



Global Environment Facility

GEF/C.22/Inf.4
October 28, 2003

GEF Council
November 19-21, 2003

OPERATIONAL PROGRAM ON PERSISTENT ORGANIC POLLUTANTS (OP#14)

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	1
CONVENTION GUIDANCE	2
GUIDING PRINCIPLES	2
PROGRAM OBJECTIVE	3
PROGRAM OUTCOMES.....	3
ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES	4
Capacity building.....	4
On-the-ground interventions.....	5
Targeted Research.....	6
FINANCING.....	6
MONITORING AND EVALUATION	7
SUSTAINABILITY AND REPLICATION	7

INTRODUCTION

1. Mounting evidence of damage to human health and the environment has focused the attention of the international community on a category of substances referred to as Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs). POPs are pesticides, industrial chemicals or unwanted by-products of industrial processes or combustion. They are characterized by *persistence* – the ability to resist degradation in various media (air, water, sediments, and organisms); *bio-accumulation* – the ability to accumulate in living tissues at levels higher than those in the surrounding environment; and *potential for long range transport* – the potential to travel great distances from the source of release through various media (air, water, and migratory species). Because of these properties, POPs can be found throughout the world, including in areas far from their original source¹. The harm these chemical substances can cause to humans and animals includes disruption of the endocrine system², suppression of the immune system, reproductive dysfunction, and developmental abnormalities. Organisms at the top of food chains such as predatory birds, marine mammals, and humans absorb the greatest concentrations of POPs.

2. The realization of the threats POPs pose to people and the environment led a number of countries to introduce policies and regulations to manage an increasing number of these substances. It became evident, however, that efforts by individual countries were not sufficient to reduce the levels of POPs in the environment because of the transboundary movements of POPs. Countries began therefore to seek bilateral and multilateral cooperative actions that culminated in the adoption of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants in May 2001. The GEF has been designated as the principal entity entrusted with the operations of the financial mechanism of the Convention, *ad interim*.

3. The involvement of the GEF in addressing POPs and other global contaminants dates back to 1995 when the GEF Operational Strategy³, and later the Contaminant-Based Operational Program⁴, under the International Waters focal area, were adopted. The GEF's assistance focused on persistent toxic substances specifically in transboundary water bodies. The designation of the GEF as the financial mechanism for the Stockholm Convention provided an opportunity to expand the focus on POPs beyond transboundary waterbodies.

4. At its meeting in Beijing in October 2002, the GEF Assembly designated POPs as one of the GEF's six focal areas, making POPs a major focus of GEF assistance. With this designation, the GEF can provide assistance to eligible countries to develop and implement activities on POPs and on "chemicals management as they relate to the GEF focal areas." To expand its delivery capacity in the field of POPs, the GEF designated the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United

¹ Although there are large data gaps, particularly in developing countries, compounds such as PCBs or DDT have been found nearly everywhere they have been sought (see for example reports from the GEF funded Regionally-Based Assessment of Persistent Toxic Substances: Regional Reports, UNEP 2002; Global Report, UNEP 2003).

² See for example "Global Assessment of the State-of-the-Science of Endocrine Disruptors", IPCS/WHO, 2002.

³ Operational Strategy of the Global Environment Facility, October 1995

http://www.thegef.org/Operational_Policies/Operational_Strategy/operational_strategy.html

⁴ Contaminant-based Operational Program (OP#10)

http://www.thegef.org/Operational_Policies/Operational_Programs/OP_10_English.pdf

Nations (FAO) as GEF Executing Agencies⁵, in addition to the regional development banks⁶ and the three GEF Implementing Agencies⁷.

5. The GEF's initial support for the implementation of the Stockholm Convention focused on assisting developing countries and countries with economies in transition to prepare National Implementation Plans (NIPs), as required under Article 7 of the Stockholm Convention⁸. A NIP provides a framework for a country to develop and implement, in a systematic and participatory way, priority policy and regulatory reforms, capacity building, and investment programs on POPs.

6. This document, the GEF Operational Program on Persistent Organic Pollutants, provides the framework to guide the development of activities eligible for GEF funding of incremental costs to protect human health and the environment from POPs.

CONVENTION GUIDANCE

7. The Stockholm Convention is aimed at protecting human health and the environment from POPs. As an entity entrusted with the operation of the financial mechanism for the Convention, the GEF functions under the guidance of, and is accountable to, the Conference of the Parties (COP)⁹. The GEF, in its operations, will take into account guidance on policies and programs from the COP. It will seek to promote synergies with the relevant program priorities of the three other global conventions for which the GEF is the/a financial mechanism – the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change – as well as with the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

8. The following principles will guide the development and implementation of projects and programs for GEF assistance under the POPs focal area:

- (a) Strong country commitment and ownership is essential for the effective implementation of POPs reduction/elimination activities. Priority policy and regulatory reforms, capacity building, and investment needs identified in a country's NIP will be the primary framework for GEF support.
- (b) An appropriate enabling environment (policies, regulations, etc) is essential for effective and sustainable actions to address POPs.

⁵ Under so called "expanded opportunities".

⁶ African Development Bank, Asian Development Bank, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, and Inter-American Development Bank.

⁷ The three Implementing Agencies of the GEF are UNDP, UNEP and the World Bank.

⁸ See "Initial guidelines for enabling activities for the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants", GEF/C.17/4, May 2001, <http://www.thegef.org/Documents/C.17.4.pdf>

⁹ See paragraph 6 of the "Instrument for the Establishment of the Restructured Global Environment Facility", 1994, revised 2002

- (c) Countries should seek to mainstream environmentally sound POPs management practices into sustainable development programs, strategies, and frameworks for assistance.
- (d) Broad stakeholder consultation is essential at all stages of project and program development and implementation.
- (e) All information related to the health and safety of humans and the environment will be made public.
- (f) POPs projects and programs will support the objectives of the Stockholm Convention and seek synergies with the other GEF focal areas – biological diversity, international waters, land degradation, climate change and ozone layer depletion¹⁰, emphasizing integrated and cross-sectoral approaches.
- (g) GEF-funded interventions to support the implementation of the Stockholm Convention will seek synergies and coordination with the activities of other global¹¹ and regional¹² chemicals-related conventions or agreements.
- (h) Partnerships are crucial for the successful development and implementation of projects and programs on POPs. The GEF will catalyze partnerships for the delivery of financial and technical assistance with the countries eligible for GEF financing, bilateral and multilateral development agencies, intergovernmental organizations and their coordinating bodies, the private sector, foundations, NGOs, and other organizations.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVE

9. The objective of the operational program on Persistent Organic Pollutants (OP#14) is to provide assistance, on the basis of incremental costs, to developing countries and countries with economies in transition to reduce and eliminate releases of POPs into the environment. This objective is consistent with that of the Stockholm Convention which is aimed at protecting human health and the environment from POPs.

PROGRAM OUTCOMES

¹⁰ See for example “Persistent organic pollutants country strategy development: experiences and lessons learned under the Montreal Protocol”, World Bank, 1999.

¹¹ In particular the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal, and the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent (PIC) Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade, as well as the Bahia Declaration on Chemical Safety and the World Summit on Sustainable Development Plan of Implementation.

¹² Such as the Bamako Convention on the Ban of the Import into Africa and the Control of Transboundary Movement and Management of Hazardous Wastes Within Africa, and the Waigani Convention to Ban the Importation into Forum Island Countries of Hazardous and Radioactive Wastes and to Control the Transboundary Movement and Management of Hazardous Wastes Within the South Pacific Region.

10. The expected outcomes of GEF-supported interventions on POPs include the following:
- (a) The institutional and human resource capacity for the management of POPs is strengthened.
 - (b) The policy and regulatory framework is strengthened to facilitate environmentally sound management of POPs and other chemicals.
 - (c) There is significant improvement in the reduction¹³ of the use of POPs for disease vector control, termite control and agricultural production.
 - (d) Safe and cost-effective alternatives to POPs are available to developing countries and countries with economies in transition.
 - (e) Stockpiles of POPs are managed, and wastes that contain POPs are managed and contained or disposed of, in an environmentally safe manner.

ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

11. The GEF will provide funding, on the basis of agreed incremental costs, for three types of activities to address the issue of POPs – capacity building, on-the-ground interventions, and targeted research. This assistance will focus primarily on the national level, and, to a lesser extent, on regional and global activities.

Capacity building

12. Capacity building activities are aimed at strengthening the capacity of developing countries and countries with economies in transition to address the threats posed by POPs, based on priorities identified in their NIPs.

13. Activities eligible for GEF funding may include:

- (a) Strengthening of human and institutional capacity, including: capacity to perform inventories of stockpiles of POPs and wastes that contain POPs, human and environmental risk assessment, development of management options and analysis of cost-effectiveness, use of economic instruments to promote and facilitate environmentally sound POPs management, and development of institutional mechanisms for integrated management of POPs;
- (b) Strengthening and harmonization of the policy and regulatory framework for integrated and cross-sectoral approaches to POPs management, as well as support for the inclusion of POPs-related issues as priorities in countries' development strategies and assistance frameworks;

¹³ Leading to a reduction in the number of countries that request specific exemptions under the Stockholm Convention, and eventual elimination of the need for specific exemptions.

- (c) Strengthening of monitoring and enforcement capacity to ensure compliance with regulatory controls, including addressing the illegal traffic of POPs and trans-sectoral flows (e.g. use of vector control products for agricultural pest control);
- (d) Developing capacity to assess technologies and management practices, including Best Available Techniques and Best Environmental Practices (BAT/BEP), and promoting and facilitating the transfer of viable and cost-effective options and management practices based on the application of international standards;
- (e) Developing and implementing public awareness /information / environmental education programs; and
- (f) Facilitating dissemination of experiences and lessons learned, and promoting information exchange through country participation in the clearinghouse mechanism.

On-the-ground interventions

14. On-the-ground interventions to assist eligible countries to reduce and eliminate POPs emissions include the following¹⁴:

15. Promote/effect transition to environmentally sound alternatives. Activities eligible for GEF funding may include:

- (a) Promoting access to, and the transfer of, clean and environmentally sound alternative technologies, products, and management practices¹⁵, such as integrated pest and vector management and BAT/BEP for the reduction of POPs releases;
- (b) Demonstrating viable and cost-effective alternatives to POPs products, and to the processes and practices that lead to the releases of POPs; and
- (c) Designing and implementing management programs¹⁶ to reduce the use of, and ultimately to phase out, POPs.

16. Facilitate the environmentally sound management of stockpiles and the disposal of wastes that contain POPs. Activities eligible for GEF funding may include:

- (a) Identification and environmentally sound management of POPs stockpiles;
- (b) Identification, containment and stabilization of wastes that contain POPs and related affected areas; and

¹⁴ GEF programs dealing with hazardous wastes will require an appropriate assessment of the environmental impact of these activities following established Agency practices and relevant international and other standards.

¹⁵ Including indigenous knowledge.

¹⁶ Leading to reduction of the need for country specific exemptions.

- (c) Environmentally sound destruction¹⁷ of wastes that contain POPs and remediation of related affected sites, where warranted, taking into account the assessment of the risks posed to ecosystems and human health and cost-effectiveness.

Targeted Research

17. GEF's targeted research is aimed at providing information and tools to improve the quality and effectiveness of GEF projects and programs. Taking into account the wealth of research existing in some parts of the world, and the large information gaps in other parts, potential areas for targeted research¹⁸ on POPs-related issues may include:

- (a) The development/promotion of cost-effective rapid assessment methodologies, including biological markers for environmental and human monitoring, in order to address data gaps in GEF-eligible countries that currently hinder sound management decisions, as well as raising awareness of the issue;
- (b) Development of methodologies for exposure assessment in susceptible populations, as well as identification of exposure pathways in particular scenarios (e.g. malaria areas), in order to better target POPs reduction efforts;
- (c) Testing and demonstrating methodologies and techniques to identify and address the contaminated sites related to stockpiles and wastes, with a view to reducing long-term costs and logistical difficulties associated with stockpile management;
- (d) Characterization of the behavior, fate, and impact of POPs under conditions prevalent in developing countries, including the potential for their remobilization through dredging of harbors or channels, to better understand the sources and sinks of POPs in these areas and their contribution to global contamination, and
- (e) Methods to estimate releases in order to increase the knowledge base for planning and investments in POPs reduction measures.

FINANCING

18. The GEF provides grant or concessional funding to meet the agreed incremental costs of measures to achieve agreed global environmental benefits. Actions to address the reduction and elimination of POPs emissions will often lead to local and national benefits, most directly in the form of reduced threats to human health, as well as regional and global environmental benefits

¹⁷ In the context of the overall toxic waste management strategy of a country, taking into account possible synergies, for example potential opportunities to integrate POPs disposal with the destruction of halogenated organics arising as wastes from the Montreal Protocol.

¹⁸ Based on report of the STAP Brainstorming on POPs, Barbados, Feb. 2000

(GEF incremental actions). Therefore it is expected that projects will be cofinanced and that project proponents, with the assistance of the GEF agencies, will mobilize cofinancing to cover complementary national sustainable development activities, i.e. baseline activities.

19. Principles to determine incremental costs may include consideration of the additional cost to alter or replace chemical products, technologies, and/or management practices related to pest and vector management, industrial chemicals, or unwanted by-products, to achieve global environment benefits. To a large extent, the increment of GEF funding for POPs reduction and elimination activities will be based operationally on cost sharing¹⁹.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

20. GEF-funded projects and programs on POPs will be subject to the monitoring and evaluation procedures and requirements of the GEF. At the project level, it is expected that each project will develop impact or outcome indicators, with baseline information developed during the first year of implementation. The GEF will develop program-level indicators to monitor the overall performance and outcomes/impacts of activities under the POPs focal area. Emphasis will be placed on the dissemination of lessons learned at the portfolio level and the exchange of experience between clusters of related projects.

SUSTAINABILITY AND REPLICATION

21. The sustainability and replication of interventions are cornerstones of the GEF and they underline the GEF's catalytic role. Different types of interventions will have different levels of sustainability and replication potential. For example, for interventions such as the destruction of obsolete stockpiles (wastes) containing POPs, sustainability would be achieved by implementing prevention measures to ensure that stockpiling does not (re)occur and future releases to the environment are prevented²⁰. Lessons learned in GEF projects will be widely disseminated to facilitate replication of good management practices and technologies, at the national, regional and global levels.

¹⁹ The nature of POPs is such that the regional/global aspect of POPs contamination is time-dependent: for example whilst a particular POPs waste might pose an immediate direct threat to human health locally, over a longer period of time the persistent POPs it contains will be mobilized in the global environment.

²⁰ Or, for another example, the prevention of the spread of illegal uses would contribute, and be necessary, to ensure the sustainability of a program that would remove a POP from use in a particular country.