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**International Conference on Chemicals Management****Third session**

Nairobi, 17–21 September 2012

Item 4 (d) of the provisional agenda\*

**Implementation of the Strategic Approach to****International Chemicals Management:****financial and technical resources for implementation**

## **Conclusions and recommendations of the Executive Board on the midterm evaluation of the Quick Start Programme**

### **Note by the secretariat**

1. In its resolution II/3 on financial and technical resources, the International Conference on Chemicals Management requested the Quick Start Programme Executive Board to evaluate the Programme, report on its effectiveness and the efficiency of its implementation and make recommendations in the light of its findings for the consideration of the Conference at its third session. By the same decision, the Conference, at its third session, is called upon to review and evaluate the above-mentioned reports and to consider the adequacy of financial and technical arrangements for Strategic Approach implementation for action as appropriate.
2. At its fifth meeting, held in Geneva on 29 and 30 June 2010, the Executive Board approved the terms of reference for a midterm review of the Quick Start Programme and the secretariat engaged two international experts to conduct the review in May 2011. The Executive Board considered the report on the review at its sixth meeting, held in Geneva on 13 and 14 September 2011, and decided that additional input from stakeholders was required in order for the Executive Board to make decisions based on the review's findings.
3. Following the Executive Board's adoption of a procedure to improve the report on the review, the secretariat hired another consultant to revise the report for consideration by the Executive Board at its seventh meeting.
4. At its seventh meeting, held in Geneva on 7 and 8 May 2012, the Executive Board reviewed the evidence contained in the revised draft report on the midterm review of the Quick Start Programme and concluded that it provided sufficient information to evaluate the efficacy of the Programme and the efficiency of its implementation. The findings of the review were based on a number of important inputs, including evidence from 30 completed projects. The review was conducted in a participatory manner, with the engagement of representatives of Governments, donors and recipients, civil society organizations, industry, executing agencies, the United Nations Environment Programme as trustee of the Quick Start Programme Trust Fund, and the secretariat.
5. In accordance with resolution II/3, the secretariat has the honour to circulate to the Conference at its third session the Executive Board's summary of conclusions and recommendations (see annex), based on the findings of the draft report on the midterm review of the Quick Start Programme.

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\* SAICM/ICCM.3/1.

### **Possible action by the Conference**

6. The Conference may wish:

- (a) To consider the information provided in the present note and in the final report on the midterm review of the Quick Start Programme set out in document SAICM/ICCM.3/INF/17;
- (b) To commend the Executive Board on its efforts to provide a midterm evaluation of the Programme that is accurate and conforms to the highest standards of quality;
- (c) To consider and endorse, as appropriate, the conclusions and recommendations of the Executive Board concerning the midterm evaluation of the Programme.

## Annex

# Summary of conclusions and recommendations of the Executive Board of the Quick Start Programme on the midterm evaluation of the Quick Start Programme

## Introduction

1. The Executive Board of the Quick Start Programme of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management met for the seventh time in Geneva on 7 and 8 May 2012 in order to, among other things, finalize its evaluation of the Quick Start Programme of the Strategic Approach.
2. The evaluation of the Quick Start Programme had been requested by the International Conference on Chemicals Management at its second session in paragraph 17 of resolution II/3 on financial and technical resources for implementation. In that resolution, the Conference specifically “requests the Quick Start Programme Executive Board to evaluate the Quick Start Programme, report on its effectiveness and the efficiency of its implementation and make recommendations in the light of its findings for the consideration of the Conference at its third session”.
3. Paragraph 19 of resolution II/3 calls upon the International Conference on Chemicals Management at its third session to review and evaluate the reports referred to (in paragraphs 17 and 18) and to consider the adequacy of financial and technical arrangements for Strategic Approach implementation for action as appropriate.
4. In carrying out its evaluation, the Executive Board took into account the detailed findings of a review of the Quick Start Programme that had been commissioned by the secretariat to address the terms of reference for a mid-term review which were established by the Executive Board in 2010.<sup>1</sup> The findings of the review were based on a number of important inputs; the review was conducted in a participatory manner with the engagement of representatives of Governments, donors and recipients, civil society organizations, industry, executing agencies, the United Nations Environment Programme as trustee of the Quick Start Programme Trust Fund, and the secretariat.
5. The main inputs to the review were the following:
  - (a) Desk study. A desk study was made of all available documentation, including project applications, project progress reports, monitoring and evaluation reports, and final reports. The desk study was conducted between May 2011 and January 2012. The full portfolio of 145 approved projects was considered as the basis for the desk study. A sample of 30 projects from the 37 that had completed all project activities by 31 December 2011 were selected for a more in-depth analysis of the outcomes and achievements of Quick Start Programme project activities. Information routinely collected by the secretariat for the purpose of monitoring the achievement of the Quick Start Programme business plan<sup>2</sup> also formed a part of the desk study.
  - (b) Interviews with key stakeholders. Interviews with key stakeholders from selected organizations serving as executing agencies, representatives of the Quick Start Programme Executive Board and Trust Fund Implementation Committee, donors, contributors to the broader (non-trust fund) Quick Start Programme, project implementers and the secretariat were conducted either by telephone, Skype or face-to-face meetings.
  - (c) Questionnaire survey. A questionnaire was developed and e-mailed in June 2011 to all Strategic Approach stakeholders, including project implementers (Governments and non-governmental organizations). Forty-six stakeholders responded to the survey.

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1 Terms of reference for the evaluation were adopted by the Executive Board of the Quick Start Programme at its fifth meeting, Geneva, 29 and 30 June 2010.

2 The Quick Start Programme business plan is available on the Strategic Approach website.

(d) Country visits. In addition to the methods described above, a limited number (7) of country visits in both the African<sup>3</sup> and the Latin American and the Caribbean<sup>4</sup> regions were carried out in March and April 2012. The main objective of these field visits was to conduct a general and qualitative assessment of project performance at the country level.

(e) Technical briefing session. A technical briefing held on the occasion of the first meeting of the Open-ended Working Group allowed for a focused and interactive information session with a number of Quick Start Programme project proponents. This information was combined with information obtained from other sources.

6. An initial evaluation of the findings of the midterm review of the Quick Start Programme was made by the Executive Board at its sixth meeting held in Geneva on 13 and 14 September 2011. The evaluation was completed by the Executive Board at its seventh meeting, held on 7 and 8 May 2012, on the basis of a revised report of the midterm review. A copy of the revised midterm review is contained in document SAICM/EB.7/6/Rev.1.

### Summary conclusions of the Executive Board

7. At the time of the Executive Board's evaluation in April 2012, the Quick Start Programme of the Strategic Approach had been successful in attracting applications leading to 145 approved projects from more than 100 countries and non-governmental organizations. Following consideration of the findings of the revised report of the midterm review of the Quick Start Programme, the Executive Board concluded the following:

(a) On the basis of the revised report of the midterm review of the Quick Start Programme, the Executive Board has sufficient information to carry out the midterm evaluation of the Quick Start Programme and report on the effectiveness and the efficiency of its implementation;

(b) The midterm review indicates that the Quick Start Programme Trust Fund has been successful in facilitating initial capacity-building activities in developing countries, small island developing States and countries with economies in transition;

(c) The preponderance of the capacity-building projects funded to date have addressed strategic priorities A and B<sup>5</sup> of the Quick Start Programme. Many countries see these as the initial steps in sound chemicals management. The findings of the midterm review also reveal some of the challenges that many countries still face to mainstream sound chemicals management throughout their life cycle into all relevant sectors (strategic priority C).<sup>6</sup> Continuing needs include: strengthening institutional capacity, promoting a multisectoral approach, establishing mandates for coordination mechanisms, enhancing stakeholder involvement and increasing political will;

(d) Accessibility, flexibility, practicality, promotion of synergies between chemicals and wastes conventions and multisectoral involvement are advantages of the Programme as noted in the revised midterm review. While applications have been encouraged from a number of sectors, including agriculture, health, industry, labour, and science, over half of all project applications have come from the environment sector;

(e) High-quality applications from non-governmental organizations have consistently exceeded the available quota for their participation and therefore many of those applications have not received funding support;

(f) The governance of the Quick Start Programme adequately supports the administrative and decision-making functions for the efficient implementation of the programme;

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3 African countries visited: United Republic of Tanzania (12–13 March), Uganda (15–16 March), Zambia (19–20 March), Kenya (22–23 March).

4 Latin American and the Caribbean countries visited: Colombia (5–6 March), Guatemala (12–13 April), Costa Rica (24–25 April).

5 Strategic priorities A and B for the Quick Start Programme are defined in appendix I of resolution I/4 of the International Conference on Chemicals Management. Strategic priority A addresses “Development or updating of national chemicals profiles and the identification of capacity needs for sound chemicals management”. Strategic priority B addresses “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”.

6 Resolution I/4 defines strategic priority C as “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 in national strategies, and thereby informing development assistance cooperation priorities”.

(g) The secretariat has supported the administration of the programme effectively, but has been challenged by the workload caused by the strong interest in the programme. Considering the large number of projects remaining to be completed and the nature of the work required to administer and monitor implementation of these projects, priority should be given to maintaining an adequate staffing level of the secretariat;

(h) The midterm review found that the completed projects had met their objectives and achieved positive impacts regarding capacity-building and implementation of the Strategic Approach; however, the findings are based on data from a limited number of completed projects. Additional improvements in, and use of, performance indicators as well as more effective project reporting will support and allow for a quality final evaluation of the programme;

(i) The Executive Board recognized the importance of looking at a proposed time-limited extension in relation to the need to avoid a gap in providing support for enabling activities. The Executive Board also recognized the importance of the consultative process on financing options for chemicals and waste and its potential impact on financial considerations for the Strategic Approach;

(j) The revised midterm review was unable to provide findings on the effectiveness of the Quick Start Programme activities outside the Trust Fund. The Executive Board therefore decided not to make specific recommendations on these activities whilst recognizing the considerable financing which had been contributed for them.

### **Recommendations of the Executive Board**

8. The Executive Board therefore recommends that the International Conference on Chemicals Management at its third session should:

(a) Consider the further need to support additional initial enabling activities for Strategic Approach objectives, and consider a time-limited extension to the Quick Start Programme Trust Fund for this purpose;

(b) Welcome the focus on the sound management of chemicals in the framework of the fifth Global Environment Facility (GEF) replenishment and request countries, the GEF implementing agencies and the GEF Council to accelerate support to the implementation of the sound management of chemicals within the GEF mandate;

(c) Consider that lessons learned from the midterm review of the Quick Start Programme should be taken into account in the wider discussions on financing options for chemicals and wastes;

(d) Consider ways to promote mainstreaming of sound chemicals management throughout their life cycle into all relevant sectors;

(e) Further encourage, in the light of the higher proportion of applications from the environment sector, wider participation and leadership from all sectors to strengthen sustainability of project outcomes;

(f) Consider opportunities to increase participation of non-governmental organizations in initial enabling activities;

(g) Call for a final evaluation of the effectiveness and efficiency of the Quick Start Programme Trust Fund at its conclusion.