

**STRATEGY FOR INVOLVEMENT
OF NGOs FROM BIELORUSSIA, KAZAKHSTAN AND KYRGYZSTAN INTO SAICM
IMPLEMENTATION FOR THE PERIOD FROM 2011 TO 2020.**

The **Strategy for involvement of NGOs of Belarus, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan in SAICM Implementation** – was developed within the framework of the project “Strengthening Capacities of Civil Society Organisations for National and Regional SAICM Implementation in the EECCA Region,” which was implemented in Belarus, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, with financial support from SAICM QSP Trust Fund. The strategy is based on the Regional EECCA NGO Action Plan to achieve a Toxics-Free Future developed by “Eco-Accord” Centre with the participation of more than 50 NGOs from EECCA countries.

To develop the Regional EECCA NGO Action Plan numerous activities were carried out with the aim to identify priority problems in the region in the frame of SAICM Global Plan of Action (GPA). These problems include:

- 1) the need to reduce environmental pollution caused by pesticides (including prevention of stockpiles of banned and obsolete pesticides);
- 2) wastes management, including electronic and electrical wastes;
- 3) an inventory of PCBs;
- 4) environmental pollution by heavy metals;
- 5) availability of hazardous chemicals in products;
- 6) awareness raising and education on environmental health, etc.

Type of activities to address problems mentioned above were subsequently included into the “Regional EECCA NGO Action Plan” (see information at: www.ecoaccord.org). Participation in the implementation of these types of activities allowed civil society organizations to better understand the problems associated with chemical contamination in the region, obtain necessary knowledge and skills for more effective cooperation and information sharing and to initiate new projects.

The goal of this Strategy is to strengthen the efficiency of NGO participation in SAICM implementation in Belarus, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

The Strategy contains both short-term (from 2012 to 2013) and long-term (from 2012 to 2020) activities aimed at expanding civil society participation (environmental NGOs, organizations working on health and social wellbeing, local communities, associations of women, youth and disabled people) in SAICM implementation in three countries.

Chemical safety problems , and their solution

The project “Strengthening Capacities of Civil Society Organisations for National and Regional SAICM Implementation in the EECCA Region,” implemented in Belarus, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, helped to analyze problems on chemical safety and prioritize those of them which are most relevant to these three countries.

Despite geographical and political differences, as well as differences in chemical regulations, the following problems were prioritized by NGOs:

- absence of a unified system for collecting and providing information on SAICM implementation;
- poor information exchange between governmental bodies and the civil society groups on chemical safety issues at national and local levels;
- lack of a unified national system for civil society involvement into activities on chemical safety;
- low civil society capacity for effective participation in the implementation of SAICM GPA.

Addressing the above problems encounters serious difficulties, namely:

- Lack of funding for projects on chemical safety. This problem is relevant to both governmental projects and to NGO projects.
- Insufficient understanding of importance of chemical safety by governmental bodies, business and civil society due to their low level of awareness on the sound chemicals management.
- Reluctance of governmental and business organizations to cooperate with civil society organizations in implementing projects on chemical safety.

To address the above listed problems it is proposed within the short-term perspective from 2012 to 2013:

- to form a Coordinating Group (CG) on the basis of existing NGOs for liaising with the national SAICM Focal Points and other stakeholders in three countries.

It is envisaged that the CG will become a management structure developing NGO regional reviews and assessments on chemical safety as well as other projects and initiatives. This activity based on the experience of joint projects and international experience will facilitate establishing of a coordination infrastructure aimed at building a link between NGOs of three countries and SAICM national Focal Points, including the establishing and maintaining of an electronic mailing list and NGO database in Russian and national languages.

An Action Plan for CG will be developed shortly that will include areas of work, a coordination scheme, dates of Skype conferences, joint activities, etc.

CG Terms of Reference include:

- provide assistance to NGOs of three countries in identifying, preparing and implementing project activities on priority areas;
- provide assistance to NGOs in developing sustainability plans, positions and strategies;
- provide assistance to NGOs in mobilizing resources needed to implement their projects;
- provide support (via e-discussions, teleconferences, meetings) to national information services for experience sharing between various NGOs, including Eco-Accord Programme on Chemical Safety, IPEN and other coordinating groups.

CG activities to improve communication, cooperation and dissemination of information may also include:

- seminars on key provisions of international chemical agreements (Stockholm, Basel, Rotterdam Conventions, and SAICM);
- raising NGO capacity on legislative and legal aspects;
- Establishing information and resource centers in each of three countries on the basis of existing NGOs for awareness raising and capacity building of NGOs and other civil society organizations on SAICM implementation.

CG Objectives :

- Establishing inter-sectoral cooperation and partnership between governmental bodies, business-structures and NGOs;
- Raising capacity of national NGO information centers on chemical safety, which can be achieved through:
 - providing information on priority issues (toxic wastes, stockpiles of obsolete and banned pesticides, mercury contamination);
 - providing expert support and consultations;
- Establishing a regional information web-site on chemical safety;
- Developing a program on public awareness raising on SAICM, which will include project proposals for donors and specific activities to implement the program;
- Carrying out a broad campaigns on NGO involvement into SAICM implementation;
- Preparing information for dissemination among local communities about toxic chemicals and Globally Harmonized System on Classification and Labeling of Chemicals (GHS).

Possible Risks

CG development and effective work will require financial resources. Experience shows that NGO efforts in Belarus, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan (and subsequently of the CG) on attracting financial resources face certain difficulties. Attempts to attract new and additional resources will face limited funding sources. Therefore, there is a risk that non-governmental organizations will not be able to fully implement their action plans due to financial constraints.

Project participants are recommended to undertake all possible efforts to find and attract funding sources even though funding for implementation of large- and medium-size projects is provided mostly to large NGOs.

To address priority issues on chemicals in three countries in the long term perspective (for the period from 2012 to 2020) the following is proposed:

Use of international agreements and policy discussions to improve the effectiveness of actions at the national level.

NGO active participation in policy discussions on chemicals at the national, regional and international levels will allow to continuously raise public awareness on new policy initiatives on priority issues of chemical safety, expand contacts between NGOs and international organizations, including donor agencies, will promote partnerships with international organizations and NGO networks.

Actions

NGOs from Belarus, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan agreed on the need to develop cooperation to implement partnership initiatives in the frame of existing international agreements, namely:

- reducing the risk of persistent organic pollutants impact on human health and environment (the Stockholm Convention on POPs);
- introducing best available techniques for minimization of industrial emissions with the goal of their elimination (the Stockholm Convention on POPs, SAICM);
- rehabilitation of contaminated sites (the Stockholm Convention on POPs, SAICM);
- hazardous chemicals in products, including food and goods for children (this issue is on SAICM agenda);
- hazardous substances in the life cycle of electrical and electronic equipment (this issue is on SAICM agenda);
- lead in paint (this issue is on SAICM agenda);
- minimizing asbestos risk on human health (the Rotterdam Convention);
- minimizing the use of highly toxic pesticides (the Rotterdam Convention);
- reducing mercury contamination of the environment (a new international legally binding agreement on mercury is being developed);
- dissemination of information about impact of toxic substances on human health and environment (SAICM), the Stockholm Convention on POPs, and the Rotterdam Convention).

Possible Risks

The Stockholm Convention

In Belarus, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan there is GEF Small Grants Programme. However not in all countries NGOs can rely on this program and get funding for projects on chemical safety including POPs.

In Kazakhstan, the GEF SGP does not support projects on POPs and other chemical safety issues.

Access to funding projects on POPs under GEF SGP is difficult for NGOs in Belarus and Kyrgyzstan, which could have a negative impact on NGO priority projects in these countries.

SAICM

While governments of donor countries recognize that sound management of chemicals is essential for sustainable development and poverty eradication (as stated in SAICM), very limited funding has been allocated to achieve this goal. Additionally, NGO projects are funded based on leftover principle. Priority is given to governmental projects.

SAICM Quick Start Programme expires in 2012. The situation with providing financial support to SAICM projects is unclear.

For many NGOs, small funding available under IPEP (International POPs Elimination Project) and ISIP (International Project for Implementation of SAICM) is the only option for SAICM related project implementation.

Capacity building of civil society organizations for effective participation in projects on chemical safety

In general, individual NGOs in Belarus, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan are well trained and educated; at the same time, they need to improve their skills on legal and legislative aspects, they need more scientific-and-research information on toxic chemicals, their sources and impacts on human health and environment. All NGOs need more additional information about safe alternative technologies, and international processes on chemical safety.

NGOs concur that they also need technical and scientific support to effectively participate in addressing problems on toxic wastes, mercury contamination, and pesticides. Technical expertise is needed for implementing projects aimed at addressing problems associated with the new POPs under the Stockholm Convention, as well as projects on other toxic substances. Expert support is crucial for the success of NGO activities, including actions and campaigns. In addition, NGOs would like to increase their capacity on chemical management.

Actions

To build capacity of civil society organizations in addressing problems of chemical safety it is necessary to:

- Conduct educational seminars on the key provisions of SAICM, Stockholm, Basel and Rotterdam Conventions. Given the priority issues identified by NGOs participated in the study, such seminars should focus mainly on information related to pesticides (including obsolete pesticides stockpiles), toxic wastes, mercury contamination, impact of toxic substances on environment and health (including child's health); alternative technologies of waste management, hazardous chemicals in consumer products and foods, etc.
- Conduct training seminars on the following topics: impact of hazardous chemicals on human health, reducing the risk of chemical contamination, EU/international legislation on chemical safety, and international case studies of NO good practice experience on chemical management, etc.
- Prepare and disseminate information materials in national and Russian languages, including brochures, posters, TV social advertising, etc.
- Strengthening information networks aimed at sharing information on toxic wastes, industrial hot spots, stockpiles of obsolete and banned pesticides.

Possible risks:

- Need to attract foreign and national experts to participate in the above-mentioned training/educational meetings and seminars, which will require financial support.

- Unstable political situation in the countries may aggravate participation of international experts.

Promotion the adoption of political decisions at national and regional levels

Success of SAICM GPA implementation is largely depends on the inclusion of chemical safety issues into national development plans and programs. Advocacy campaigns aimed at including sound management of chemicals throughout their life cycle into national legislation is one of the most important NGO tasks .

Activities

To address the problem the following is needed

- influence national governmental policies in order to incorporate issues on toxic wastes, mercury contamination, pesticides, hazardous chemicals in consumer products and foods into national development plans and policies;
- participate in developing of amendments to national legislation to ensure that issues associated with toxic wastes, mercury contamination , pesticides and hazardous chemicals in consumer products and foods are included into national development programmes ;
- promote civil society participation in all working groups at all levels involved in decision-making on chemical safety, including issues on toxic wastes, mercury contamination, pesticides and hazardous chemicals in consumer products and foods;
- seek governmental adoption of decisions on funding activities pertaining to the development and maintaining of automated databases on chemicals, provide free access to NGOs and other representatives of the civil society groups;
- seek for establishing governmental cadastres of chemical emissions and transport;
- strive for adoption of the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS) at the national level;
- strive for a permanent inter-agency body with NGO participation to coordinate activities of governments and other stakeholders working on chemical and waste safety;
- strive for establishing community advisory boards under supervision of respective ministries and departments, which are responsible for chemicals management;
- strive for establishing an effective infrastructure for information sharing on chemical safety and for ensuring open access for the interested public.

Possible Risks

- national governments ignore NGO requirements;
- insufficient capacity of NGOs to address the above listed issues.

Promoting institutional development of NGOs and other civil society organizations

Organizational development of NGOs is closely related to the availability of financial resources. Stable funding of NGO activities reduces staff turnover and makes it possible to attract qualified experts to work in public organizations.

Activities

1. Meetings with representatives of international foundations and donor organizations interested in supporting projects on sound chemicals management. NGOs expect to receive information from donors on their priorities and criteria to be met by the proposed projects.
2. Develop project proposals (including such issues as sustainability of projects, results, indicators of success, etc.) on priority issues of chemical safety.
3. Prepare presentations to attract donor attention to project proposals.

Possible Risks

- mismatch of NGO priorities with donors' priorities;
- inability of NGOs to properly develop project proposal;
- Lack of contacts with donor organizations.

NGO PROJECT PROPOSALS

Based on priority issues, NGOs from Belarus, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan discussed project proposals aimed at implementing SAICM requirements and provisions of other international agreements on sound chemical management.

Project Title	Information and awareness campaign on the threat of mercury in products and the availability of safer alternatives
Goal	Reducing the risk of mercury impact on human health
Project Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prepare information materials on mercury impact on human health and environment; availability of safe alternatives, discussing problems and sharing experience..

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of the use of mercury-containing consumer goods and their alternatives: collecting and analyzing information on the availability of mercury containing and mercury free products. • Involving community and governmental organizations at the local and national levels to develop policies aimed at reducing the use of mercury-containing products. • Preparing recommendations to the public on mercury-containing consumer goods and contribute to the adoption of a strong legally binding mercury treaty by 2013
Expected Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A survey is prepared (questionnaire was developed and the survey was carried out), containing data on the availability of mercury-containing products and mercury-free alternatives. • Public awareness about the impact of mercury on human health and environment and the availability of safer alternatives was raised. • Implementation of this project will enhance public environmental movement and will strengthen the role of NGOs in addressing environmental issues.
Project Title	Assessment of mercury emission sources in three countries and development of recommendations to reduce emissions and releases of mercury
Goal	Strengthening national environmental policies on reducing mercury contamination
Project Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation of mercury emission sources using available information data. • Assessment of mercury exposure from mercury sources on environment and human health of local residents (using data from laboratory analysis and medical statistics). • Conduct awareness meetings, seminars, discussions based on obtained data and information. • Preparing recommendations to governments on how to reduce mercury contamination and eliminate mercury emission source
Expected Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mercury emission sources are identified in all three countries. • Stakeholder awareness on mercury impact on human health and measures to minimize this impact is raised. • Recommendations for governments to eliminate mercury emission sources and reduce mercury contamination are prepared in three countries. • National environmental policy aimed at reducing mercury contamination is strengthened in three countries

Project Title	Stakeholder capacity building on POPs management, including new POPs under the Stockholm Convention
Goal	Raising stakeholder capacity on the implementation of the Stockholm Convention on POPs
Project Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducting awareness-raising meetings, seminars, round tables to build stakeholder capacity on the implementation of the Stockholm Convention. • Identifying priority needs of countries required to implement provisions of the Stockholm Convention. • Developing mechanisms for public participation in the management of POPs at the local and national levels.
Expected Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Party capacity in complying with the Stockholm Convention on POPs is increased. • POPs management and control are strengthened. • Public awareness on POPs is improved.
Project Name	Artisanal gold mining as a source of mercury contamination
Goal	Reducing mercury contamination of environment and minimization of risk of mercury impact on human health
Project Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of the situation with artisanal gold mining and national legislation in this area. • Developing a questionnaire and conducting interviews with various stakeholders, including local authorities, NGOs, local residents about the impact of artisanal mining as a source of mercury pollution. • Developing an action plan to inform local residents, local authorities and other stakeholders on the role of artisanal gold mining as a source of mercury discharge. • Developing a draft action plan for minimizing the risk of impact of mercury in artisanal gold mining on health
Expected Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National legislation has been improved. • Awareness among stakeholders has been improved. • The issue of minimizing the risk of exposure to mercury in artisanal gold mining has been included as a priority issue into national development plans
Project Title	Developing an information system on hazardous chemicals in consumer products
Goal	Improving stakeholder awareness on hazardous chemicals in consumer products
Project Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of stakeholder needs for information on chemicals in consumer products.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of existing national information systems on hazardous chemicals in consumer products. • Development of a pilot information system on hazardous chemicals in consumer products. • Discussion of information system among stakeholders
Expected Results	A pilot system for providing information on chemicals in consumer products in three countries is developed.
Project Title	Integration of the Globally Harmonized System (GHS) into the national system of classification and labeling of hazardous chemicals
Goal	Protection of human health and environment from hazardous chemicals by introducing GHS in three countries
Project Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducting a training sessions on GHS for the respective stakeholders. • Organizing a National Seminar on GHS. • Development of a national strategy on GHS implementation (including situation analysis / gaps and sectoral action plans). •
Expected Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GHS system is introduced in these three countries • Awareness on GHS among all stakeholders is raised
Project Name	Harmonization of national technical regulations with REACH
Goal	Harmonization of national legislation on chemicals management with REACH
Project Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of standards and regulations on chemical safety for their compliance with REACH. • Conducting an information campaign. • Conducting a lobbyist campaign on the need to harmonize national standards with REACH and environmental due diligence with REACH.
Expected Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National legislation is harmonized with the European standards • Awareness among stakeholders is improved.
Project Title	Informational and awareness-raising campaign on safety of products for children
Goal	Raising consumer awareness on chemical safety of products for children.
Project Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of production, export / import of goods for children, legislation and labeling of toxic chemicals in goods/products for children. • Conducting awareness-raising meetings, seminars, round tables to raise awareness on the issue. • Conducting information and advocacy campaigns to tighten quality control over quality of products for children.
Expected Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity on consumer rights protection is raised. • Control over quality of products for children is tightened. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public awareness on the risks associated with the quality of products for children is improved.

Project Title	Establishment a subregional network of resource and information centers for NGOs
Goal	Strengthening capacity of civil society organizations on SAICM implementation.
Project Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing resource centers on the base of existing NGOs. • Organization and carrying out a subregional and national information campaigns on SAICM implementation . •
Expected Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inter-sectoral cooperation and partnership with government, businesses and NGOs is been established. • Sub-regional network for the collection and dissemination of information on chemical safety is organised. • Capacity of civil society groups and general public on SAICM is raised.
Project Title	Capacity building on SAICM GPA implementation in EECCA countries
Goal	Development a SAICM Capacity Assessment in three countries
Project Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessing the capacity of three countries to implement SAICM Global Action Plan (research and analysis of existing problems, development of recommendations). • Prepare an Action Plan (short-term, medium-term) in three countries to implement SAICM Global Plan of Action at the national level.
Expected Results	SAICM GPA capacity assessment is developed for three countries

Contact information:

Belarus

Report «Needs analysis and identification of mechanisms for effective dissemination of information on SAICM to the public of the Republic of Belarus»
<http://ecoproject.by/userfiles/BY%20Unitar%20report.pdf>

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Kazakhstan

Report « Needs analysis and identification of mechanisms for effective dissemination of information on SAICM to the public of the Republic of Kazakhstan»
<http://caresd.net/site.html?en=0&id=24543>

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Needs analysis and identification of mechanisms for effective dissemination of information on SAICM to the public of the Republic of Kyrgyzstans:

<http://eco-expertise.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/06/study-2011.htm>

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