



Project: Strengthening the synergies between the Basel, Rotterdam, Stockholm and Minamata Conventions at the national level in the Republic of Serbia

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

RESULTS

Overall Assessment

The effectiveness of the project was high as it achieved all the targets at output and intermediate outcome levels. The project contributed to strengthening institutional capacity of the country by a) establishing a coordination mechanism for the management of chemicals and waste, b) developing an IT infrastructure for synergistic data collection and reporting under BRS-M Conventions, c) building capacities of relevant stakeholders on sound chemicals management issues, and d) by providing relevant institutions with important policy and guidance documents.

Implementing partner:
Ministry of Environment
Protection of Serbia with
UNDP as executing agency

Agreement timeframe:
June 2018 to June 2021

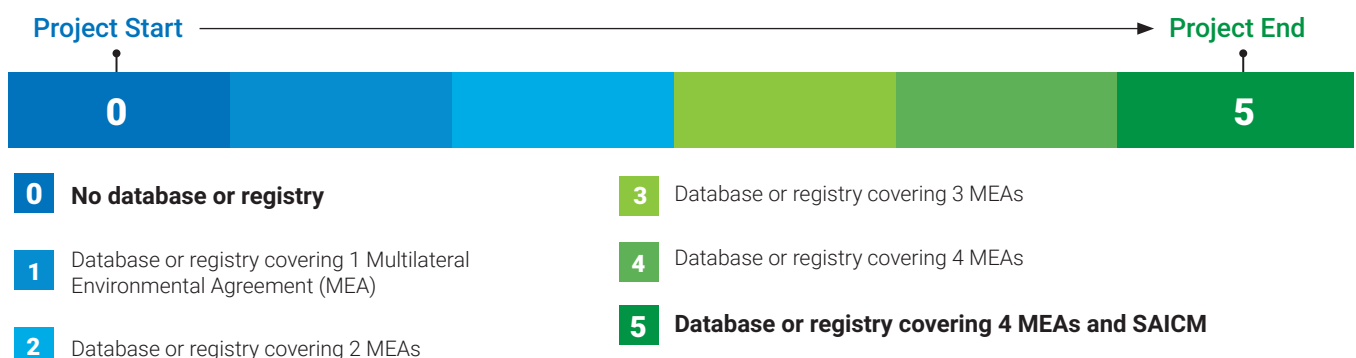
Budget: 250,000 USD

Results & progress by Core Indicator Criteria

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

Criterion 1.1: Level of development of national chemical/waste database

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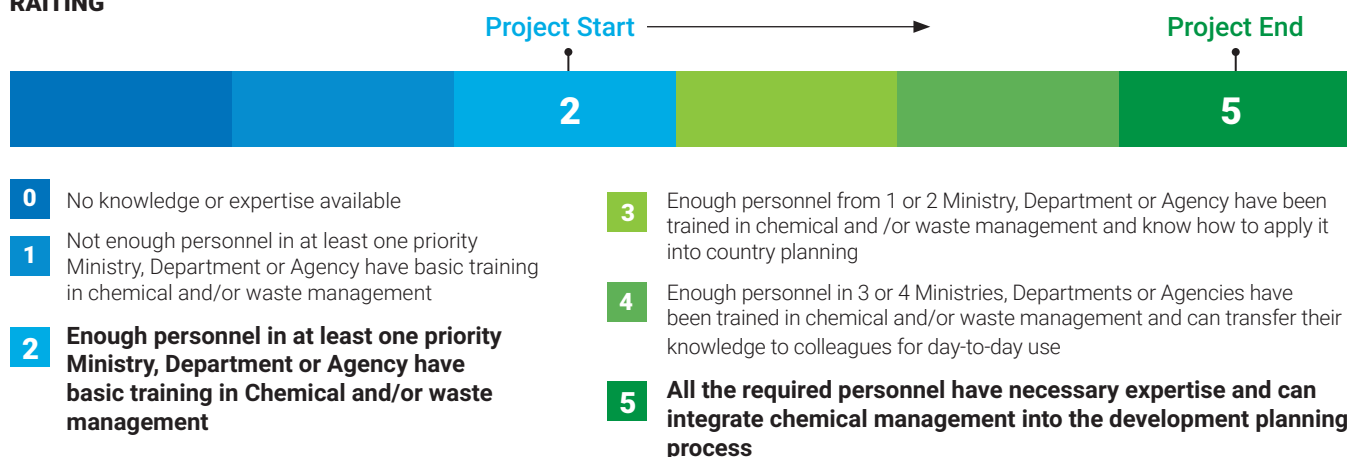


SPECIFIC RESULTS:

- **The project assisted the Government of Serbia with the establishment of a Joint Information System (JIS) for data collection and reporting under the BRS and Minamata Conventions** which speeded up data collection/consolidation processes. The project produced two videos on the IT system use and developed user and system administrator manuals¹ to ensure the proper use of the developed system by the relevant stakeholders. In addition, several trainings were organized for different users², such as focal points of the BRS conventions, data providers, and the ICT unit of the Ministry of Environment Protection (MoEP). The responsibility for the JIS system maintenance lies with MoEP³ which is hosting the system (<https://brsm.ekologija.gov.rs>).

Criterion 1.2: level of necessary for chemical/waste management expertise

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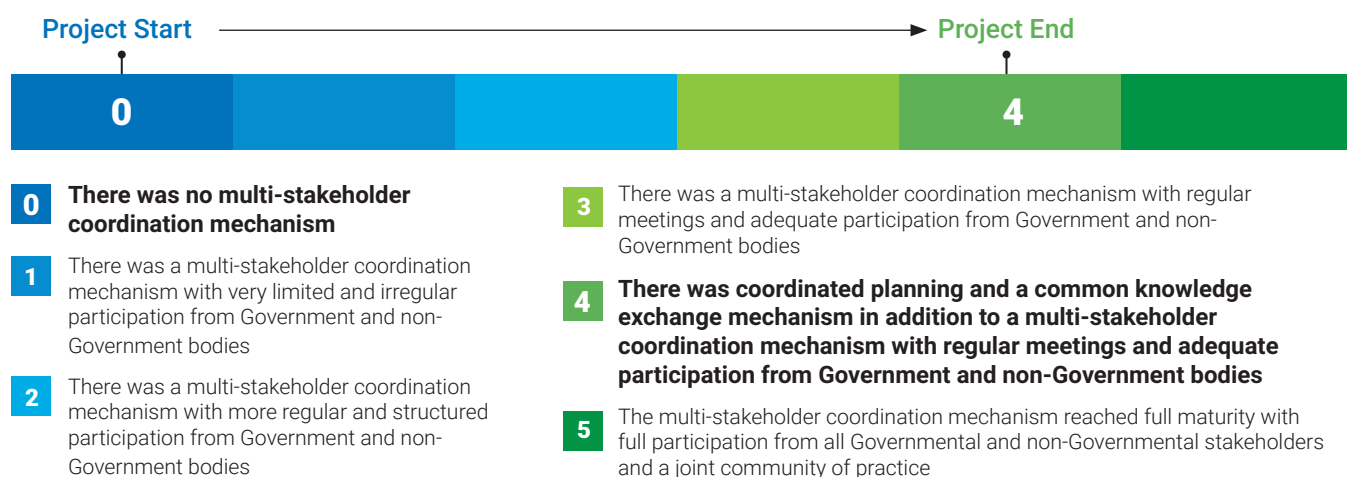


SPECIFIC RESULTS:

- **The project strengthened the capacities of national institutions for the development of policies and regulations and mainstreaming SMC into the development planning processes through:**
 - Holding capacity building events, including two workshops for decision-makers and experts, one workshop for academia and CSO representatives, one workshop for industry and business sector representatives, and initial and final project conferences for diverse types of stakeholders⁴. The final project conference was a hybrid event attended by over 50 representatives from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, North Macedonia, Serbia and Slovenia, which helped with the exchange of SMC experiences.
 - Provision of guidance documents to relevant stakeholders (see Criterion 2.1).
 - Peer-to-peer learning with the colleagues from Moldova, where the two country representatives shared their experiences related to SMC management issues.

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

RAITING



SPECIFIC RESULTS:

- The project supported establishment of the national coordination mechanism for chemicals and waste management in support of monitoring and implementation of the BRS and Minamata Conventions. This mechanism, in the form of a Working Group (WG), was created in July 2020 with the Decree of MoEP. The project helped with the elaboration of the rules and procedures for the WG, identification of its members⁵ and development of the workplan for the WG functioning.
- Criterion 1.4 received high rating due to the highly participatory and coordinated planning processes that took place during the project's implementation, with the participation of WG's members and other relevant stakeholders.

Criterion 2.1: Level of development and implementation of chemical/waste management policy, plan or strategy

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- | | |
|--|--|
| 0 There was no strategy, policy or plan | 2 The strategy, policy or plan was adopted |
| 1 The strategy, policy or plan was proposed | 3 The strategy, policy or plan was in place and being implemented |

SPECIFIC RESULTS:

The project contributed to the elaboration of important policy and guidance documents for the implementation of BRS conventions, including:

- Action Plan for the synergistic implementation of the BRS-M Conventions that included many measures implemented by the project (e.g. the establishment of the national coordination mechanism and IT system for BRS-M monitoring and implementation)
- Manual for customs and other enforcement bodies on control of illegal traffic of hazardous wastes
- Manual for the recycling industry concerning identification and separation of PBDEs⁶ from the e-waste
- Policy paper to address priority mercury-related issues in the Republic of Serbia. This paper provided an analysis of the current situation and defined the desired change, including the ratification of Minamata Convention, development of the national programme to reduce mercury emissions from the energy sector, national programme for decommissioning of chlor-alkali electrolysis plants including decontamination of contaminated sites.
- Assessment of remediation costs of two mercury contaminated sites which, according to BRS-M focal points, provided an additional justification for ratifying the Minamata convention.

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

RAITING



- | | |
|---|--|
| 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 strengthened the regulatory framework for SMC by supporting:

- The elaboration of Draft Regulation on Construction Waste Management. The draft was approved by the working group, and its adoption is expected by the new government in 2022.
- The elaboration of Forms for Notification of Final Regulatory Action (FRA) to ban or severely restrict chemicals under the Rotterdam Convention⁷. In total 63 forms for notification of FRA were developed under the project, notifying about the ban for 61 chemicals and severe restrictions for two chemicals. Part of these notifications were sent to the Secretariat as the collection of additional information for those forms continues. By the time of this assessment, the Rotterdam Convention Database of Notifications⁸ of FRA contains 10 notifications from Serbia which were published in December 2020.

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

RAITING



- | | |
|--|--|
| 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:

- The project contributed to improving the reporting system under the BRS conventions and ensuring the submission of relevant reports. According to the BRS focal points in the country this was made possible thanks to the joint information system that improved coordination of data collection and reporting activities. It should be noted, however, that the JIS system became operational only towards the end of the project.
- During the project implementation the government of Serbia submitted:
 - Three reports for 2018, 2019 and 2020 under the Basel Convention⁹. The completeness of reports was rated high for the years 2016 (prior to the project), 2018 and 2019 by the Basel Convention Secretariat¹⁰. The 2020 report was, at the time of the Assessment, still under the review by the Secretariat of the Convention.
 - National Report to the Stockholm Convention for 2018 in a timely manner. As the reporting under this convention is done once in four years, the next report is due in 2022. The Stockholm Convention secretariat noted that the quality of the reporting was good and that the country responded to most of the questions in its last report.

As noted under Criterion 2.3 the country submitted several Forms for Notification of FRAs under the Rotterdam Convention and 10 notifications were published in the FRA database in 2020.

FACTORS AFFECTING PERFORMANCE



Gender: About half of participants of the project-organized events were women and the content of developed materials was directed towards broader population or specific groups (e.g. customs officers) that was equally applicable to both women and men.



COVID-19: The project was slightly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and that was the reason for requesting the extension. The project, however, adapted successfully to COVID-19 restrictions by conducting online and/or hybrid meetings.

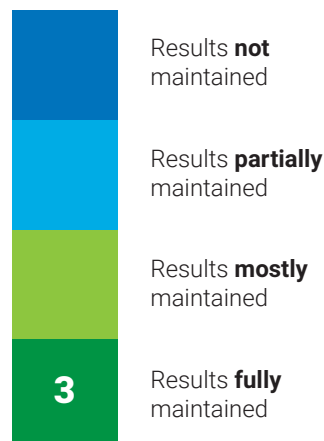


Vulnerable population groups: The project promoted the protection of health from harmful effects of hazardous waste and chemicals by conducting an awareness raising campaign for the Roma population involved in the collection of secondary raw materials¹¹.

SUSTAINABILITY

- The project results are **fully maintained**. One of the major results, the coordination mechanism and IT infrastructure, is still in place and financially supported for collecting data and meeting the reporting requirements of BRS Conventions and Minamata Convention.
- The project-developed policy guidance documents and manuals were disseminated to relevant stakeholders and are in use. One of the successful cases, according to the respondents to this assessment, is the use of the specially developed manual for the recycling industry. Representatives of this industry currently separate potentially Bromine-containing plastic parts from e-waste, when prior the project only metals were separated. The beneficiaries learnt, for example, how to use the same instruments and equipment for separating plastic parts of electronics and what procedures to follow thereupon.
- The government personnel whose capacities were built within the project, especially the focal points of the conventions, continue functioning in the SMC field and are ready to provide the necessary follow-up. They will push for the ratification of the Minamata Convention once the new government is in place, and they will also work on the second phase of the SP project that builds on the results of the previous one.

RAITING After the End of the Project



LESSONS LEARNED

Close collaboration between the executing agency (UNDP) and the government during the project implementation ensured the ownership of results and subsequent follow-up.

Highly participatory processes promote sustainability of results and strengthen collaboration between the government and non-government actors. The project, for example, developed the JIS through regular consultations with relevant stakeholders to ensure that the system responds to end-users needs. The project also conducted joint meetings and workshops for the government and industry representatives that helped public servants to better understand the industry concerns, communicate certain requirements and promote compliance with legal provisions.

Establishment of synergies among BRS Conventions and Minamata Convention (e.g. through coordination mechanisms and the JIS) enables policy makers and other stakeholders to effectively monitor and support the implementation of those conventions.

¹ This manual contained instructions on the installation, configuration, backup and restore procedures.

² All users have their own login details.

³ The engaged IT company was supporting the system maintenance until June 2022.

⁴ Each of the workshops was attended by about 40 individuals.

⁵ The group was composed of the representatives of all relevant government institutions, academia and Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Serbia which is a national association of Serbian businesses. The MoEP acts as an ad hoc Secretariat since all four Nationally Designated Authorities and Focal Points are within that ministry.

⁶ Polybrominated Diphenyl Ethers

⁷ Article 5 of the Rotterdam Convention sets out the obligations of Parties with respect to notifying the Secretariat of their final regulatory actions. If a Party takes an FRA to ban or severely restrict a chemical for health or environment reasons, it shares the information with all Parties by notifying the action to the Secretariat. Upon receipt of a notification of final regulatory action the Secretariat must verify whether it meets the information requirements of Annex I of the Convention. If the notification is found to be complete a summary is prepared and published in the PIC Circular. The summary briefly describes the scope of the action and the reasons, including information on hazards and risks of the chemical to human health or environment and the expected effect of the regulatory action.

⁸ <http://www.pic.int/Procedures/NotificationsofFinalRegulatoryActions/Database?tpl=std>

⁹ The 2018 report under the Basel Convention was submitted in a timely manner, while the reports for 2019 and 2020 were submitted late.

¹⁰ The report for 2017, which is also prior to the project, was not submitted.

¹¹ The project conducted Training of Trainer trainings for young Roma population and produced and disseminated different brochures in 30 towns, including one with pictures. Such brochures responded to the needs of Roma people with low level of education.