

RC-2/4: Regional and national delivery of technical assistance

The Conference of the Parties,

Recalling the work of the secretariat in producing a comprehensive proposal for the regional delivery of technical assistance for the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties,¹

Also recalling the provisions of the Rotterdam Convention on technical assistance, especially its article 16,

Noting that the hazardous chemicals and pesticides covered by the Convention contribute to poverty through their adverse effects on human health and environmental resources,

Stressing the importance of working closely with the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-Building as well as other international processes so as to promote a coherent framework for technical assistance,

Stressing the importance of technical assistance in enabling Parties, especially developing countries, and in particular the least developed among them, and countries with economies in transition, to implement the Convention,

Emphasizing the need to promote coordination and cooperation among international organizations, conventions, Parties, designated national authorities, customs services and other relevant organizations in the provision of technical assistance,

Recalling the role of the secretariat of the Convention as laid down in its article 19,

Emphasizing also the need to achieve effective and coordinated delivery of technical assistance,

Noting with appreciation the work of the secretariat in the implementation of decision RC-1/14 on the regional delivery of technical assistance,²

1. *Requests* Parties that are in a position to do so to contribute to the voluntary trust fund in support of technical assistance activities;
2. *Adopts* the work plan for the regional and national delivery of technical assistance for 2006 annexed to the present decision;
3. *Requests* the secretariat to report to the Conference of the Parties at its third session on the experience gained in the regional delivery of technical assistance;
4. *Requests* the secretariat to prepare a detailed costed programme of activities for the regional and national delivery of technical assistance for the biennium 2007–2008 for consideration by the Conference of the Parties at its third session.

¹ UNEP/FAO/RC/COP.1/28.

² UNEP/FAO/RC/COP.2/14.

Annex I to decision RC-2/4

Work plan for 2006 on the regional and national delivery of technical assistance³

A. Elements unique to the Rotterdam Convention

1. National and subregional consultations on the implementation of the Rotterdam Convention

1. A proposal has been made to continue the national and subregional consultations on assisting countries to prepare national strategies or action plans for the ratification and implementation of the Convention. The methodology and approach will be modified as necessary to reflect experience gained. Measures of the success of this programme will include an increase in the number of ratifications and the ability of countries to meet their obligations under the Convention, in particular with regard to the submission of notifications of final regulatory actions, proposals for severely hazardous pesticide formulations and import responses.

2. The initial phase of work in Latin America is expected to be completed with two subregional meetings for Central American countries funded from the 2005 budget, which will be held in the first quarter of 2006 in cooperation with the Regional Plant Protection Officer at the regional office of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in Santiago, Chile. The first meeting, involving Costa Rica and Cuba, will be focused on developing national plans for the implementation of the Convention and the second, involving the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua, will be focused on training in the implementation of the Convention.

3. Two subregional meetings are proposed for countries in Eastern and Southern Africa, where possible cooperation is contemplated with regional initiatives such as the Africa Stockpiles Programme and partners such as the secretariat of the Economic Community of West African States, the Basel Convention regional centre in Johannesburg, South Africa, and the Regional Plant Protection Officer at the FAO Regional Office for Africa in Accra, Ghana. Participating countries have yet to be identified.

4. In cooperation with the secretariat of the Sahelian Pesticides Committee (CSP), a proposal has been made to follow up on the work initiated in 2005. This would take the form of a one- or two-day meeting of designated national authorities in conjunction with a regularly scheduled CSP meeting. The purpose of this meeting between designated national authorities and CSP would be to review progress in integrating the work of the Rotterdam Convention with that of CSP, address questions on the role of CSP in assisting member countries to meet their obligations under the Rotterdam Convention, and encourage ratification of the Convention by CSP members that are not yet Parties to it.

5. Further national or subregional consultations with two or three selected countries in Asia are foreseen in cooperation with the Regional Plant Protection Officer at the FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific in Bangkok, Thailand. Pakistan has been identified as one of those countries.

6. Provisions have also been made in the budget (on the order of \$90,000) for national and subregional consultations in other regions in 2006. Information on specific activities should be available at the time of the second meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

7. Consideration will also be given, on a case-by-case basis, to determining the most appropriate follow-up for countries participating in the national and subregional consultations convened in 2005. This will include working with regional experts and the Regional Plant Protection Officers of FAO in an effort to ensure that the most relevant assistance is provided. The countries for which such specific assistance is envisaged include El Salvador and Panama, in part based on a recommendation made at the first meeting of the Chemical Review Committee.

B. Cross-cutting elements

8. The resource kit will be revised to reflect experience gained in its use, especially regarding the development of new documents and the updating and reprinting of existing materials.

³ A summary of the costs of the individual elements of the present work plan is set out in the attached appendix.

9. In particular, the guidance document for designated national authorities and the guide on how to become a Party to the Rotterdam Convention both need to be updated to reflect experience gained and feedback from countries.

10. Section D of the resource kit, on training materials, contains detailed technical information on the four key operational elements of the Convention (notifications of final regulatory action, proposals for severely hazardous pesticide formulations, import responses for chemicals in Annex III and obligations related to exports of chemicals). A proposal has been made to develop an interactive compact disk to facilitate continuous and self-directed training at the national level in order to try and meet the challenges that arise from frequent changes in designated national authorities in some countries. A prototype of the interactive training compact disk will be developed in English, and field testing will be initiated to determine its effectiveness.

11. Section E of the resource kit, on cross-cutting issues, requires further work in order to develop more complete coverage of the relevant information that is available and to determine how it might be best reflected in the resource kit.

1. Guide on the development of national laws to implement the Rotterdam Convention

12. As a complement to the guide on the development of national laws to implement the Rotterdam Convention, a proposal has been made to develop a set of case studies based on the experience of a limited number of countries in revising their national laws or administrative arrangements to meet the requirements of the Rotterdam Convention. The countries have yet to be identified and the full scope of case studies needs further consideration.

2. Development of plans for the implementation of chemicals-related multilateral environmental agreements – development of supplementary guidance

13. The supplementary guidance developed in association with UNITAR to assist countries in using their national profiles or national implementation plans under the Stockholm Convention as a basis on which to define gaps in their infrastructure for the implementation of the Rotterdam Convention will be field tested in 2006 through national and subregional meetings on the implementation of the Convention.

14. A new proposal involves a series of national meetings in countries that have participated in the UNITAR project, “Action plan training/Skills building for 25 least developed countries to assist with national implementation plan development under the Stockholm Convention”. The goal of this initiative is to determine the extent to which the UNITAR training might be applied to the preparation of national plans for the ratification and implementation of the Rotterdam Convention. Steps will be taken to assess the feasibility of this approach through a series of follow-up meetings in five pilot countries. The project would be undertaken in cooperation with UNITAR, which would take the lead in developing the relevant training materials and in organizing the five meetings.

3. Cooperation with customs officials

15. Opportunities for cooperative or collaborative activities with customs officials will continue to be explored with the World Customs Organization, the secretariats of other multilateral environmental agreements and relevant organizations.

16. At the same time, relevant information materials in the resource kit, including the guidance document for designated national authorities, will be updated to reflect the importance of information flow between designated national authorities and customs officials. The presentations made during the national and regional meetings will also be updated.

4. Integration with activities under the Stockholm Convention

17. In order to strengthen the links between national implementation plans and associated action plans under the Stockholm Convention and the obligations of countries under the Rotterdam Convention, further work is needed to determine the effectiveness of relevant guidance documents. The secretariat, in cooperation with the secretariat of the Stockholm Convention, will undertake a review of a number of completed national implementation plans for the Stockholm Convention and will consider whether there is a need to revise the relevant guidance documents.

18. Pilot country projects to develop plans with UNITAR and national and subregional meetings may also provide opportunities to field test these guidance materials.

5. Collecting information on severely hazardous pesticide formulations

19. The secretariat will continue its efforts to integrate the severely hazardous pesticide formulation incident report forms with the work of the WHO pesticide data management system, possibly through cooperation with WHO regional offices.

20. Since January 2005, the European Union has been funding a three-year project with the Pesticide Action Network (PAN) to strengthen community health monitoring capabilities relevant to pesticide poisonings in six African countries. The lack of a process for collecting reliable information on pesticide poisoning incidents and a lack of adequate mechanisms for communicating this information to designated national authorities have been identified as major challenges by countries. A proposal has been made to collaborate on this project with a view to establishing appropriate links between designated national authorities and community health monitoring activities in the six pilot countries and a process for the preparation and submission of proposals for severely hazardous pesticide formulations under article 6 of the Convention.

Appendix to the work plan for 2006 on the regional and national delivery of technical assistance

Summary of the costs of the individual elements of a work plan on the regional and national delivery of technical assistance for 2006

A. Elements unique to the Rotterdam Convention	Cost (US \$)
<i>National and subregional consultations on the implementation of the Rotterdam Convention</i>	
Two subregional meetings involving countries of Southern Africa and East Africa (paragraph 3)	60,000
Meeting with CSP and DNAs to further integration of the Convention with the work of the Committee (paragraph 4)	15,000
National meetings in Asia region, in cooperation with the FAO Regional Office (Pakistan + one to two others) (paragraph 5)	40,000
National and subregional meetings (paragraph 6)	90,000
Follow-up to previous subregional and national meetings – individual country visits (paragraph 7)	15,000
B. Cross-cutting issues	
<i>Resource kit</i>	
Updating language versions and reprinting existing documents (paragraphs 8–9)	20,000
Prototype of interactive compact disk for self-directed training on the four key operational elements of the Convention (paragraph 10)	20,000
Further developing and expanding section E on cross-cutting issues (paragraph 11)	10,000
Case studies to supplement the guide on the development of national laws (paragraph 12)	15,000
<i>Development of supplementary guidance</i> (paragraph 14)	90,000
Collaboration with UNITAR: action plan development – preparation of training materials and delivery of pilot project in four countries	
<i>Integration with activities under the Stockholm Convention</i> (paragraphs 17–18)	5,000
Review completed national implementation plans (NIPs) to determine whether the references to the Rotterdam Convention in the guidance on the development of NIPs need strengthening.	
<i>Collecting information on severely hazardous pesticide formulations</i> (paragraphs 19–20)	20,000
Within the context of the PAN-European Union project on strengthening community health monitoring of pesticide poisoning incidents, strengthen links between DNAs and community health monitoring activities in six pilot countries.	
Total	400,000