



Global Environment Facility

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**NOTE ON THE TECHNICAL ASPECTS OF THE DESIGNATION OF A
GEF FOCAL AREA RELATING TO PERSISTENT ORGANIC
POLLUTANTS**

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Conference of Plenipotentiaries meeting in Stockholm in May 2001 concluded the negotiations for an “International Legally Binding Instrument for Implementing International Action on Certain Persistent Organic Pollutants” with the adoption of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs). Following Council decision, the GEF, during the second round of negotiations, had expressed its readiness in serving as the financial mechanism for the future agreement, should the negotiators so desire. At the final 5th Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee meeting (INC), the negotiators agreed on the provisions for financial assistance, and requested the GEF to act, on an interim basis, as the “principal entity” of the financial mechanism (Art. 14, Stockholm Convention), until the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP) or until such time as the COP decides which institutional structure should be designated to fulfil this role.

2. This was endorsed by the Conference of Plenipotentiaries which passed a number of resolutions addressed directly to the GEF. In particular, the Conference requested “*the Assembly of the Global Environment Facility to consider establishing a new focal area through amendment of the Instrument for the Establishment of the Restructured Global Environment Facility in order to support the implementation of the Convention*” (resolution 2.2.) and further requested “*the Council of the Global Environment Facility to establish as soon as possible and implement an operational program for persistent organic pollutants, taking into account future decisions of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee*” (resolution 2.3.).

3. In response to these requests, the GEF Council at its 17th Session requested “*the Secretariat, in consultation with the Implementing Agencies and the Trustee, to prepare proposed textual amendments to the Instrument concerning the designation of a GEF focal area relating to persistent organic pollutants for consideration by the Council at its next meeting with a view to the Council recommending approval of such amendments by the Assembly at its meeting in October 2002*” (Summary of the Chairs, decision on Agenda Item 6), and “*requested the Secretariat, in consultation with the Implementing Agencies and Executing Agencies, to prepare for its consideration a paper examining the technical aspects of the designation of a focal area relating to persistent organic pollutants, including the scope of the proposed focal area with regard to other toxic chemicals*” (Summary of the Chairs, decision on Agenda item 9). The present paper is in response to this last request.

II. GEF’S INTERVENTIONS IN THE FIELD OF POPs

4. Following the adoption of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-Based Activities in 1995, the Operational Strategy of the GEF (GEF, 1996) identified among the priority concerns to be addressed within the International Waters Focal Area, the “*control of land-based sources of surface and groundwater pollution that degrade the quality of the international waters*” with special emphasis on the “*prevention of releases of persistent toxic substances and heavy metals*”. This guidance has been incorporated into Operational Program number 10 (GEF, 1997) that provides the framework for GEF support to activities that “*help characterize the nature, extent, and significance of these contaminants*

and support the agreed incremental cost of processes and measures that demonstrate prevention or reduction of releases in recipient countries.” Operational Program number 10 makes specific reference to toxic pesticides, PCBs and dioxins.

5. Consistent with these programmatic objectives, GEF, beginning in 1998, granted preparatory funding for a number of demonstration projects dealing with integrated pesticide management, testing more benign alternatives to persistent toxic substances (PTS) and developing safer disposal technologies. A major step was taken by the GEF Council in 1999 with the approval of the project *“Regionally Based Assessment of Persistent Toxic Substances”*, a global effort to provide priorities for action for a broader range of toxic and persistent chemicals than the twelve substances initially covered by the Stockholm Convention. The results of this project will be available in 2003. Annex 1 lists POPs and PTS projects under implementation or in preparation, including enabling activities.

6. In May 2001, at the same time that the Stockholm Convention was adopted, the GEF Council approved actions specifically designed to support the implementation of the Stockholm Convention. The first of these was the approval of *“Initial guidelines for enabling activities for the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants”* that are intended to facilitate capacity building in countries to enable them to meet their obligations under the Convention. The second was the approval of a project entitled *“Development of National Implementation Plans for the Management of Persistent Organic Pollutants”* aimed at assisting twelve pilot countries in this effort. Since then, funding has been approved by the GEF CEO for another 27 countries and additional proposals are in preparation. In September 2001, the GEF CEO approved a medium size project to convene, jointly with the interim Secretariat to the Convention, eight regional workshops during 2001-2002. These actions reflect the GEF’s commitment to raising the awareness of recipient countries of the availability of funding for POPs Enabling Activities and the acceptance of new GEF responsibilities in the chemical sector. It should be stressed that the approach adopted in the guidelines and in the design of the workshops reflects the interrelationships among the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, and the need for a coherent response to their requirements. Additional efforts are being considered that target different audiences or specific capacity building needs.

III. POTENTIAL SCOPE OF A FOCAL AREA RELATING TO PERSISTENT ORGANIC POLLUTANTS

7. In discussing the designation of a new focal area, two proposals have been put forward by Council at its 17th meeting:

- (a) either to designate the focal area as “Persistent Organic Pollutants” which would strictly restrict the focal area activities to POPs as defined in the Stockholm Convention, or
- (b) to designate an “Integrated Chemicals Management, especially Persistent Organic Pollutants” focal area which could potentially allow for a broader approach to chemical safety and persistent toxic substances.

8. It is important to note from the outset of this discussion that, in both cases, the overwhelming priority in the near to medium term (including in the allocation of resources) is for the implementation of the Stockholm Convention on POPs. As described in the business plan (GEF/C1.19/11), the GEF, in the next three years, will concentrate its efforts on funding the development of implementation plans for the Stockholm Convention on POPs for all eligible countries that so request, will test new and innovative approaches to alternatives and disposal of POPs through demonstration projects, and will initiate priority activities as they emerge from the National Implementation Plans in eligible countries.

Option 1: Proposed Scope, Advantages, and Operational Implications of a “Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs)” Focal Area

9. Activities under a POPs Focal Area will be developed in accordance with the program priorities approved by the future Conference of the Parties to the Stockholm Convention. The main advantage of this approach is to be fully consistent with the priorities of the Convention. It would be clear that GEF resources are committed to this focal area directly in support of the implementation of the Convention.

10. The Council, at its December 2000 meeting, has already taken note of the “*Elements for an Operational Program on POPs*” which would be further developed. The Operational Program will fully respond to the guidance of the Stockholm Convention and provide the criteria through which GEF funds would facilitate the implementation of the Convention. This OP would specifically support efforts to phase out, reduce, eliminate, and dispose of, substances whose characteristics have been recognized as justifying priority actions through the Convention process.

11. The wider range of persistent toxic substances would continue to be addressed through the Contaminant-based Operational Program (OP10), as they impact on international waters. More particularly, actions in support to the implementation of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities would continue to be funded through this window.

Option 2: Proposed Scope, Advantages, and Operational Implications of an “Integrated Chemicals Management, especially Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs)” Focal Area

12. Contemporary concerns are leading to globally accepted and environmentally sound chemicals management that encompasses production, trade, use and ultimate disposal. A comprehensive, collective, and coordinated response is being engendered to address the threats posed to human health and the environment by a broad range of chemicals that extends beyond the immediate international concerns about POPs. In broadening the scope of the focal area to integrated chemicals management with emphasis on POPs, the GEF would give a powerful signal to the international community that its involvement in issues related to chemicals management is expected to be long lasting and sustained. Moreover, it ensures that the GEF’s involvement can grow and evolve and continue to respond to new solicitations from our client countries and to new and emerging issues.

13. There is a growing realisation and consensus that the implementation of the global conventions will not be successful if it is not based on solid capacity building at the national level. The three chemical related conventions – the Basel Convention on Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes, the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade, and the Stockholm Convention on POPs - taken together, form a coherent “cradle to grave” approach to chemical safety, with Rotterdam putting in place safety nets and providing an “early warning” of potential risks, Stockholm banning those substances posing unacceptable risks, and Basel providing the context for the safe disposal of chemicals. When building capacity in chemicals management at the country level necessary for the implementation and ownership of the Stockholm Convention, the GEF efforts will opportunely strengthen countries’ capacity to address the implementation of the Basel and Rotterdam Conventions.

14. Initially, as with option 1, an Operational Program consistent with the guidance of the Stockholm Convention would be developed. Other operational programs or priority areas could be added in the future at the request of Council. A second OP could define the criteria for expanded action targeting persistent substances of global relevance including such global contaminants as potential POPs, organo-metallic compounds and heavy metals. Under this second OP, GEF would essentially support demonstration initiatives involving environmentally friendly technologies and industrial processes, integrated chemicals management practices (e.g. strengthening chemicals - including pesticides – legislation and regulations and strengthening the ability to enforce them, establishment of Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers, strengthening capacity of customs officials to limit the trade in banned or obsolete chemicals), assistance to the implementation of Integrated Pest Management programmes that seek to reduce the reliance of farmer communities on toxic and persistent pesticides, and targeted research.

15. This OP would subsume the Global Contaminant component of the existing OP10, and would therefore allow a rationalisation and harmonisation of GEF operations, as well as providing the possibility to address non International Waters issues. In order to ensure that funds would not be diverted from the priority implementation of the Stockholm Convention, the total resource allocations to this Operational Program would be kept at a fraction of the resources allocated to the “POPs” OP. Moreover, particular emphasis would be placed on the necessity to achieve on-the-ground tangible results, and on the catalytic role of the GEF whereby co-financing should be leveraged at a ratio of a minimum of 2 to 1.

16. The Council is invited to consider the two options presented above when considering proposed amendments to the Instrument.

2.

Capacity Building Support to Enabling Activities

Support for the Implementation of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (MSP under implementation; UNEP).

3. GLOBAL STRATEGIC PROJECTS

Regionally-based Assessment of Persistent Toxic Substances (under implementation; UNEP).

Demonstration Projects: Disposal Technologies

Demonstration of Viability and Removal of Barriers that Impede Adoption and Effective Implementation of Available, Non-combustion Technologies for Destroying Persistent Organic Pollutants (PDF-B; UNDP/UNIDO).

Demonstration Projects: Agricultural Pesticides

Reducing Pesticide Runoff to the Caribbean Sea (project submitted for Council approval May 2002; UNEP).

Reducing Reliance on Agricultural Pesticide Use and Establishing a Community Based Pollution Prevention System in the Senegal and Niger River Basins (PDF-B; UNEP/FAO).

Demonstration Projects: Control of Disease Vectors

Regional Program of Action and Demonstration of Sustainable Alternatives to DDT for Malaria Vector Control in Mexico and Central America (project submitted for Council approval May 2002; UNEP/WHO).

Prevention of Human and Environmental Exposure to DDT and other Toxic Pesticides and Strengthening of Malaria Control Programmes in Africa (PDF-B; UNEP/WHO).

Demonstration Projects: Food-chain Contamination

Persistent Toxic Substances (PTS), Food Security and Indigenous Peoples of the Russian North (MSP under implementation; UNEP/AMAP/RAIPON).

Demonstration Projects: Alternatives to PTS

Removal of Barriers to the Introduction of Cleaner Artisanal Gold Mining and Extraction Technologies (project under appraisal; UNDP/UNIDO).

**4. ENABLING ACTIVITIES (EXPEDITED PROCEDURE)
APPROVED AS OF APRIL 15 2002**

Algeria, Armenia, Bangladesh, Bolivia, Cote d'Ivoire, Croatia, Czech Rep., Fiji, Ghana, Hungary, Indonesia, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Macedonia, Mauritania, Nigeria, Philippines, Poland, Romania, Samoa, Slovak Rep., Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, Vietnam.

**5. ENABLING ACTIVITIES UNDER PROCESSING FOR
APPROVAL AS OF APRIL 15 2002**

Colombia, Congo, Gambia, Guatemala, Laos, Latvia, Lesotho, Moldova, Morocco, Mozambique, Nepal, Niger, Yemen.

Enabling Activities (normal processing procedures) approved as of April 15 2002

China (PDF-B; UNIDO).

**Enabling Activities: Countries part of the Project “Development of National
Implementation Plans for the Management of Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs)”**

(approved May 2001; UNEP): Barbados, Bulgaria, Chile, Ecuador, Guinea, Lebanon, Malaysia, Mali, Micronesia, Papua New Guinea, Slovenia, Zambia.