

COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS ON THE TRANSPORT OF DANGEROUS GOODS AND ON THE GLOBALLY HARMONIZED SYSTEM OF CLASSIFICATION AND LABELLING OF CHEMICALS

Sub-Committee of Experts on the Globally
Harmonized System of Classification
and Labelling of Chemicals

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IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GHS

Cooperation with other international organizations

Providing an update on SAICM and opportunities for project funding

Transmitted by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
Secretariat for the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM)

A. Background

1. SAICM was adopted in February 2006 (Dubai) by the International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM). It is a key initiative supporting the achievement of the goal agreed at the 2002 Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) “ensuring that, by the end of the year 2020, chemicals are produced and used in ways that minimize significant adverse impacts on the environment and humans”.
2. The Strategic Approach is built upon the need to streamline and integrate efforts to safely manage hazardous chemicals and wastes. A major driving has been the recognition of the growing gaps between the capacities of different countries to manage chemicals safely and the need to improve synergies between existing instrumental and processes.
3. SAICM is multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder in nature and encompasses a life-cycle approach to chemical safety. Its scope includes:
 - (a) Environment, economic, social, health and labour aspects of chemical safety; and
 - (b) Agricultural and industrial chemicals, with a view to promoting sustainable development and covering chemicals at all stages of their life cycle, including in products.
4. SAICM is described in three core texts:
 - (a) The Dubai Declaration which expresses the commitment to SAICM by Ministers, heads of delegation and representatives of civil society and the private sector;
 - (b) The Overarching Policy Strategy which sets out the scope of SAICM, the need it addresses and objectives for risk reduction, knowledge and information, governance, capacity-building and technical cooperation, illegal international traffic as well as underlying principles and financial and institutional arrangements for the Strategic Approach; and

- (c) A Global Plan of Action which sets out possible work areas and activities for implementation of the Strategic Approach.

5. Copies of these texts can be found on a comprehensive SAICM web site (<http://www.chem.unep.ch/saicm/>) where details of all meetings, meeting documents and related initiatives are kept up-to-date.

B. Progress made with SAICM

6. Since its adoption in 2006, an impressive number of achievements have been made, including:

- (a) Identification of National Focal Points in 136 countries, together with Regional Focal Points in all UN regions (Africa, Central and Eastern Europe, Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, Western Europe and Other Groups), and focal points from non-governmental organizations and inter-governmental organizations.
- (b) Regional Meetings in Africa (11-14 September 2006); Central and Eastern Europe (4-6 December 2006); and Asia-Pacific (21-24 May 2007). A regional meeting will take place in Latin America and the Caribbean from 14-16 February 2008. In addition meetings have taken place at the sub-regional level for Arab countries (1-2 April 2006) and between EU- JUSCAANZ countries (20-22 November 2006 and 12 June 2007). A Pacific Island Workshop on SAICM will take place on 8-9 November 2007 and a further meeting of the EU-JUSCAANZ countries on 12 February 2008.
 - Under SAICM, such meetings are intended to review progress with SAICM within regions; to provide guidance on implementation to all stakeholders and to enable technical and strategic discussions and exchange of information.
- (c) Acknowledgement of SAICM by the following governing bodies of intergovernmental organizations and ministerial for a namely: Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), 9 February 2006; Board of Trustees of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), 27 April 2006; World Health Assembly (for the World Health Organization –WHO), 27 May 2006 and 27 May 2007; Governing Body of the International Labour Organization (ILO), 14-16 November 2006; Council of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), 25 November 2006. In addition SAICM has received the support of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development Joint Meeting of the Chemicals Committee and the Working Party on Chemicals, Pesticides and Biotechnology (OECD), November 2006; The International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine and General Workers' Unions (ICEM), May 2007 and December 2006 and the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN), Eleventh session 25-26 May 2006.
 - In its resolution on SAICM implementation arrangements the ICCM “commended SAICM to the attention of the governing bodies of relevant intergovernmental organizations and encouraged them to endorse or otherwise appropriately acknowledge the SAICM with a view to incorporating its objectives into their programmes of work within their mandates and to report thereon to the ICCM.”
- (d) Establishment of the SAICM Quick Start Programme to support initial enabling capacity building and implementation activities in developing countries, least developed countries, small island developing States and countries with economies in transition.

- The SAICM QSP includes a voluntary Trust Fund which was established in 2006. It is envisaged that the SAICM QSP Trust Fund envisages will be open to disburse funds until 2013. Fundraising targets range from USD 6 M in 2006 to USD 9.6 in 2011. So far over USD 3.8 M has been disbursed in the first two rounds of project proposals. A third round of applications for project funding will be considered at the fourth meeting of the SAICM QSP Trust Fund Implementation Committee on 30 -31 October 2007.

Further information on progress with the SAICM QSP is given below [paras 13-20]

- (e) Establishment of the SAICM Secretariat colocated with UNEP chemicals and wastes cluster in Geneva, Switzerland. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Health Organization (WHO) have lead roles in the secretariat in their respective areas of expertise. The secretariat works in coordination with the participating organization of the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC)* as well as other intergovernmental organizations.
- (f) Consultation on arrangements for the second meeting of the International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM2). The secretariat has provisionally scheduled ICCM2 to take place in Geneva, from 11 to 15 May 2009, immediately before the 62nd World Health Assembly. ICCM2 would itself be preceded by the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties of the Stockholm Convention.

C. The GHS and SAICM

7. The Globally Harmonized System for the Classification and Labelling of chemicals (the GHS) provides the accepted international basis for the communication of information on physical, chemical and toxicological hazards, all the way from chemical manufacturers and suppliers to downstream users. It sets out internationally accepted guidance for hazard identification and classification, precautionary advice, labeling, packaging, and safety data sheets together with effective ways of communicating these elements.

8. SAICM supports the achievement of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) Plan of Implementation which itself specifically promotes the implementation of the GHS by “encourage(ing) countries to implement the new globally harmonized system for the classification and labeling as soon as possible with a view to having the system fully operational by 2008.

9. The GHS provides a sound basis for many chemicals management approaches and given the above it is not surprising that reference to the GHS is found at several places in the SAICM core texts notably in the Overarching Policy Strategy with respect to knowledge information and information:

- (a) Subparagraph (b) highlights the need to disseminate information on chemicals throughout their life cycle By making full use of “communication mechanisms such as the Globally Harmonized System for Classification and Labeling of Chemicals”; and
- (b) Subparagraph (h) refers to the need “To promote implementation of the common definitions and criteria contained in the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labeling of Chemicals”.

10. In addition the SAICM Global Plan of Action, which provides guidance to stakeholders in governments, and non-governmental organizations on possible actions to achieve the objectives of SAICM identifies eight specific activities specifically in relation to GHS implementation.

* The Participating Organizations of the IOMC are: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), International Labour Organization (ILO), Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) and the World Health Organization (WHO). In addition, two observer organizations are also participating in the IOMC: United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank.

11. At the international level a WSSD Global Partnership for Capacity Building to Implement the GHS has been in place since 2002 (created between UNITAR, ILO and OECD). Despite the significant momentum gained over the years towards GHS implementation it is commonly regarded by this Partnership and others that resources are currently not sufficient to satisfy the growing demand for GHS capacity building or to maintain the level of activities and services that the GHS Partnership needs to support worldwide implementation. The second meeting of the GHS Partnership was held on 12 July 2007, and brought together representatives of governments; business and industry groups; public interest and labour organizations; and international organizations to address this issue. Among the recommendations from this meeting were that *further emphasis should be given to linking GHS to SAICM and in particular as a capacity building enabling activity.*

12. SAICM Regional Meetings provide the important opportunity to discuss and develop SAICM priorities and projects at a regional level. In this regard, the African Regional Meeting (11-14 September 2006) identified implementation of the GHS, including capacity-building, training of various workers (maritime workers, industrial workers and framers) as a priority for the Africa region.

D. Opportunities for project funding under the SAICM Quick Start Programme (QSP)

13. One of the important achievements made since the adoption of the SAICM has been the establishment of the SAICM Quick Start Programme which comprises a new trust fund, to support initial capacity-building activities, in developing countries, least developed countries, small island developing States and countries in transition consistent with their national priorities for the implementation of the SAICM.

14. The Trust Fund provides an opportunity to apply for project funding for activities that are in-keeping with the work areas set out in section IV of the SAICM Overarching Policy Strategy and in particular those that address:

- (a) Development or updating of national chemical profiles and the identification of capacity needs for sound management;
- (b) Development and strengthening of national chemicals management institutions, plans, programmes and activities to implement the Strategic Approach, building upon work conducted to implement international chemicals-related agreements and initiatives; and
- (c) Undertaking analysis, interagency coordination and public participation activities directed at enabling the implementation of the Strategic Approach by integrating – i.e. mainstreaming– the sound management of chemicals into national strategies, and thereby informing development assistance cooperation priorities.

As the GHS provides the internationally accepted basis for hazard identification and communication it can be argued to be a foundational step in chemicals management relevant to a) and b) above.

15. The SAICM QSP Executive Board, consisting of two government representatives of each of the United Nations regions and all the bilateral and multilateral donors and other contributors to the programme, provides overall oversight and guidance to the programme. Projects financed by the QSP are to be carried out in accordance with the project management arrangements approved by the QSP Trust Fund Implementation Committee (TFIC). The SAICM QSP TFIC consists of representatives of participating organizations of the IOMC.

16. The QSP TFIC meets twice a year, generally in April and October to consider and approve eligible projects. Meetings are coordinated around the closure of each round in which applications are invited. Governments, and under exceptional circumstances non-governmental organizations; can receive support for projects from USD 50,000 to USD 250,000.

17. The first Trust Fund application round closed on 18 August 2006 and the second round on 16 April 2007. In these two rounds a total of 79 applications were received, 29 of which were approved for funding. A total of approximately USD 3.8 M was agreed for disbursement.

18. The third round of applications closed on 14 September 2007 and received 21 applications seeking applications of over USD 4.3 M. These applications were considered by the SAICM TFIC at its meeting on 30-31 October 2007. The outcomes from this meeting will be available on the SAICM web site before the fourteenth session of the Subcommittee.

19. A fourth round of applications is expected to open in November 2007 and will close on 7 March 2008. To date no applications to assist with GHS implementation have yet been received.

20. Further information, application forms and guidance for making applications to the Trust Fund can be found on the SAICM web site <http://www.chem.unep.ch/saicm/qsptf.htm>.

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