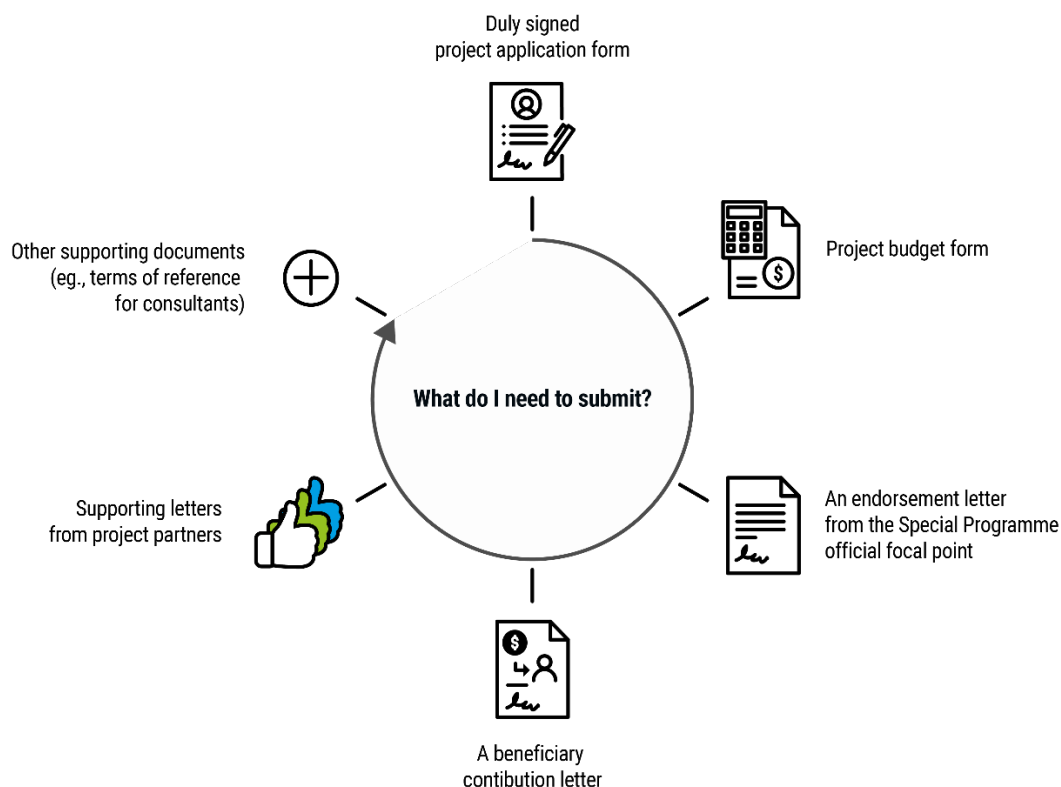
In addition, the following documents should also be included with the application package:

- Endorsement letter from the official focal point
- Proof of funding from beneficiary country and other sponsors and donors
- Letters of project endorsement from implementing partners
- Other supporting documents

For regional/multi-country projects:

- Endorsement letter from the lead government acknowledging its role in the project;
- Letters of project endorsement from the official focal points of each participating country;
- Proof of funding from each of the participating countries and other sponsors and donors
- Letters of project endorsement from implementing partners
- Other supporting documents

Complete application packages should be sent electronically in **Word and PDF** versions (i.e., scanned or electronic signatures from the Applicant Government Official, National Focal Point or the GEF Operational Focal Point), to: unepchemicalsspecialprogramme@un.org **no later than 23 August 2024.**



2.13. What is the application deadline?

The eighth round of applications has a mandatory deadline of **23 August 2024**.

Applicants are encouraged to submit their application packages as early as possible in advance of the deadline in order for the Secretariat to review them for completeness and eligibility and provide guidance.



2.14. Can I seek support in the preparation of my application?

The Secretariat is available to provide support on a case-by-case basis upon request from applicants during the preparation of their application. Applicants can seek specialist advice on identifying technical cooperation solutions, project design and sequencing of appropriate activities, measurement of effectiveness/impact and project management best practices. This advice can be provided directly by the Secretariat. The Secretariat can also seek to connect applicants with relevant experts from the relevant chemicals and waste related Conventions, as appropriate. **Applicants are encouraged to reach out to the Secretariat as early as possible to secure assistance.** The Secretariat may not be able to support late requests. Kindly send all requests to unepchemicalsspecialprogramme@un.org.

The Secretariat will be providing information on the eighth round of applications during appropriate events such as regional meetings of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, Minamata Convention and Global Framework on Chemicals meetings. This may include side events and clinics on conceptualizing and developing projects (including how to complete the Logical Frameworks). The delivery format may vary depending on prevailing conditions.



2.15. What happens next?

The Secretariat will acknowledge receipt of the application package, no later than one week after receipt.

Step 1: Screening by the Special Programme Secretariat

The Secretariat screens the applications to ensure they are complete and eligible.

During the screening process the Secretariat may request additional information or clarifications from the applicant to facilitate the eligibility and completeness process.

It is imperative that applications reach the Secretariat before the deadline so that if there are any missing/additional items required, the Secretariat can alert the applicant of missing items for submittal before the deadline. ***Incomplete applications cannot be considered for funding by the Executive Board.***

Step 2: Initial review by the Secretariat

The Secretariat conducts the initial review of the applications in consultation with the Secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, the Secretariat of the Minamata Convention, the Global Framework on Chemicals Secretariat, and the Secretariat of the Global Environment Facility. The review is based on the appraisal criteria and procedures as endorsed by the Executive Board of the Special Programme, as outlined in Annex III of this document.

The Secretariat will provide feedback to the applicant after the initial review, and the application will be invited to revise their application accordingly and resubmit it within a specified timeframe.

Step 3: Appraisal by the Secretariat

The Secretariat conducts the appraisal of the applications in consultation with the Secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, the Secretariat of the Minamata Convention, the Global Framework on Chemicals Secretariat, and the Secretariat of the Global Environment Facility, and partners to IOMC as appropriate.

The appraisal is based on the criteria and procedures as endorsed by the Executive Board of the Special Programme, as outlined in Annex III of this document.

Secretariat will submit its report of the complete and eligible proposals as well as its appraisal to the Executive Board for its review and consideration at its annual meeting.

Step 4: Approval by the Special Programme Executive Board

The Executive Board will review all the complete and eligible project proposals, taking into account the appraisal undertaken by the Secretariat, at its next annual meeting.

Projects applications will be decided upon by the Executive Board, subject to the availability of funds.

If an Applicant Government is represented by a member of the Executive Board that is due to take a decision on the application, the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board require that Board member to recuse himself or herself from the deliberations of, and decision-making on, the application.

Step 5: Notification of Applicants

The Secretariat will notify the applicants in writing of the decision of the Governing Board within four weeks of the relevant Executive Board meeting.

Step 6: Implementation arrangements

Activities financed by the Special Programme Trust Fund will be implemented in accordance with the project management arrangements approved by the Executive Board. Project management arrangements will include the conversion of applications into relevant legal instruments, which would form the basis of a signed funding agreement between the project proponent and UNEP as the Trust Fund administrator. Financial and reporting arrangements will be set up with the project manager.

3. Case Studies: Possible Scope of Projects

The Special Programme supports strengthening institutional capacity for the implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam, and Stockholm conventions, the Minamata Convention and the Global Framework on Chemicals. Institutional strengthening is defined as *“enhancing the sustainable institutional capacity of Governments to develop, monitor and enforce policy, legislation and regulation, as well as to gain access to financial and other resources for effective frameworks for the implementation of the instruments for the sound management of chemicals and wastes throughout their life cycle”*.

The projects must take into account national priorities and the goals of national development plans and may include components such as:

Institutional Strengthening Component: Enhancing legal and institutional frameworks and enforcement

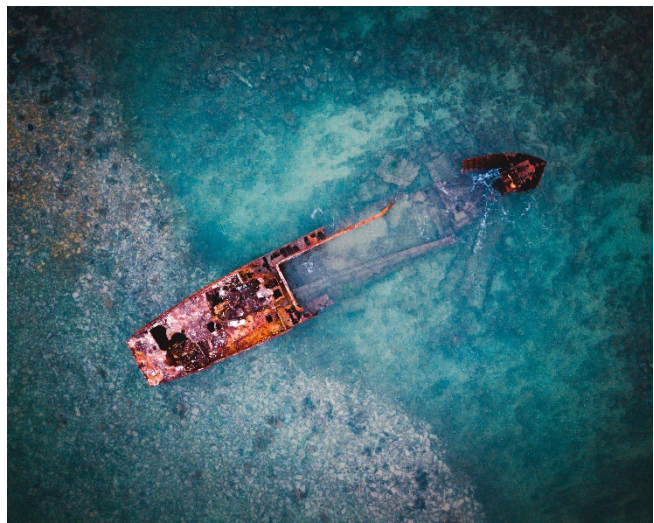
- Identifying and documenting the needs and challenges that your country has in developing, implementing and enforcing integrated chemicals and wastes policies;
- Promoting full legislative implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions and the Minamata Convention; and
- Identifying possible elements of a national strategy for the effective implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, the Minamata Convention and the Global Framework on Chemicals, e.g. measures, steps and best practices for strengthening national institutional, regulatory and legal frameworks.

CASE STUDY: COUNTRY DRIVEN ASSESSMENT AND UPDATE OF CURRENT LEGISLATION IN SAO TOME AND PRINCIPE

The review and update of the legal and institutional infrastructures can provide the basis for an integrated, lifecycle chemicals and waste management strategy, while building on existing structures and information as far as possible to ensure efficient use of resources and continuity.

Through its Special Programme project, Sao Tome and Principe is planning to strengthen its chemicals and waste management by strengthening the capacities and governance structures to enhance national coordination of

Basel, Rotterdam, Stockholm, and Minamata Conventions and the SAICM implementation.



One of its project outputs will be to strengthen the implementation and compliance of the national chemicals and waste management legislation including the extended producer responsibility (EPR) law. This will be carried out by conducting a comprehensive assessment of the national EPR, legislation and policies concerning chemicals and waste management related activities including the compliance levels. The roles of government ministries and agencies such as the ministries of agriculture, customs, justice, police and others in supporting the enforcement of the national EPR, chemicals and waste legislation for the sound management of chemicals and wastes; and the domestication of the BRS and Minamata Conventions will be assessed.

Institutional Strengthening Component: National coordination, the exchange of information on chemicals and wastes

- Establishing national coordination mechanisms and promoting the exchange of information on chemicals and waste management in your country
- Identifying stakeholders in the management of chemicals and waste, clarifying roles and responsibilities, and strengthening the governance structures to ensure enhanced coordination to promote implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, the Minamata Convention and the Global Framework on Chemicals
- Awareness raising, training and capacity building for chemicals and waste management to strengthen national capacities to implement the Conventions and the Global Framework on Chemicals including assessing the potential for the implementation of circular economy and conducting feasibility pilot testing

CASE STUDY: ESTABLISHING COORDINATION MECHANISMS FOR SOUND CHEMICALS AND WASTE MANAGEMENT IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

Adopting a multi-sectoral approach and ensuring that all relevant stakeholders are engaged and informed is essential to the sound management of chemicals and waste.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo through its Special Programme project will establish national capacities and coordination mechanisms for the sound chemicals and waste management, implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam, Stockholm Conventions, the Minamata Conventions and SAICM, and improve its capacity to comply with international Conventions. The project will establish a national chemicals and waste website to promote information exchange; assess how to strengthen the governance structures and financing of chemical management related activities including coordination and reporting; identify key actors with responsibility for implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam, Stockholm Conventions, the Minamata Convention and SAICM, strengthen their data collection and reporting capacities, develop guidance and awareness raising tools on chemicals and waste management and conduct awareness raising and capacity building.



Institutional Strengthening Component: Enhancing government's analytical capacity

- Understanding where your country stands in the sound management of chemicals and waste by identifying the baseline
- Enhancing the government's analytical capacity to identify, assess and monitor progress in the management of chemicals and waste
- Promoting education of stakeholders on the sound management of chemicals and waste

CASE STUDY: Establishing the baseline and enhancing capacities to manage hazardous waste in Mongolia

Building a country's analytical capacity allow the governments to define the scope of a problem, identify appropriate solutions and monitor how those solutions are implemented.



Through its Special Programme project, the government of Mongolia aims to establish a sound hazardous waste management system in response to the country's obligations under the Basel, Stockholm and Rotterdam Conventions and the Minamata Convention. The project will implement comprehensive actions to facilitate implementation and reporting obligations of relevant international and national legislation on chemicals and waste management, focusing on the facilitation of analytical capacity to identify hazardous wastes. The project activities include a baseline study on hazardous waste management in Mongolia; enhancing the hazardous waste analytical capacity of the government institutions to identify hazardous wastes from different sources; and improving stakeholders' knowledge and education on the hazardous waste management.

Institutional Strengthening Component: Enhancing national capacities to take international trade control measures on illegal trafficking of chemicals and waste

- Training on practical application of procedures for the import and export of the hazardous chemicals and waste regulated by the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, the Minamata Convention and SAICM
- Sharing experience and information on challenges and opportunities linked to international trade of hazardous chemicals and waste subject to the control mechanisms under the four conventions and SAICM;
- Raising awareness and increasing knowledge on the legal and policy matters related to trade and environment cross-cutting issues, at the global, regional and national levels, as they relate to the implementation of the four conventions and SAICM;
- Enhancing knowledge on existing globally agreed instruments for adequately labelling hazardous chemicals; and
- Collecting information on possible synergies in preventing and combating illegal traffic and trade in hazardous chemicals and wastes.

CASE STUDY: PROMOTING ADEQUATE LABELLING OF HAZARDOUS CHEMICALS IN PERU

The Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS) is an internationally agreed upon system for the definition and classification of hazardous chemicals and communicates health and safety information on labels and safety data sheets. It is a mechanism that



supports the work of the chemicals and waste related instruments as countries can make use of the GHS as a tool to increase chemical safety which will in turn assist with implementation.

The Special Programme project in Peru seeks to, amongst other things, implement the GHS, firstly by conducting an assessment to determine the current degree of its use and to establish whether there are any implementation gaps in the context of GHS implementation in the country. This will include a legal technical evaluation to identify the sectors involved in the implementation of the GHS using a modular approach. Ultimately the project intends to strengthen the capacities of the public and private sectors in the implementation of the GHS.

Moreover, guidance will be drafted regarding the application of specific measures for the reduction and management of risks to health and the environment for those chemical substances that, according to their hazard classification (GHS) are identified as carcinogenic, mutagenic, toxic for reproduction or hazardous for the environment. In addition, training will be designed and executed for the technical personnel of the institutions involved in the application and implementation of the GHS, to strengthen their technical capacities in the interpretation and application of the system.

<p>Institutional Strengthening Component: National reporting and other notification of information</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhancing the understanding of the reporting requirements under the Basel and Stockholm Conventions and the Minamata Convention as well as the reporting requirements on progress in SAICM implementation including the use of the online reporting systems; • Facilitating information exchange on the status of implementation of Articles 11 and 12 of the Rotterdam Convention, which are all related to trade; • Enhancing the country’s capacity to fulfill its Rotterdam obligations related to the control of the trade of Annex III chemicals (Article 11), export notification (Article 12) and information to accompany exports.
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CASE STUDY: IMPROVED DATA COLLECTION FOR THE FULFILLMENT OF OBLIGATIONS TOWARDS THE BRS CONVENTIONS IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

The Government of the Republic of Moldova has been undertaking strong and positive commitments towards improving the management of chemicals and waste with to achieve the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals and align itself with European Union regulations. Through its first Special Programme project, the Republic of Moldova has successfully developed a prototype of a Chemicals Registry System to track the flow of chemicals within the country. Building on this, the country in its second Special Programme project will, among other things, expand the Chemicals Registry System. The full scale launching of this registry system will improve Moldova’s inter-ministerial and inter-sectoral procedures for sharing of data on chemicals and will be supported by the holding of awareness raising activities relating to various issues regarding chemicals safety.



Institutional Strengthening Component: Mainstreaming of chemicals and waste

- Supporting the development of sustainable financing mechanisms for the continued funding of activities related to the sound management of chemicals and waste;
- Supporting the inclusion of chemicals and waste into sustainable development strategies and plans;
- Supporting the country to develop and set priorities for the national indicators for the SDGs related to chemicals and waste;
- Supporting the country to enhance collaboration with statistical offices, by strengthening their capacities for data collection for the purpose of Basel and Stockholm conventions and the Minamata Convention national reporting, reporting on progress in SAICM implementation as well as the SDGs global indicators and collecting data on the pilot basis beyond national reporting format.

CASE STUDY: IMPLEMENTING CIRCULAR ECONOMY PRINCIPLES IN BURUNDI

One of the thematic priorities of the Special Programme is the integration of the principles of circular economy into national level approaches to the sound management of chemicals and waste. The circular economy approach relies on reuse and high-quality recycling and much less on virgin raw materials for the manufacture of products. This approach aims to maintain the added value in products and materials for as long as possible, as compared to the traditional linear “take-make-dispose” model which has contributed to much of today’s challenges resulting from pollution from chemicals and waste.



The Special Programme project in Burundi integrates circular economy into its project design to underpin its approach to the sound management of chemicals and waste. The project aims to implement a pilot project that will contribute to institutional strengthening through the demonstration and assessment of circular economy approaches to chemicals and waste management. This will be coordinated with the development and implementation of a national assessment and national strategy for priority areas developed under the project which will in turn inform, the development and endorsement of strengthened national legislation/regulation that provides an enabling framework for a circular economy approach to chemicals and waste management.

This will be supported by developing and implementing an awareness raising strategy on circular economy approaches to sound chemicals and waste management as well as a training programme for key national and regional institutions on the regulatory measures regarding the circular economy framework

4. Gender and Safeguard Considerations



4.1. Gender mainstreaming

Gender mainstreaming in the context of the sound management of chemicals and waste is an overarching issue that involves assessing and planning for how the harmful impacts of pollution from chemicals and waste affect women, children and men differently. These differences result from several physiological and socio-economic factors.

Men and women are exposed to different chemicals and waste because of how their socio-economic roles are defined along gender lines. For example, men may have higher exposure in an occupational context to agents or substances in the workplace that could cause ill health. Women, on the other hand, often perform the bulk of domestic work in and around the house, including the sorting, removal, and disposal of household waste. In some areas, this includes the open burning of plastics and other household waste. This leads to significantly different impacts on the health of men and women, including reproductive health and prenatal developmental health.

Furthermore, physiologically, women tend to be smaller in size and have a major role in childbearing and rearing. In addition, a woman's chemical burden can be passed on to her baby during gestation, through the placenta, as well as via breastfeeding. Therefore, the impact of pollution from chemicals and waste on women is greater than on men, even if their exposure is the same.

It is therefore imperative that any planned actions that will be undertaken within the scope of a Special Programme project describes the gender mainstreaming considerations that address women's as well as men's concerns and experiences in the context of the sound management of chemicals and wastes as an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the project.

The inclusion of both men and women in policy development and decision making brings to the table different experiences and perspectives that would serve to strengthen proposed policies and proposed activities.

Gender mainstreaming can be integrated into Special Programme project proposals by including activities with gender indicators and targets in the logframe that focus on, amongst other things:

- Conducting research and generating sex-disaggregated data that reflects the impact of pollution from chemicals and waste on disadvantaged populations in your country. This data can then be used to, for example, inform any updates in legislation or to produce a gender action plan that can be used to guide future work on chemicals and waste through a gender lens.
- Planning and organising awareness raising activities that educate relevant stakeholders, such as the general public, on the gender-differentiated and socially determined impacts of the (mis)management of chemicals. Activities may include producing information materials and media that contains gender specific information and ensuring that in person activities are held at various times that are appropriate for both men and women to attend.
- Promoting multi-stakeholder approaches to ensure effective participation of different groups, including women, in policy development and decision making. The inclusion of both men and

women brings to the table different experiences and perspectives that would serve to strengthen proposed policies and proposed activities.

- Creating terms of reference for project staff that ensure equal opportunity for women and men, and where applicable, require skills/expertise in gender.
- Monitoring benefits, participation, and feedback among women and men during project activities and incorporate remedial action that promotes gender equality as appropriate. This can be carried out through evaluation forms are distributed during each project activity, as appropriate, to collect information on each participant's gender, previous engagement in similar activities and perceived relevance and improvements that can be carried out.



4.2. Human rights and indigenous peoples

In February 2020 UNEP adopted a revised [Environmental and Social Sustainability Framework](#), which sets out seven safeguard standards, several of which are of relevance to Special Programme projects. **Safeguard standard 3 on pollution prevention and resource efficiency** is of particular relevance as it aims to, among other things:

Avoid or minimize generation of hazardous or non-hazardous waste and promote a human rights-based approach to the environmentally sound management and disposal of hazardous substances and wastes

As outlined in the [Report of the Special Rapporteur on the implications for human rights of the environmentally sound management and disposal of hazardous substances and wastes](#), a human rights based approach to addressing the sound management of chemicals and waste includes considerations of the following:

- Ensuring that legislation and other practices respect, protect and fulfil human rights obligations implicated by hazardous substances and wastes, including the rights to life, to health and to physical integrity;
- Ensuring that practices relating to hazardous substances and wastes ensure equality, do not discriminate against any vulnerable group, including children, the poor, workers, persons with disabilities, older persons, indigenous peoples, migrants and minorities, and take into account gender-specific risks;
- Using inherently safer design, implement a life-cycle approach to protect the most vulnerable from hazardous substances and wastes and should, with urgency, apply a global approach;
- Enacting and enforcing legislative and regulatory frameworks to protect human rights against infringement caused by business operations that produce, use, release, store and dispose of hazardous substances and wastes, including the foreign operations of businesses based in individual countries while maintaining standards of protection and continuously improving protections; to fulfil their obligations, and exploring cost-recovery systems;
- Establishing effective institutions capable of taking timely action to protect human rights; and prevent conflicts of interest while implementing a whole-of-government approach;
- Enabling people and peoples to claim and defend their rights against the threats of toxic and otherwise hazardous substances and wastes;
- Encouraging businesses to conduct and publicly disclose human rights due diligence for the life cycle of toxics in their products and their operations, including supply and value chains, and should identify and assess risks, prevent and mitigate impacts, and be transparent and accountable regarding their efforts; and

- Ensuring that victims of the effects of hazardous substances and wastes have access to an effective remedy, including remediation, health care, compensation and a guarantee of non-repetition, among others, and must reduce systemic obstacles, including the burden of proof and causation, among others, that prevent victims of toxic exposure from accessing remedies.

Also relevant under the revised [Environmental and Social Sustainability Framework](#) is **safeguard standard 7 on indigenous peoples**, which it aims to, among other things:

- Promote and protect the rights of indigenous peoples, especially concerning their lands, territories, resources, traditional livelihoods, tangible and intangible cultural heritage, which are central to respecting indigenous peoples' identities and improving their well-being.

Ensuring that the rights of indigenous peoples are considered during the design and implementation of Special Programme projects includes consideration of the following:

- Facilitating the right of indigenous peoples to participate in decision making in matters that would affect their rights, through representatives chosen by themselves in accordance with their own procedures, as well as to maintain and develop their own indigenous decision-making institutions as set out under article 18 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
- Establishing effective measures to ensure that programmes for monitoring, maintaining and restoring health are designed and implemented by those affected by such materials.
- Obtaining the free, prior and informed consent of indigenous peoples regarding the storage or disposal of hazardous materials on their lands or territories, as set out under article 29 (2) of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

5. Considerations on project monitoring, evaluation and reporting

While it may seem premature to consider project monitoring evaluation and reporting at the application stage, they are actually important components of project design and management. Individual country projects are expected to contribute toward achieving the outcome of the Special Programme, which is that: *'Governments of developing countries and countries with economies in transition are taking affirmative action to implement the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, the Minamata Convention and the Global Framework on Chemicals implementation plans'*.

Designing and planning a project with the principles of monitoring and reporting in mind contributes to ensuring that the project objectives, proposed measures and indicators speak to the overarching outcome of the Special Programme.

To facilitate the consideration of project monitoring, evaluation and reporting, the Special Programme Secretariat has developed a [Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Strategy](#) which serves as guidance to the Special Programme and its country project recipients for monitoring, evaluation and learning at the Programme and country levels. The Strategy outlines two core indicators that should be incorporated in the projects at the country level, to allow for key aspects of the projects to be highlighted and showcased. These indicators, which should be included in each project logframe at the outcome level, are:

- **Core Indicator 1**

Extent of strengthened government capacity and coordination mechanism to support development and implementation of National Strategies for Chemicals and Waste Management as a result of funding from the Special Programme (Outcome indicator, Qualitative)

- **Core Indicator 2**

Degree of integration of chemicals and waste management into national and sector planning - formally proposed, adopted, or being implemented including required reporting to the relevant Conventions and voluntary reporting to the Global Framework on Chemicals (Outcome Indicator, Qualitative)

Furthermore, similar considerations connecting the objective of each individual project with the proposed measures and indicators will facilitate the drafting of annual project reports. Developing a monitoring and evaluation mechanism at the project design phase will lead to ensure its effective implementation.

The accompanying Special Programme [Monitoring, Evaluation, & Learning Toolkit](#) is designed to guide recipient countries through the project monitoring and reporting processes indicated in the Strategy. It also includes scoring sheets to help countries measure progress against the core indicators for the purpose of reporting on implementation progress. They are designed to be flexible, so that individual countries can adapt the tools to their needs.

6. Additional resources

Applicants may wish to use or make reference to the following resources in the development of their application.

[The Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions](#)

- Provides information on the ratification status of countries and convention text, which sets out the obligations upon countries which are parties to the conventions.

[The Minamata Convention on Mercury](#)

- Provides information on the ratification status of countries and Convention text, which sets out the obligations upon countries which are parties to the Convention.

[The Global Framework on Chemicals](#)

- In 2023, the International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM5) in Bonn adopted the new Global Framework on Chemicals, providing a vision for a planet free of harm from chemicals and waste, for a safe, healthy and sustainable future. The framework is supported by a High-Level Declaration to expedite its implementation, the framework emphasizes stakeholders' commitment to promoting circular economies, establishing a global fund, and achieving five main objectives alongside 28 specific targets. These efforts are designed to enhance pollution prevention, strengthen capacity building, and foster better cooperation across various sectors.
- More information under: <https://www.chemicalsframework.org/>

[The Global Environment Facility](#)

- Provides information on national and regional projects and programmes that have been funded by the GEF.

[UNEP Special Programme E-Learning Platform](#)

- The Special Programme E-Learning Course in the UNEP Special Programme E-Learning Platform provides with guidance on how to prepare an application for the Special Programme. It is available in English, French and Spanish. You can access it on this site: <https://specialprogramme.unenvironment.org/>

[Compendium of lessons learned from past Special Programme projects](#)

- The compendium of lessons learned from past Special Programme projects helps applicants to take specific aspects into consideration that could strengthen the application. The compendium covers the following aspects: management structure, coordination, communication and awareness raising, project elements, financing, and specific circumstances. You can access it here: <https://wedocs.unep.org/handle/20.500.11822/41479>

[IOMC Toolbox](#)

- The IOMC Toolbox is a problem-solving tool that enables countries to identify the most appropriate and efficient national actions to address specific national problems related to chemicals management.

[UNEP LIRA Guidance](#)

- The LIRA (*Legal and Institutional infrastructures for the sound management of chemicals and measures for Recovering costs of national administrations*) guidance aims to provide practical support to policymakers for strengthening national legislation and institutional set-ups for achieving sound management of chemicals. It includes proposals for measures for financing necessary administration activities in this regard.

[Guidance on chemicals control contributing to national progress and safety](#)

- These new guidance documents complement the LIRA Guidance. The publications aim to support decision makers in their efforts to establish legal frameworks for chemicals control and the work of government officials involved in building government capacity for chemicals control.

[Gender equality and the environment: a guide to UNEP's work](#)

- This document outlines the linkages between gender equality and the environment, the impacts of gender inequality, how unequal participation in policy- and decision-making stymies effective action on tackling environmental challenges, and opportunities to unlock the untapped potential of both men and women in confronting these challenges.

[Gender Mainstreaming Guidance Series: Chemicals and gender](#)

- Guidance document describes important linkages between development, gender, and chemicals management. While policymakers are beginning to understand the important role played by the sound management of chemicals in economic and social development, it is also important to recognize the significant linkages between gender and chemicals.

[Other available resources](#)

Applicants may also find the following resources useful:

- UNEP's [World Environment Situation Room](#) includes tools aimed at enhancing the management of pollution including chemicals and waste.
- The [InforMEA platform](#) contains useful information about the chemicals and wastes conventions, including introductory training courses.
- UNITAR offers a number of online platforms and courses including the [Chemicals and Waste platform](#), the [PCB Management Platform](#) and the [Waste Management and Circular Economy Online Course](#).

- The Swedish Chemicals Agency is running an International Capacity Development Programme “[Developing Strategies for National Chemicals Management](#)”

Annex I: Terms of reference for the Special Programme¹¹

Recalling decision 27/12 on Special, part VIII, paragraphs 13 and 14 of the of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) at its first universal session:

I. Objective of the Special Programme

1. The objective of the Special Programme is to support country-driven institutional strengthening at the national level, in the context of an integrated approach to address the financing of the sound management of chemicals and wastes, taking into account the national development strategies, plans and priorities of each country, to increase sustainable public institutional capacity for the sound management of chemicals and wastes throughout their life cycle. Institutional strengthening under the Special Programme will facilitate and enable the implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, the Minamata Convention and the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (hereinafter referred to as “the Instruments”).

II. Definition of institutional strengthening

2. For the purposes of the Special Programme, institutional strengthening is defined as enhancing the sustainable institutional capacity of Governments to develop, adopt, monitor and enforce policy, legislation and regulation, as well as to gain access to financial and other resources for effective frameworks for the implementation of the Instruments for the sound management of chemicals and wastes throughout their life cycle.

III. Expected outcomes of institutional strengthening through the Special Programme

3. It is expected that strengthened national institutions would have the capacity to do the following:
- (a) Develop and monitor the implementation of national policies, strategies, programmes and legislation for the sound management of chemicals and wastes;
 - (b) Promote the adoption, monitoring and enforcement of legislation and regulatory frameworks for the sound management of chemicals and wastes;
 - (c) Promote the mainstreaming of the sound management of chemicals and wastes into national development plans, national budgets, policies, legislation and implementation frameworks at all levels, including addressing gaps and avoiding duplication;
 - (d) Work in a multisectoral, effective, efficient, transparent, accountable and sustainable manner in the long term;
 - (e) Facilitate multisectoral and multi-stakeholder cooperation and coordination at the national level;
 - (f) Promote private sector responsibility, accountability and involvement;
 - (g) Promote the effective implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, the Minamata Convention and the Strategic Approach;
 - (h) Promote cooperative and coordinated implementation of the Instruments at the national level.

¹¹ Environment Assembly resolution 1/5, annex II.

IV. Scope of the Special Programme

4. The Special Programme should avoid duplication and proliferation of funding mechanisms and associated administration, and should fund activities that fall outside the mandate of the Global Environment Facility.
5. The activities funded under the Special Programme may encompass the following:
 - (a) Identifying national institutional capacity, weaknesses, gaps and needs, as well as strengthening the institutional capacity to do so, where required;
 - (b) Strengthening institutional capacity to plan, develop, undertake, monitor and coordinate the implementation of policies, strategies and national programmes for the sound management of chemicals and wastes;
 - (c) Strengthening institutional capacity to improve progress reporting and performance evaluation capabilities;
 - (d) Promoting an enabling environment to foster the ratification of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions and the Minamata Convention;
 - (e) Enabling the design and operation of institutional structures dedicated to the promotion of the sound management of chemicals and wastes throughout their life cycle;
 - (f) Strengthening institutional capacity to promote measures to support all aspects of the sound management of chemicals and wastes, including more specific nationally identified thematic areas covered by the Instruments.

V. Eligibility for support from the Special Programme

6. Support from the Special Programme will be available for developing countries, taking into account the special needs of least developed countries and small island developing States, and for countries with economies in transition, with priority given to those with least capacity.
7. Applicants will be eligible if they are party to any one of the relevant conventions or have demonstrated that they are in the process of preparing for ratification of any one of the conventions.
8. Applications will include identification of the associated domestic measures to be taken to ensure that the national institutional capacity supported by the Special Programme is sustainable in the long term.

VI. Governance arrangements for the Special Programme

9. An Executive Board will be the decision-making body and oversee the Special Programme with the support of a Secretariat.
10. The Executive Board will reflect a balance between donors and recipients. The term of the representatives will be in a two-year rotation. The Executive Board will be composed of the following:
 - (a) Four representatives of recipient countries, reflecting equitable, geographical representation, drawn from the following United Nations regions: Africa, Asia-Pacific, Central and Eastern Europe, and Latin America and the Caribbean. In addition, the Executive Board will have one representative from a least developed country or a small island developing State on a rotational basis;
 - (b) Five donor representatives, which are not also recipient countries.

11. The executive secretaries of the Secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions and the Minamata Convention, the Coordinator of the Strategic Approach and a representative of the Secretariat of the Global Environment Facility, as well as representatives of Governments and regional economic integration organizations, any implementing agencies and one representative from each of the bureaux of the governing bodies of the instruments may participate, at their own expense, as observers at the meetings of the Executive Board.

VII. Mandate and functions of the Executive Board

12. The Executive Board will have two co-chairs, one from recipient countries and one from donor countries.

13. The Executive Board will meet yearly and take its decisions by consensus wherever possible. If consensus cannot be reached, the Executive Board will, as a last resort, take its decisions by a two-thirds majority of its members present and voting. The Executive Board will, as required, further develop its rules of procedure at its first meeting.

14. The Executive Board will take operational decisions regarding the functioning of the Special Programme, including the approval of applications for funding, and will endorse procedures for application, assessment, reporting and evaluation. The Executive Board will provide operational guidance on the implementation of the Special Programme and will provide advice on other matters as required.

VIII. Administering organization

15. As the administering organization, UNEP will provide a Special Programme trust fund and a Secretariat to deliver administrative support to the Programme, including the allocation of human and other resources.

16. The Secretariat will process application proposals for approval by the Executive Board, manage approved allocations and service the Executive Board. The Secretariat will report on its operations to the Executive Board and will be accountable to the Executive Director of UNEP for administrative and financial matters. The Secretariat will submit an annual report to the Executive Board, which will also be sent to the governing bodies of UNEP and of the instruments for their consideration.

IX. Operational arrangements for the Special Programme

17. The Special Programme will receive applications directly from national Governments. It will be easily accessible, simple and effective, and draw on experience from existing support mechanisms as appropriate.

18. Applications should be outlined within the context of an overall country approach to strengthening institutional capacity. The applications should contain proposed measures and performance targets, and information relating to long-term sustainability.

19. Applications should be submitted to the Secretariat. The Secretariat will appraise applications for consideration and decision by the Executive Board.

20. Cumulative allocations to a country should be decided by the Executive Board, based on the contributions received and the needs expressed in the applications submitted. Of that total, an amount not exceeding 13 per cent may be retained for administrative purposes.

21. Beneficiary countries will contribute resources equal to the value of at least 25 per cent of the total allocation. The Executive Board may reduce that percentage, commensurate with consideration of the specific national circumstances, capacity constraints, gaps and needs of the applicant.

22. Beneficiary countries shall submit annual reports on progress achieved. A final report and financial audit shall be submitted upon completion of each project, which shall include a full accounting of funds used and an evaluation of outcomes, as well as evidence as to whether the performance targets have been met.

X. Contributions

23. Contributions will be encouraged from all signatories and parties to the conventions and other Governments with the capacity to do so, as well as from the private sector, including industry, foundations, other non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders.

XI. Duration of the Special Programme

24. The Special Programme will be open to receive voluntary contributions and applications for support for seven years from the date it is established. On the basis of a satisfactory review and evaluation, and subject to a recommendation from the Executive Board to the United Nations Environment Assembly, the Special Programme may be eligible for a one-time extension, not to exceed an additional five years. Special Programme funds may be disbursed for a maximum of 10 years from the date the Programme is established, or eight years from the date it is extended, if applicable, at which point the Programme will complete its operations and close. The terms of reference of the above-mentioned review and evaluation are to be decided by the Executive Board.

Annex II: Possible Scope of Projects

This section provides information on some of the many possible thematic areas that countries can consider incorporating into their project. The **topics described are not exhaustive**. Any thematic area should be presented in the context of each country's national priorities. Please consult your GEF operational focal point to ensure that no element of the proposed project fall into the mandate of the GEF in your country. This may vary from country to country.



1.1. Promoting institutional strengthening in the context of the chemicals and waste related instruments

For the purposes of the Special Programme, institutional strengthening is defined as enhancing the sustainable institutional capacity of Governments to develop, adopt, monitor and enforce policy, legislation and regulation, as well as to gain access to financial and other resources for effective frameworks for the implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, the Minamata Convention and the Global Framework on Chemicals throughout their life cycle.

Countries should consider which of the following specific aspects of the instruments need to be addressed in the context of their national priorities when designing their projects and include outcomes and outputs that speak to those needs. The aim is to ultimately strengthen the capacity of national institutions to meet obligations under the conventions in a coordinated manner.

Furthermore, all projects should demonstrate strong elements of sustainability by satisfactorily setting out how the proposed measures, and institutional structures established, will be continued, maintained and further strengthened following the completion of the project.

Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions

The Special Programme may support countries in establishing the necessary institutional capacity as well as the legal and policy instruments to manage chemicals and wastes in a sound manner in the context of the implementation of related obligations and provisions under the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions. Such support can focus on, among others, the following obligations:

- The designation of contacts to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions in accordance with Article 5 (Basel Convention), Article 4 (Rotterdam Convention) and Article 9 (Stockholm Convention) as well as relevant decisions of the Conferences of the Parties (focal point and competent authorities; designated national authorities and official contact points; national focal point and official contact points, respectively);
- Developing institutional capacity to facilitate the preparation, update and transmission of:
 - National Implementation Plans in accordance with Article 7 of Stockholm Convention;
 - National Reports as provided for in Article 13 of the Basel Convention;
 - Notifications of restrictions or prohibitions provided for in Articles 4 and 13 of the Basel Convention;
 - National definitions of hazardous wastes provided for in Article 3 of the Basel Convention;
 - Bilateral, multilateral and regional agreements or arrangements provided for in Article 11 of the Basel Convention;
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- Where assessed as needed by a Party, notification or withdrawal of available specific exemptions and acceptable purposes for chemicals listed in Annexes A and B to the Stockholm Convention;
- Annual certification of exports to non-Parties provided for in Article 3 (b)(iii) of the Stockholm Convention, as relevant; National Reports as provided for in Article 15 of the Stockholm Convention;
- Import responses in accordance with Article 10 of the Rotterdam Convention;
- Final regulatory actions (FRA) in accordance with Article 5 of and Annex I to the Rotterdam Convention;
- Texts of national legislation and other measures adopted to implement and enforce the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions.

Special Programme projects can also support other aspects of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions that are not obligations, but nonetheless support their implementation, such as:

- Provision of support to countries wishing to become a Party to one or more of the Convention(s) or consent to be bound by the amendment(s) to the Annexes A, B and/or C to the Stockholm Convention;
- Ensuring that Special Programme projects take into account activities under the BRS Conventions to support implementation, such as technical assistance activities included in the technical assistance plan adopted by the Parties of the three Conventions, and activities in the workplans or programmes of work of existing partnerships in support of the BRS Conventions. Activities undertaken by the Secretariat and Basel and Stockholm Convention Regional Centres, as well as the submissions before the compliance committees of the BRS Conventions;
- Ensuring that guidance adopted by the Conferences of the Parties is used to strengthen the institutional capacity and ensuring consistency in guidance, decision making and policy making.

In addition, as part of the effectiveness evaluation of the Stockholm Convention conducted every six years, the Effectiveness Evaluation Committee, which is established by the Conference of Parties for each evaluation cycle, developed for consideration by the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties, conclusions and recommendations as to the effectiveness of the Stockholm Convention¹², and made strong recommendations to support Parties in view of increasing the national reporting rates. For this, the Special Programme has been identified as one of the key providers of such support. Accordingly, the Committee recommended “The Conference of the Parties should urge Parties to provide information on the amount of financial assistance provided and received as part of their national reports transmitted under Article 15, and invite other donors, including the UNEP Special Programme, to provide information on funding provided to assist Parties.” Furthermore, the role of the Special Programme has been recognized by both the Compliance Committee of the Rotterdam Convention and Implementation and Compliance Committee of the Basel Convention. A number of recommendations to the Conference of the Parties from these Committees relate to the Special Programme and the support provided to Parties.

¹² UNEP/POPS/COP.11/19/Add/1

Minamata Convention

Projects submitted for consideration under the Special Programme may provide support for institutional strengthening elements that would also advance implementation of obligations under the various articles of the Minamata Convention on Mercury. Projects that include activities relating to mercury and broad-based strengthening of chemicals and waste management regimes or units, mainstreaming of chemicals and waste management, development of sustainable financing, broader stakeholder engagement, awareness-raising, information/data management, and monitoring can also contribute to the fulfilment of articles under the Convention. For example:

- Strengthening national level coordination mechanisms that submit mercury trade notifications (Article 3);
- Establishing sustainable financing mechanisms to mobilize financial resources at the national level for mercury management (Article 13);
- Promoting communication and public awareness on mercury and health as part of broader public awareness programmes on chemicals and health (Articles 16, 17 and 18);
- Establishing platforms, networks or programmes that facilitate data collection and management, information exchange, and regulatory and public information on mercury (Articles 17 and 19);
- Developing implementation plans and strengthening national level coordination mechanisms to facilitate implementation, compliance and reporting on the Minamata Convention (Articles 15, 20 and 21);
- Ensuring that guidance adopted by the Conferences of the Parties is used to strengthen the institutional capacity and ensuring consistency in use of guidance, decision making and policy making;
- Providing support to countries wishing to become a Party to the Minamata Convention.

Of note, the Minamata Convention has a financial mechanism that consists of the **Global Environment Facility and the Specific International Programme**. Both components of the financial mechanism focus on support to Minamata Convention Parties to implement mandatory obligations set forth in the Convention. While the Global Environment Facility provides larger projects, the Specific International Programme provides small grants directly to governments of developing country Parties and Parties with economies in transition to strengthen their capacity to implement specific articles of the Convention. Because both components of the financial mechanism provide support for institutional strengthening in the context of implementation of the Convention's control articles, the Special Programme, which funds projects that address the broader aspects of institutional strengthening across more than one instrument, therefore can fulfil a country's need to facilitate coordination and strengthening across the cluster.

Specific International Programme	Special Programme
FOCUS = capacity-building and technical assistance for Minamata Convention implementation	FOCUS = institutional strengthening across chemicals and waste MEAs and the Global Framework on Chemicals
Open to Parties from developing countries and countries with economies in transition	Open to Parties and non-Parties from developing countries and countries with economies in transition
Convention-specific , addresses specific obligations of the Convention	Must strengthen across more than one MEA/Global Framework on Chemicals SAICM; promotes mainstreaming
Applicant contribution is not required	Applicant contribution is required
Direct access: No implementing agencies	Direct access: No implementing agencies

Figure 1: Comparison table: Specific International Programme (Minamata Convention) compared with Special Programme.

The Global Framework on Chemicals

The Special Programme also supports countries with the implementation of the Global Framework on Chemicals. The Framework provides a vision for a planet free of harm from chemicals and waste, for a safe, healthy and sustainable future – where all sectors and stakeholders are strategic actors to foster innovation, move towards sustainable solutions and drive change. It is backed up by a High-Level Declaration - the political drive for its fast implementation and a reminder of stakeholders' commitment to increase global ambition and action to protect human health and the environment. In serving as the successor instrument to SAICM, the Framework brings about a transformational shift in the way chemicals are managed, across their entire life cycle, including products and waste.

The elements in the framework that relate to institutional strengthening and can be incorporated into projects, in line with national priorities include for example:

- Building capacity in the relevant ministries to address the sound management of chemicals and waste at the national level;
- Adopting, strengthening or enforcing legal and regulatory frameworks to implement global chemicals and waste commitments, relevant conventions and voluntary mechanisms;
- Ensuring sustainable finance including by leveraging private finance and promoting innovative and blended-finance schemes, enhancing relations with donors, encouraging industry engagement, or through implementing instruments such as cost-recovery mechanisms;
- Mainstreaming chemicals and waste into the agendas of relevant sectors (health, labour, agriculture, development among others), including in national economic and budgeting processes and development plans and strengthening inter-ministerial cooperation and coordination; Engaging different stakeholder groups such as civil society, industry and academia to make sure that interests and needs of all societal groups are taken on board in areas such as phasing out harmful chemicals, enhancing capacity building, and establishing better connections across various sectors like health, safety, trade, agriculture, energy, and transport;
- Monitoring and assessing progress of the project to identify successful outcomes as well as gaps and challenges to drive opportunities for scaling up and improvement, and to assess the need for enhanced implementation efforts or prioritization;
- Sharing knowledge and information to enable informed decisions and actions;

- Risk assessment and minimization through, for example, safer alternatives, and encouraging the transition to safer chemical alternatives, responsible management in sectors such as industry, agriculture, and healthcare, and improved transparency and access to information about chemicals and associated risks.

Furthermore, addressing identified issues of concern is at the core of the Global Framework on Chemicals. An issue of concern is an issue involving any phase in the life cycle of chemicals that has not yet been generally recognized, is insufficiently addressed, or arises as a potential concern from the current level of scientific information, and that may have adverse effects on human health and/or the environment that would benefit from international action.



1.2. Determination of GEF eligibility

The terms of reference stipulate that the Special Programme should avoid duplication and proliferation of funding mechanisms and associated administration and should fund activities that fall outside the mandate of the GEF. This means that an application (or measure proposed in an application) cannot be funded by the Special Programme if it is eligible for funding under the GEF. This is applicable to both individual country projects and programs and regional/multi-country projects and programs. The determination of whether a proposal falls within the GEF mandate is carried out by the Secretariat of the Global Environment Facility following the submission of the application.

This section of the Guidance was prepared to clarify what projects or proposed measures would fall under the GEF mandate, to minimize the possibility of countries submitting projects that fall within the GEF's mandate. **It is also strongly recommended that applicants consult with the GEF operational focal point in your country to review the proposed project and ensure that the activities proposed in your project are not within the mandate of the GEF. Please note that what falls under the GEF mandate may vary from country to country.**

GEF funding is made available for activities¹³ within several focal areas, specifically: biological diversity; climate change; international waters; land degradation, primarily desertification and deforestation; and chemicals and waste. The agreed incremental costs of activities to achieve global environmental benefits concerning chemicals management as they relate to these focal areas shall be eligible for funding under the GEF.

The GEF's mandate in the management of chemicals and wastes is derived from its role in the financial mechanism of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, as defined under Articles 13¹⁴ and 14, and from the Minamata Convention on Mercury as defined under Article 13¹⁵. In addition, the GEF provides funding to certain areas under the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) that require global action¹⁶ and the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer. Additional eligibility can be provided by the GEF council outside of the Conventions but for other activities promoting the purposes of the Facility¹⁷.

¹³ [Instrument for the Establishment of the Restructured Global Environment Facility, September 2019 – paragraph 9](#)

¹⁴ [Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants](#)

¹⁵ [Minamata Convention on Mercury](#)

¹⁶ The GEF also supports the implementation of the Montreal Protocol, however this is not within the scope of Special Programme funding and is therefore not discussed here.

¹⁷ Para 9 (b) of the [GEF Instrument](#)

The GEF operates under the guidance of, and is accountable to, the Conferences of the Parties (COP) of the Minamata Convention¹⁸ and the Stockholm Convention¹⁹. Each COP provides guidance on overall strategies, policy, program priorities and eligibility for access to, and utilization of, financial resources. In addition to the legally binding chemicals conventions, the International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM) has also requested the GEF to include elements of SAICM into GEF programming which has facilitated early action on areas such as e-waste, plastics, chemicals of concern including pesticides, pharmaceuticals, and chemicals from other sectors.

With each GEF replenishment, which takes place every four years, a programming directions document sets out activities that can be funded under each focal area, as well as other large programs. The GEF's programming directions for chemicals and waste are developed from the guidance received from the COPs of the Stockholm Convention, the Minamata Convention, and requests from the ICCM. On June 21, 2022, twenty-nine donor governments finalized \$5.33 billion in pledges to the Global Environment Facility for the next four years from July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2026. The record funding will support large-scale initiatives to address biodiversity and forest loss, improve ocean health, combat pollution, and reduce the effects of climate change within the decade. It reflects a growing consensus on the need to expand efforts in these areas and to work across borders and sectors. Much of the funding will be delivered through a set of 11 integrated programs (IPs) that address multiple environmental threats at once. Please refer to the GEF website²⁰ for more information. The GEF 8 programming directions codifies the current activities that can be supported by the GEF.

While it is not practical to summarize every type of project that could be funded under the chemicals and waste focal area, as there are a wide variety of chemicals and groups of chemicals, national and regional priorities, there are general elements included in most projects:

- a. Management of chemicals and waste (including materials, products and processes), including safe handling, storage, disposal, EPRs etc. of chemicals that are covered by the Conventions including groups of those chemicals, chemicals in products, waste chemicals, waste containing chemicals, and wastes that can emit chemicals including plastics, electronics, textiles, and others.
- b. Capacity building, institutional strengthening and technical assistance and technology transfer, including policy and regulatory support to achieve the above.
- c. Monitoring and evaluation of the project including verification of results achieved.
- d. Knowledge management to capture lessons learned to inform future programming
- e. Project management. Every GEF project provides funding for project management cost including a project management unit for the duration of the project.

The GEF reports on all projects funded to the Stockholm Convention and the Minamata Convention and provides updates on funding related to the SAICM to the ICCM. Links to these reports are available on the websites of the respective Conventions.

¹⁸ Article 13, Para 7, [Minamata Convention on Mercury](#)

¹⁹ Article 13, Para 6, [Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants](#)

²⁰ <https://www.thegef.org/who-we-are/funding/gef-8-replenishment>

GEF programming in chemicals and waste will continue to expand and evolve with each replenishment, for example, to take into account chemicals being added to the Stockholm Convention require different solutions to previous projects that dealt with stockpiles etc.



1.3. Involvement of the health sector

Human exposure to chemicals and waste occurs on a daily basis and in many forms, for example through food, air or skin exposure amongst other things. Many of these chemicals are harmless and are necessary for living healthy lives, however exposure to many others can negatively impact human health. The [World Health Organization](#) estimates that 1.6 million deaths occurred due to chemicals exposures in [2016](#), with pregnant women, infants and children among the most vulnerable to such exposures. Potential adverse health effects of chemical exposures result in diseases such as cancers, strokes, chronic pulmonary disease and congenital abnormalities. Such diseases may result from acute poisonings, long-term exposure to individual chemicals or occupational exposure to air pollutant mixtures.

Countries may wish to develop projects that address the impact of chemicals on human health, in the context of the objectives of the Special Programme. It is important, when developing a health focused project, to consult and engage relevant stakeholders during project development and implementation, for example the Ministry of Health and other relevant stakeholders. Addressing human health through Special Programme projects will contribute the fulfillment of obligations and objectives of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions and the Minamata Convention. It will also contribute towards the achievement of the SAICM 2020 goal and beyond, as outlined in the [WHO Chemicals Roadmap](#) which highlights four action areas for the effective engagement of the health sector in project development:

- **Risk management** actions focus on engaging the health sector to help implement health protection strategies, regulating chemicals used in the healthcare setting and public awareness-raising in order to improve health both in the short term and long term for people.
- **Knowledge and Evidence** actions focus on facilitating the collaboration across multiple sectors, such as health, environment, trade, transportation, and private industry, to work in partnership and produce objective evidence, surveillance data and the burden of disease from chemicals and hazardous wastes.
- **Institutional Capacity** initiatives focus on strengthening national policy and regulatory frameworks; improving the domestic capacity for an emergency response to chemical spills and exposures; and implementing the MEAs to reduce the health impacts of chemical and waste exposures.
- **Leadership and Coordination** actions focus on considering health in all aspects of national and subnational chemicals and waste activities and stresses collaboration with the health sector in multisectoral projects to reduce the burden of disease due to mismanagement of chemicals.

Proposed measures that contribute to the engagement of the health sector, should be articulated in the context of national priorities and how the proposed intervention will contribute to achieving the sound management of chemicals and waste. Proposed measures must be specific and explicit on how they will be sustainable and address institutional strengthening and capacity building, in the context of the objectives of the Special Programme.



1.4. Sustainable Development Goals

The [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs) were adopted in January 2016, following the 2015 United Nations Sustainable Development Summit as a global blueprint for achieving dignity, peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and in the future. The implementation of projects that focus on the sound management of chemicals and waste will directly contribute to the achievement of several SDG targets, for example:

- **SDG 12:** Sustainable Consumption and Production - **Target 12.4:** *By 2020, achieve the environmentally sound management of chemicals and all wastes throughout their life cycle, in accordance with agreed international frameworks, and significantly reduce their release to air, water and soil in order to minimize their adverse impacts on human health and the environment.*

This target is directly linked to, and encompasses, successful implementation of the chemicals and waste multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), the SAICM and other relevant policies and actions. This mirrors the Special Programme objective to promote the effective implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, the Minamata Convention and SAICM.

- **SDG 3:** Good Health and Well-Being - **Target 3.9:** *By 2030, substantially reduce the number of deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals and air, water and soil pollution and contamination.*

This target focuses on the ultimate impact of enhanced sound management of chemicals and waste in terms of human health which is also a primary focus of the chemicals and wastes MEAs.

- **SDG 6:** Clean Water and Sanitation - **Target 6.3:** *By 2030, improve water quality by reducing pollution, eliminating dumping and minimizing release of hazardous chemicals and materials, halving the proportion of untreated wastewater, and substantially increasing recycling and safe reuse globally.*

This target sheds light on the need for reduced pollution to maintain water quality.

Furthermore, SDG targets concerning environmental and social objectives related to chemicals and waste management action are also relevant when considering the development of Special Programme project proposals, including:

- **SDG 8:** Decent Work and Economic Growth - **Target 8.8** on the protection of labour rights and promotion of safe working environments.
- **SDG 12:** Sustainable Consumption and Production - **Target 12.5** on the reduction of waste generation.
- **SDG 14:** Life Below Water - **Target 14.1** on the reduction of marine pollution.
- **SDG 15:** Life on land - **Target 15.5** on the protection of biodiversity and natural habitats.

Other SDGs that focus on fostering economic development and strengthening the enabling environment may also be relevant in the context of each country's national priorities and specific project proposal. The full list of Sustainable Development Goals and the corresponding targets and indicators can be found on the [SDG Knowledge Platform](#).



1.5. Circular Economy

Circular economy is commonly defined as “an industrial system that is restorative or regenerative by intention and design”. It replaces the ‘end of life’ concept with restoration, shifts towards the use of renewable energy, eliminates the use of toxic chemicals, which impair reuse, and aims for the elimination of waste through the superior design of materials, products, systems and, within this, business models”

At its core, the circular economy approach relies on reuse and high-quality recycling and much less on virgin raw materials for the manufacture of products. This approach aims to maintain the added value in products and materials for as long as possible, as compared to the traditional linear “take-make-dispose” model which has, so far, contributed to much of today’s challenges resulting from pollution from chemicals and waste.

The transition to a circular economy requires changes throughout the value chain, from product design to new modes of consumer behaviour. This can be encouraged through the implementation of policy frameworks that will incentivize and promote the shift toward a system where resources remain resources within the economy.

The Special Programme provides support to countries at the national level to implement policies and regulatory frameworks for the sound management of chemicals and waste. The principals of circular economy can therefore be integrated into the proposed projects with the view to strengthening the outcomes in a sustainable manner, for example:

- Establishing regulatory frameworks and a strategy on resource productivity and circular economy that aim to define product regulations, including design, extended warranties and product passports.
- Establishing waste regulations, including collection and treatment standards and targets, the definition of waste, extended producer responsibility and take-back systems.
- Establishing public-private partnerships with businesses at the national level with a view to encouraging industry collaboration platforms, encouraging value-chain and cross-sectoral initiatives and information sharing.
- Providing educational support and awareness raising to the general public and businesses on the principles of circular economy and training materials on best practices.

These principles can be integrated into project outcomes that focus on specific sectors, as shown, for example, in the section on plastic waste, or can be proposed as stand-alone interventions to promote the adoption of circular economy principals at the national level in the context of the objectives of the Special Programme.



1.6. Sound Management of Chemicals and Waste in the context of post COVID-19 recovery

The COVID-19 pandemic has shed light on the indispensable nature of the sound management of chemicals and waste to keep the environment clean and people healthy. But the pandemic has also placed significant pressure on the systems that have been put in place by countries to address the

sound management of chemicals and waste by exposing existing gaps and highlighting areas where urgent action and continued investment may be needed to strengthen the relevant institutional structures.

Waste management has been deemed an essential public service in many countries and plays a vital role in the pandemic response. There has been a surge in the disposal of medical waste and disposable personal protective equipment from clinics and hospitals, which have been treating COVID-19 patients. At the same time, with many people also recovering from the disease at home, there is also a possibility that potentially infectious household waste could be entering treatment streams. This may have an impact on waste management workers and collectors who might not have the necessary training or equipment to make sure that health and safety procedures are in place to protect them from potentially infectious waste. Furthermore, both medical and household waste may contain mercury due to the disposal of widely used mercury-containing products such as thermometers and other medical equipment.

The COVID-19 pandemic also saw an increase in the production and use of chemicals such as biocides, disinfectants and household cleaning products. The safe use and disposal of such chemicals is essential for keeping people healthy and maintaining a clean environment – otherwise, we could see issues like antibiotic resistance and contamination of water sources start to emerge.

Working within its mandate to support countries strengthening their national institutions, the Special Programme can provide funding to developing countries and countries with economies in transition to focus on addressing existing systemic weaknesses and gaps related to the sound management of chemicals and waste that have been brought to light following the COVID-19 pandemic.

Addressing such issues through Special Programme projects will also contribute to countries fulfilling the obligations and objectives of the Basel Convention as it relates to the management of waste as well as the Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions and the Minamata Convention. It will also go towards achieving the the Global Framework on Chemicals.

Countries may wish to submit projects that implement activities which address existing systemic weaknesses and gaps related to the sound management of chemicals and waste that have been highlighted following the COVID-19 pandemic. This may include, amongst other things:

- Developing national legislation putting in place policies for the responsibilities and best practices of relevant stakeholders with respect to the safe management of healthcare waste from its collection to where and how it will be treated. [Technical Guidance](#) on this topic is available through the Basel Convention, and also form part of obligations under the Minamata Convention on Mercury;
- Developing national legislation for household waste and putting in place policies for the establishment of formal household waste collection mechanisms that follow best practice guidelines, including the development to training schemes for the protection of waste management workers and collectors including in recycling practices. [Draft Guidance](#) on the management of household waste is available through the Basel Convention;
- Assessing and reviewing existing legislation related to the transboundary movement of hazardous waste;
- Assessing regulatory needs relating to eliminating the manufacture, import and export of mercury-containing products in the health care sector as called for in the Minamata Convention;

- Assessing and reviewing legislation related to the responsibilities in conducting chemicals risk assessments and provide risk reduction recommendations in the context of production and marketing of chemicals that are destined for use as biocides, disinfectants and household cleaning products;
- Developing regulations on air pollution control for mercury-emitting sectors, including coal-fired power plants and incineration of mercury containing waste;
- Raising awareness and increasing the knowledge on the positive impact of the sound management of chemicals and waste towards facilitating the the maintenance of healthy populations and the environment.
- Conducting training for frontline health and waste management practitioners on safe handling of hazardous and infectious health care waste.

Annex III: Appraisal Criteria

The objective of the Special Programme is to support country-driven institutional strengthening at the national level, in the context of an integrated approach to address the financing of the sound management of chemicals and wastes, taking into account the national development strategies, plans and priorities of each country, to increase sustainable public institutional capacity for the sound management of chemicals and wastes throughout their life cycle. Institutional strengthening under the Special Programme will facilitate and enable the implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, the Minamata Convention and the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management.

To assist and guide Applicant Governments in the development of their applications based on national priorities, the Executive Board laid out appraisal criteria against which all applications are assessed. These criteria are used in appraisal and decision-making on the applications. The criteria are as follows:



1.1. Completeness Check

Has the applicant submitted all the required documents?

Form A - Project Application Form	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has the official Focal Point, or the lead government representative for regional/multi-country projects, signed and endorsed the Application?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has the applicant signed and certified the Application?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Annex 1: Contact Details	<input type="checkbox"/>
Annex 2: Related Project Information	<input type="checkbox"/>
Annex 3: Additional Information for Multi-Country Applications	<input type="checkbox"/>
Form B – Project Budget	<input type="checkbox"/>
Proof of funding from beneficiary country and any other project funding	<input type="checkbox"/>
Endorsement letter from the Official focal point / Lead Government	<input type="checkbox"/>
Letters of support from participating countries in regional/multi-country projects	<input type="checkbox"/>
Letters of support from all the project partners confirming its/their role(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Projects with an implementing organization/institution, a letter from the organization/institution confirming its role (if relevant)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Annexes providing any relevant additional information regarding the measures and activities to be funded	<input type="checkbox"/>
Completed Application Checklist	<input type="checkbox"/>



1.2. Eligibility Screening

- E1. Is the Applicant from a national government ministry or department in charge of the chemicals and waste agenda at the national level?
- E2. Is the Applicant Government a developing country, Least Developed Country (LDC), Small Island Developing Country (SIDS) or a Country with an Economy in Transition (CEIT)?
- E3. Are the proposed activities eligible for funding from the GEF?
- E4. What is the contribution of resources provided by the beneficiary country?



1.3. Budgetary Appraisal

- B1. Have there been cumulative allocations to the country? What are the contributions received and the needs expressed in the applications submitted?
- B2. Assess the personnel and contractual services costs being listed in the project budget. Is this in line with the guidance provided? ($\leq 50\%$ of the amount requested to the SP Trust Fund)
- B3. Assess the administrative costs being listed in the project budget. Is this in line with the guidance provided? ($\leq 5\%$ of the amount requested to the SP Trust Fund)
- B4. Assess the budget for monitoring, evaluation and audit. Is it in line with the guidance provided? (\leq US\$ 15,000)



1.4. Appraisal against the objectives of the Special Programme

- O1. Which measures within the objective of the Special Programme are addressed?
- O2. How well does the project ensure sustainability of the project outcome(s), including long-term staffing and maintenance of equipment if applicable?
- O3. What are the performance targets listed in the project?
- O4. Does the project identify the mainstreaming of the sound management of chemicals and waste in the various sectors? If yes, to what extent?
- O5. Are there previous GEF-related projects or programmes?
- O6. Does the project build upon previous initiatives and institutional mechanisms already established?
- O7. Does the project promote enhanced reporting, coordination and cooperation at the national level to implement the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, the Minamata Convention and SAICM and if yes, how?
- O8. Does the project have regional impact, in line with the objective of the Special Programme and if yes, how?
- O9. Does the project consider gender issues and/or gender mainstreaming and if yes, how?



1.5 Questions for prioritization on the basis of country capacity, in accordance with paragraph 6 of the Terms of Reference

These questions are for the Board to consider:

P1. What is the level of ownership, impact and sustainability of the project?

P2. Is the country classified as high income by the World Bank?

If yes,

P2.1. Is the country able to implement the project by its own financial means and capabilities?

P2.2 Does the beneficiary contribution from the applicant exceed the minimum 25% threshold provided for in paragraph 21 of the Terms of Reference and if so by how much?

P 3. Are there other factors relating to the country's capacity that should be taken into account?



1.6 Additional appraisal criteria for projects requesting more than US\$ 275,000

M1. Are all relevant sectors involved in project implementation, for example environment, health, agriculture, customs and labour?

M2. Are institutional stakeholders including, but not limited to, the private sector and civil societies involved?

M3. Is the project based on circular or green economy initiatives?

M4. Does the project link with investment and development banks for investment opportunity at the national, regional and global levels?

M5. Is mainstreaming and overall integration at the national level demonstrated, including the ways in which the efforts can be scaled up at the regional level in a synergistic manner?

M6. Does the project build on existing projects from other programmes and obligations under the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, the Minamata Convention and the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management?



1.7 Additional appraisal criteria for regional/multi-country projects

R1. Are there two or more countries participating in this project?

R2. Are all of the countries participating in the project developing countries, Least Developed Countries (LDC), Small Island Developing States (SIDS) or Countries with Economies in Transition (CEIT)?

R3. Does the project demonstrate the added value of the regional/multi-country dimension through a cooperative, country-driven approach? How will the countries leverage the collective approach?

R4. Does the project propose activities that result in improvement of the sound management of chemicals and waste in all countries involved in the project and/or does the project encourage South-South cooperation and knowledge transfer for the sound management of chemicals and waste?

R5. It is noted that regional/multi-country projects may be approved with a narrower substantive scope than individual country projects given the larger geographic scope.

R6. Is the coordinating role of the lead country clearly described? Are roles and responsibilities of each participating project partner clearly defined in the project logframe and workplan, including responsibility for reporting?

R7. Does the project include joint activities among countries to ensure best value for money?

R8. Will the countries implement the project directly? If not, what is the justification for the use of external implementing entities? Would such an arrangement undermine country ownership and country-level benefits?