



ARGENTINA

Project: Strengthening National Capacity for the Sound Management of Chemicals and Waste in Argentina

Independent Assessment of the Closed Projects under the Special Programme Report (December 2022)

RESULTS

Overall Assessment

The effectiveness of the project was high. All activities were completed. The project strengthened the capacities for the sound management of chemicals and waste by a) creating a Directorate of Chemical Substances and Wastes b) training staff of this Directorate and other stakeholders, c) establishing an intersectoral coordination mechanism; d) updating the existing legislation and regulations, and e) participating in activities proposed by the BRS Convention and Minamata Convention.

Implementing partner:
UNDP and Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development

Agreement timeframe:
October 2017 to March 2021

Budget: 245,564 USD

Results & progress by Core Indicator Criteria

The project covered six of the existing eight Core Indicator Criteria, namely:

Criterion 1.2: Level of necessary chemical/waste management expertise

RAITING

Project Start → Project End



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| <p>0 No knowledge or expertise available</p> <p>1 Not enough personnel in at least one priority Ministry, Department or Agency have basic training in chemical and/or waste management</p> <p>2 Enough personnel in at least one priority Ministry, Department or Agency have basic training in Chemical and/or waste management</p> | <p>3 Enough personnel from 1 or 2 Ministry, Department or Agency have been trained in chemical and /or waste management and know how to apply it into country planning</p> <p>4 Enough personnel in 3 or 4 Ministries, Departments or Agencies have been trained in chemical and/or waste management and can transfer their knowledge to colleagues for day-to-day use</p> <p>5 All the required personnel have necessary expertise and can integrate chemical management into the development planning process</p> |
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SPECIFIC RESULTS:

With **at least 38 activities related to capacity building**, the project was extremely active in strengthening the **expertise** for the sound management of chemicals and waste of officials and institutions. All the activities were part of a training strategy that was developed and implemented by the project in a **very effective** manner with a **multitude of partnerships with national and international institutions**. The capacity building activities included training workshops, webinars and summits/meetings¹.

Criterion 1.3: Existence and level of development of chemical/waste management unit or department

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| <p>0 Nothing had been done</p> <p>1 The Government decided on a mandate to establish a unit</p> <p>2 The Government developed a framework document detailing how the unit would be established and would operate</p> | <p>3 The unit was established and had an executive director</p> <p>4 The unit was established and had an executive director. In addition, standard operating procedures were developed, and staff were hired</p> <p>5 The unit had all human, financial and physical resources and was fully operational</p> |
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SPECIFIC RESULTS:

The project supported the establishment of the Directorate of Chemicals and Waste².

The Administrative Decision No. 311/2018, which was adopted and came into force during the project, defines the primary responsibilities, missions, and functions of the Directorate. These are, among others to:

- propose and implement actions and management tools on chemical substances and products throughout their life cycle,
- minimize their adverse effects on health and the environment, and
- propose regulations on chemical substances and products, in accordance with the international commitments assumed by the Argentine State to protect the environment.

Criterion 1.4: Level of development of multi-stakeholder coordination mechanism for chemical/waste management

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| <p>0 There was no multi-stakeholder coordination mechanism</p> <p>1 There was a multi-stakeholder coordination mechanism with very limited and irregular participation from Government and non-Government bodies</p> <p>2 There was a multi-stakeholder coordination mechanism with more regular and structured participation from Government and non-Government bodies</p> | <p>3 There was a multi-stakeholder coordination mechanism with regular meetings and adequate participation from Government and non-Government bodies</p> <p>4 There was coordinated planning and a common knowledge exchange mechanism in addition to a multi-stakeholder coordination mechanism with regular meetings and adequate participation from Government and non-Government</p> <p>5 The multi-stakeholder coordination mechanism reached full maturity with full participation from all Governmental and non-Governmental stakeholders and a joint community of practice</p> |
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SPECIFIC RESULTS:

The project supported the creation of the Interministerial **Roundtable on Chemical Substances and Products** under Decree 504/2019. The roundtable comprises technical representatives of each of the 18 participating agencies with the mandate a) to work in an articulated manner in the design, implementation and execution of national policies on chemical substances and products, b) to ensure effective compliance with the commitments under the chemicals conventions, and c) to articulate objectives and generate common work commitments.

In addition, to **promote exchange of information** among the members of the Interministerial Roundtable a shared Google Drive folder³ was created.

Criterion 2.2: Level of development of legal framework/primary legislation

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| 0 Nothing was done | 2 The integration of the MEAs into national legislation was adopted |
| 1 The relevant authority proposed to integrate the MEAs into national legislation | 3 The MEAs were integrated into national legislation and being implemented |

SPECIFIC RESULTS:

The project supported to implement several legislative texts for the sound management of chemicals and hazardous waste.

- At the beginning of the project, the Directorate responsible for the execution of the Special Programme did not exist. The Administrative Decision No. 311/201 established its primary responsibilities, missions, and functions of the Directorate.
- The Decree 504/2019 established the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development as the Authority of Application of the Multilateral Environmental Agreements. The decree was signed and approved by the Argentine Republic.
- Other activities were also carried out to update the existing legislation:
 - A Draft Law to establish the **National Inventory of Chemicals** and mechanisms of risk management was prepared and was submitted to Congress for its parliamentary handling.
 - A Draft Law "**Minimum Environmental Standards for the integral management of Hazardous waste**" to update Law 24.051 was prepared and submitted to Congress. It includes a new system of information management and other concepts related to waste issues.

Criterion 2.3: Level of development of regulatory framework/secondary legislation

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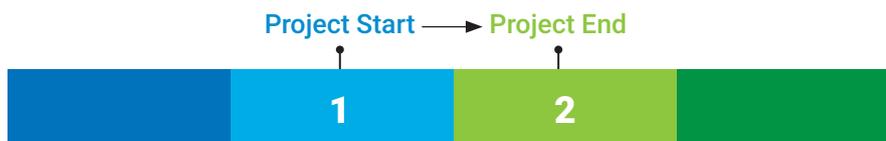
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| 0 Nothing was done | 2 The regulations were adopted |
| 1 The relevant authority proposed to develop regulations | 3 The regulations were in place and being implemented |

SPECIFIC RESULTS:

- The project developed and implemented **10 regulatory texts** to meet the requirements of the conventions (see footnote for full list⁴).
- In addition, the National Directorate of Hazardous Substances and Waste:
 - prepared a **regulatory compendium** that brings together all the legislation in force on chemicals and hazardous waste with the aim to facilitate the access to information for the broader public; and
 - established new links with academia and civil associations and jointly **proposed complementary regulations** for hazardous substances and phytosanitary products, and good practices for the management of chemicals and their wastes.

Criterion 2.4: Submission of reports to MEAs to which the country is a party to

RAITING



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| 0 No reports were submitted | 2 The reports were drafted |
| 1 Only the outlines of the reports were prepared (unfinished draft) | 3 The reports were submitted to the relevant MEA Secretariat |

SPECIFIC RESULTS:

Argentina actively participated in many activities proposed by the BRS Conventions and Minamata Convention⁵. In addition, the project worked on supporting the preparation of reports for the Secretariats of the Conventions.

- Regarding the Stockholm Convention, Argentina has submitted all the 5 national reports and feedback from the BRS Secretariat indicates that the quality of the reports has improved between the cycles, reaching a good quality.
- Regarding the Basel Convention, Argentina submitted its annual reports for 2016, 2017, 2019 and 2020⁶. However, the report for 2018 was not transmitted.
- In addition, Argentina submitted additional information on a voluntary basis, such as the self-review of its legislation⁷.

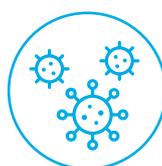
FACTORS AFFECTING PERFORMANCE



Gender: The level of participation of women in the capacity building activities was about 46%, which corresponds to the ratio of women within the Government administration. In terms of substance, the project developed a communication campaign⁸ for the proper use of household products and prevention of accidents and poisoning with household chemicals. Due to cultural and historical factors, they tended to be used mainly by women.



Socio-political factor: During the life of the project, two significant events occurred at the institutional level that had an impact on the development of the activities. The first was a process of reorganization of the entire national cabinet, which included the change of hierarchy level, transforming the Ministry into a Secretariat. The second change was a product of the national and provincial elections of 2019, which resulted in a different political party in charge, and a new organization of the national cabinet, hierarchizing the environmental portfolio at the Ministry level. This had an impact on the forms and organization of the work of the project staff.

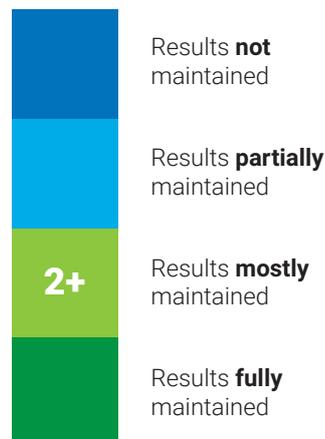


COVID-19: The set of measures adopted in the country in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, including quarantine and displacement ban, and the climate of uncertainty, led to the need to adapt and/or suspend previously planned face-to-face activities such as travel, events, training, and meetings. As a result, the activities and budget to be executed had to be modified and a 15-month extension of the SP completion date had to be requested.

SUSTAINABILITY

- The project **results have been sustained** through the government domestic financing and the established institutional capacities and mechanisms.
- Knowledge generated in governmental and non-governmental actors that is applied to day-to-day management and activities.
- Interministerial Roundtable on Substances and Chemicals continues its meetings.
- The National Directorate of Chemical Substances and Products is functioning with no major restrictions.
- Support was received from GEF (Global Environment Facility) for the implementation of UNDP Project ARG 20/G27 **“Environmentally sound management of POPs, mercury and other hazardous substances in Argentina”**.
- All current regulations created to comply with the agreements are still in effect.
- The upcoming presidential elections (2023) may impact the maintenance of the results of the project, since when new authorities and ministers take office, all areas of the State are subject to revisions and restructuring. Therefore, the continuity of the National Directorate of Hazardous Substances and Waste depends on the interests and objectives of the future officers.

RAITING After the End of the Project



LESSONS LEARNED

The project was comprehensive in the sense that it created a new technical directorate at the state level, proposed new legislation and adapted the country to comply with the pace required by international conventions, but there are opportunities still for Argentina to expand its strategy by creating a **database linked to chemical substances**.

The turnover of staff for political reasons and the limited recognition of technical expertise or career civil servants, forces to train new staff repeatedly, limiting the continuity of policies and a stronger long-term orientation. As previously mentioned, changes in government can hinder the continuity of programs and the officials in charge of their execution, regardless of their quality or expected results.

A training plan for officers to improve the capabilities for the sound management of chemicals and their reporting to the different MEAs is very helpful. The knowledge is generated within the responsible entity and does not depend on activities offered by other affiliated institutions.

¹ 27 training courses/workshops, 6 training webinars and 5 summits/meetings

² By Administrative Decision 262/2020, the Directorate of Chemical Substances and Wastes was elevated to a National Directorate. At the end of 2021, the Directorate was renamed the National Directorate of Hazardous Substances and Waste. In the organizational chart, the Hazardous Waste Coordination Department operates under the Directorate. There are also two additional work teams within the Directorate: The Chemical Substances Unit and the Transboundary Movements Unit. At the time of the final report, the Directorate had a total of 39 staff members.

³ Google Drive is not an official platform for the exchange of information within the Argentine State, but it does serve to overcome administrative barriers.

⁴ Full list: 1) Decree to formalize the Secretariat of Environment and Sustainable Development as the designated National Authority (DNA) in Argentina; 2) Administrative decision to require intervention from the DNA in customs for tariff codes reached by Rotterdam Convention; 3) National regulations for the analysis of chemicals listed in the Annex III of Rotterdam Convention; 4) Administrative decisions to require intervention from the DNA in customs for tariff codes reached by Minamata Convention; 5) Ratification file of the Stockholm amendments; 6) Ratification file for the ratification of the amendment on plastic waste of the Basel Convention; 7) Development of the Resolution 355/2020 on environmental management and elimination of PCBs; 8) Development of the Resolution 291/2020 on the restrictions of the production, imports and exports, trade, and use of POPs under the scope of the Stockholm Convention; 9) Development of a Resolution on imports and exports procedures related to Rotterdam Convention Regulations; and 10) New regulation issued in order to comply with Minamata Convention.

⁵ In relation to the **Basel Convention**, Argentina sent technical representatives in working groups related to marine debris and microplastics, electronic waste, plastic waste, mercury and, technical guidelines for the environmentally sound management of plastic waste. In relation to the **Rotterdam Convention**, Argentina prepared and evaluated documents to be sent to the Chemical Review Committee (CRC) and participated in the CRC panel of experts. In relation to the **Stockholm Convention**, Argentina sent technical representatives to the Persistent Organic Pollutants Review Committee, the Best Available Technologies and Best Environmental Practices (BAT/BEP), the Polychlorinated Biphenyls Small Working Group (PCB SWIG), and the PCBs Elimination Network. In relation to the **Minamata Convention**, Argentina sent technical representatives in working groups related to effectiveness, mercury wastes, releases, contaminated sites, and compliance committee. In addition, 1) Argentina also participated in the Conferences of the Parties, for which it held preparatory meetings of the technicians of the Directorate of Chemicals with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other relevant government agencies, industry associations, NGOs, and academia, 2) it conducted a Risk Assessment with technical support from FAO and the Rotterdam Secretariat, and 3) Developed an internal process to respond to Rotterdam Convention the Prior Informed Consent (PIC) requests with the Active participation in the Transboundary Movements Unit (UMT).

⁶ The report for 2016 was late and incomplete, the report for 2017 was on time and complete, the report for 2019 was complete and the report for 2020 was on time and is currently under review.

⁷ Document UNEP/CHW/CC.15/5/Add.1 and UNEP/CHW/CC.15/INF/8

⁸ This campaign included dissemination videos, content for social networks, and a webinar. All this content is published and available on the official website of the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development. The videos are also available on [Youtube](#) and on the [channel](#) of the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development. These activities were framed within the framework of a Communication Plan, which actually differs from the one included in the PCA, since the purpose of the former was to communicate to the relevant stakeholders about the functioning of the project and the working spaces (IWG, scientific-academic working group).