

NORWEGIAN ACTION PLAN FOR ENVIRONMENT IN DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTING MEASURES RELATING TO HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES

1. Summary

Hazardous substances are one of the four thematic priorities in the action plan. Efforts in this area will be made primarily through multilateral organisations, focusing mainly on normative efforts. According to the foreword to the action plan, funding for efforts to deal with hazardous substances will not be on the same scale as for the other priority areas, but will be gradually stepped up as the international focus on this issue increases. Climate-related measures will be the main priority in the 2008 budget, and funding for measures relating to hazardous substances will not be stepped up.

As stated in the action plan, Norway's efforts will focus on three sub-themes:

- competence- and capacity-building in the field of hazardous chemicals,
- the development and effective enforcement of national legislation,
- reducing releases of environmentally hazardous substances that have serious adverse impacts, including remediation measures to deal with contamination from earlier releases of pollution.

2. Background

This document describes how the thematic priority "Hazardous substances" in the Norwegian Action Plan for Environment in Development Cooperation is to be implemented. It describes current international targets and sets out priorities for channels and sub-themes.

This document is intended to assist units in the Foreign Service and Norad that administer development cooperation funds and cooperate with the actors mentioned here. It elaborates on the description of the thematic priority hazardous substances given in the action plan. The general guidelines for Norway's environmental development cooperation are also set out in the action plan. This document does not discuss general questions relating to forms of cooperation.

3. Objectives

An important objective for Norway's efforts relating to hazardous substances is to contribute to the implementation of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) through work in connection with the Global Plan of Action and the Quick Start Programme, which has been developed to speed up the process in developing countries. In accordance with the action plan, Norway's efforts will focus on three main areas:

- competence- and capacity-building in the field of hazardous chemicals,
- the development and effective enforcement of national legislation,
- reducing releases of environmentally hazardous substances that have serious adverse impacts, including remediation measures to deal with contamination from earlier releases of pollution.

4. Sub-themes, channels and actors

4.1 Present channels

In February 2006, the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) was adopted. It was developed by a preparatory committee representing 10 international organisations¹. The SAICM is not a legally binding agreement, but an overall strategic framework for international efforts relating to chemicals. A Global Plan of Action has been drawn up under SAICM, containing around 300 activities. For developing countries, activities that help to build basic competence in the field of chemicals and put these countries in a position to implement the global conventions will be particularly relevant. The Quick Start Programme has been established to assist developing countries in these processes. In addition, UNDP and UNEP have developed a Partnership Initiative for the Sound Management of Chemicals (SMC) to assist countries with the implementation of the SAICM.

A Norwegian approach that focuses mainly on the SAICM will also contribute to implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building. In addition, it can be used as a strategic framework for development cooperation activities in other multilateral organisations, including WHO, UNDP, ILO, FAO and the World Bank.

Until now, Norway has only provided limited support for voluntary funds under the multilateral chemicals conventions (Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade, and Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal). This has mainly been earmarked support for participation by developing countries at conferences of the parties and working meetings. Support should be increased and expanded to include specific projects under the voluntary funds.

The three chemicals conventions are currently considering how synergies between them can be better utilised. One possibility that is being considered is the establishment of a joint secretariat. This could make the three conventions more effective in political, technical and administrative terms. In addition, ways of ensuring that the conventions can contribute more effectively to capacity building in developing countries are being evaluated. The Basel Convention currently has 14 regional centres. Several of these will probably be given an extended mandate to cover the other two conventions as well, and will therefore need to build up additional expertise. Cooperation with and support for the regional centres will be an effective way of developing basic expertise on hazardous substances, and will be a means of putting developing countries in a position to implement the three conventions.

Paragraph 23(c) of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation encourages countries to implement the Globally Harmonised System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS) as soon as possible. The United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC) are running a GHS Capacity Building Programme that supports the establishment of partnerships and assists developing countries in their efforts to implement the GHS.

Persistent organic pollutants (POPs) are one of the focal areas of the Global Environment Facility (GEF). During the most recent replenishment, it was also agreed to include sound chemicals management as a cross-cutting issue. The GEF secretariat was tasked with reviewing how the GEF should continue its efforts relating to chemicals as a strategic area.

¹ UNEP, FAO, ILO, OECD, UNIDO, UNITAR, WHO, WB, UNDP, IFCS (Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety)

Oil spills can result in substantial releases of chemicals. It should be considered whether there will be a need for cooperation in connection with the Oil for Development Initiative, for example to strengthen basic expertise on chemicals, including expertise on hazardous waste, in partner countries. This would help to strengthen the environmental dimension of the Oil for Development Initiative.

4.2 Priorities

For the first few years, efforts in this field will be made mainly through organisations with a primarily normative role, and will be used to support multilateral initiatives, giving priority to work under the relevant conventions.

- Priority channels:
 - Activities under the SAICM Global Plan of Action and the Quick Start Programme
 - Cooperation with the SAICM secretariat and the secretariats of the conventions on the exchange of information, focusing particularly on the developing countries
 - Activities to build up capacity in developing countries within the framework of the voluntary funds and regional centres set up by the chemical conventions
 - UNEP/UNDP Partnership Initiative for the Sound Management of Chemicals (SMC)
 - UNITAR/ILO Global GHS Capacity Building Programme.

- Consider providing support through multilateral programme cooperation, for example through:
 - Programmes for chemicals and hazardous waste under the auspices of UNDP, UNEP, the World Bank and UNITAR
 - Cooperation with the World Bank:
 - Destruction facilities in Africa
 - African Stockpiles Program
 - Cooperation with UNIDO on the Global Mercury Project
 - Promotion of closer cooperation between the chemicals conventions and the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and World Customs Organisation (WCO)
 - Relevant FAO/WHO projects, for example on alternatives to DDT and other persistent organic pollutants, especially pesticides
 - Relevant projects on monitoring of chemicals and alternatives to disposal
 - The Green Customs Initiative.

- Consider bilateral projects to strengthen:
 - Control of releases of hazardous substances and hazardous waste management by national authorities
 - The capacity of the business sector for cleaner production, particularly in sectors where there is a large potential for reducing releases of hazardous substances.