
**Global Framework on Chemicals –
for a Planet Free of Harm from
Chemicals and Waste**

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**Open-ended Working Group of the
Global Framework on Chemicals – for a
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Agenda item 3(j) of the provisional agenda*
Capacity building**

Capacity-building

Note by the secretariat

The annex to the present note contains additional information on the development of a draft strategy for capacity-building and supporting technology transfer on mutually agreed terms as set out in document UNEP/GFC/OEWG.1/12. It has been developed and submitted by the Secretariat of the Global Framework on Chemicals in collaboration with the United Nations Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC).

The present note, including its annexes, has not been formally edited.

* UNEP/GFC/OEWG.1/1

Annex:**I. Introduction**

1. In preparation for the 5th International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM5), the secretariat of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management, working with UNEP-WCMC, produced draft elements for a capacity-building strategy that were submitted to the consideration of the Conference ([SAICM/ICCM.5/INF/05](#), see Appendix to this document for ease of reference).
2. The Global Framework on Chemicals - For a Planet Free of Harm from Chemicals and Waste (GFC), adopted by ICCM5 in Bonn in 2023, provides a vision for a planet free of harm from chemicals and waste, for a safe, healthy and sustainable future – where industry and private sectors are strategic actors to foster innovation, move towards sustainable business models and drive change. The Framework follows a multisectoral and multi-stakeholder approach that should be reflected in its implementation, through strengthened collaboration and coordination among stakeholders and building chemicals and waste management capacities in all countries ([Resolution V/1](#)).
3. The strategic objectives of the Framework emphasize the importance of the necessary capacities being in place for its successful implementation. In particular, the Framework aims to achieve the following:
 - a. Legal frameworks, institutional mechanisms and capacities are in place to support and achieve the safe and sustainable management of chemicals throughout their life cycle
 - b. Enhanced implementation occurs through increased and effective resource mobilization, partnerships, cooperation, capacity-building, and integration into all relevant decision-making processes.
4. In addition to the references to capacity building throughout the Framework, there is a specific reference for “The International Conference to develop a strategy for capacity building and supporting technology transfer on mutually agreed terms...” (paragraph 60). This reference aims to provide an umbrella for enhanced action and several of the elements that were presented to ICCM5 are included in the Framework text.

II. Proposed way forward

5. Building on the information presented above and in the Appendix to this document, it is suggested that the Open-Ended Working Group considers whether there are any gaps relating to capacity building necessary for the achievement of the strategic objectives of the Framework. Furthermore, where gaps would exist, guidance on how to address them, including on the approach that would be most suitable to address those gaps, that is on whether there is a need to develop a strategy for capacity building or whether any other more actionable approach could be more effective.

Appendix: Draft elements for a capacity-building strategy for the Strategic Approach and the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020 as set out in document SAICM/ICCM.5/INF/5

Introduction and mandate

1. This document was prepared in response to the Programme of Work and Budget 2021 – 2023 for the secretariat of the Strategic Approach, which proposed developing a draft capacity-building strategy (the strategy).⁵ The following sections of this annex identify core components that the Conference may wish to consider in the development of the strategy, namely: (II) rationale, (III) purpose, (IV) definitions, (V) objectives, (VI) guiding principles, (VII) strategic priorities for the implementation of the strategy, (VIII) institutional arrangements, (IX) roles of different stakeholders in implementing the strategy, (X) means of implementation, and (XI) monitoring, review and reporting.
2. Relevant policy and legal frameworks and instruments to inform and guide the development of the strategy may include: (a) the United Nations Assembly resolution 1/5, through which an integrated approach to address the financing of the sound management of chemicals and waste was welcomed,⁶ (b) Conference decision IV/4 on the strategic approach and sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020,⁷ (c) Conference decision IV/1 on the implementation towards the achievement of the 2020 goal,⁸ (d) Conference decision III/4 on the strategy for strengthening the engagement of the health sector in the implementation of the Strategic Approach.⁹

II. Rationale

3. Capacity-building is crucial for the sound management of chemicals and has been a component of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) since its inception.¹⁰ At the first session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM1), held in 2006 in Dubai (United Arab Emirates), ministers, heads of delegations, and representatives of stakeholder groups expressed a commitment towards bridging the capacity gaps between developed and developing countries and strengthening the capacity of the latter for the sound management of chemicals and the development of safer alternative products and processes through partnerships, technical support, and financial assistance.¹¹ Since ICCM1, capacity building has been an important area of work in implementing the Overarching Policy Strategy,¹² the Global Plan of Action¹³ and in pursuing SAICM's overall objective of achieving "the sound management of chemicals throughout their lifecycle so that, by 2020, chemicals are used and produced in ways that lead to the minimization of significant adverse effects on human health and the environment."¹⁴
4. The independent evaluation of SAICM for the period 2006 to 2016 found that the majority of stakeholders (70%) perceived the implementation of the Overarching Policy Strategy's objectives on capacity-building as having had "some success" or having been "very successful."¹⁵ It further noted that this success was largely attributed to the Quick Start Programme and capacity-building programmes delivered by United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and the chemicals industry. However, the independent evaluation also concluded that "the extent and reach of these programmes has not been sufficient to address the capacity constraints within developing countries" due to several factors, including the *ad hoc* nature of the approach to capacity-building under SAICM.¹⁶
5. The study commissioned by the secretariat to inform the preparation of the strategy also pointed to the lack of a systematic approach and designated framework for delivering capacity-building under the current structure of SAICM.¹⁷ In the draft intersessional process co-chairs single consolidated document, capacity-building is mostly addressed under section VIII, in the format of a "capacity building platform."¹⁸ As outlined by the study, proposals for building a common framework for the role of the new framework instrument in delivering capacity-building are notably absent from the current draft.¹⁹
6. During the interviews, stakeholders also highlighted several capacity-building gaps in the context of SAICM. These include, *inter alia*, challenges in accessing resources made available in the past through the Quick Start Programme, Special Programme, and the Global Environment Facility; limited availability of resources, especially for non-governmental actors, for designing and implementing capacity-building interventions; the lack of a common understanding amongst stakeholders about SAICM and its objectives; and the underrepresentation of and limited exchange with sectors beyond the environmental sector.²⁰ Several stakeholders also noted the importance of (a) seeking coordination and alignment with other intergovernmental processes and multilateral environmental agreements relevant to the chemicals and waste cluster, (b) working together with United Nations agencies and other stakeholders in the chemicals and waste cluster, and (c) having a capacity-building strategy in place.²¹

III. Purpose and scope

7. The main purpose of the strategy would be to provide an integrated framework for the design and implementation of capacity-building activities and interventions to support the implementation of the new framework instrument. As appropriate, this may include following a differentiated approach that tailors technical assistance to specific needs of developing countries, in particular least developed countries and small island developing States, and countries with economies in transition.

IV. Terminology

8. The strategy could include definitions of key terms to support building a common ground for identifying and delivering capacity-building interventions in support of the implementation of the new framework instrument. The definitions below may be relevant for such purpose:
 - a. *Capacity*: Capacity can be defined as the ability of people, organisations, and society as a whole to manage their affairs successfully.²²
 - b. *Capacity-building*: Capacity-building is defined as the process of developing and strengthening the skills, abilities, processes, and resources that organizations and communities need to survive, adapt, and thrive in a fast-changing world.²³ In recent years, there has been a shift towards the term “capacity development” in different circumstances. For instance, various definitions of capacity development exist in the literature²⁴ and the context of development agencies.²⁵ The United Nations Development Group defines capacity development as “the process whereby people, organizations, and society as a whole unleash, strengthen, create, adapt and maintain capacity over time.”²⁶ This involves, at the country level, support to national and subnational entities “in developing their capacities to lead, manage, achieve and account for their development priorities.”²⁷
 - c. *Technical capacities*: Technical capacities are those associated with areas of expertise in given sectors and/or areas. These include capacities to carry out technical tasks related to the sound management of chemicals and waste and the implementation of the new framework instrument.
 - d. *Functional capacities*: Functional capacities can be defined as broad, all-purpose skills (including soft skills) needed to uptake and sustain the objectives of the new framework instrument. They include cross-cutting capacities relevant to individual and organizational effectiveness, such as capacities needed to formulate, implement and review policies, strategies, programmes, and projects; capacities to create, access, manage, and exchange information and knowledge; capacities to create and maintain networks, alliances, and partnerships; strategic planning and leadership; budgeting, marketing, and resource mobilization.
 - e. *Capacity-building approaches*: Capacity-building approaches refer to the manner in which capacity-building interventions are planned to achieve a desired outcome(s).
 - f. *Capacity-building modalities*: Capacity-building modalities are the delivery methods employed to achieve specific capacity-building goals. As a rule, the selection of capacity-building modalities is informed by the target audience and their needs, as well as the approaches in which the modalities will be embedded.

V. Objectives

9. In the context of multilateral environmental agreements and other multilateral processes, capacity-building strategies and plans provide strategic guidance and direction in the development of targeted capacity-building interventions.²⁸ In relation to the new framework instrument, such a strategy could support its effective delivery.
10. The Conference could consider setting out several general and specific objectives for the strategy. A general objective could identify the overall goal to be pursued by implementing such a strategy. For example, “to support countries and other stakeholders in strengthening their capacities for the effective implementation of the new framework instrument.” The strategy could then list a series of specific objectives regarding areas or activities that would be important for achieving the general objective. For this purpose, the following areas could be considered:
 - a. Increasing understanding about the scope, goals, and targets as well as other elements of the new framework instrument and the possible contribution and roles of different stakeholders for its effective implementation.
 - b. Institutional strengthening development of policy and legal frameworks for the sound management of chemicals and waste.

- c. Strengthening the capacities of countries and other stakeholders for enhanced cross-sectoral cooperation and collaboration in implementing the new framework instrument.
 - d. Strengthening the capacity of countries and other stakeholders to monitor progress in the implementation of the new framework instrument and other related global commitments relating to the sound management of chemicals and waste, at the global, regional, and local levels.
11. Alternatively, the Conference could consider outlining a set of expected or intended outcomes and related objectives/outputs for their achievement.

VI. Guiding principles

12. The co-facilitators of the thematic group on financial considerations at the third meeting of the intersessional process developed proposed draft capacity-building principles as an outcome of the discussions.²⁹ Further input was received by stakeholders and consolidated into document number SAICM/IP.4/2/Rev.1.³⁰ The latest draft of the intersessional process co-chairs' single consolidated document incorporates some of these draft principles in section IV, titled "principles and approaches."³¹ The strategy has the potential to build on these principles, reinforce them, and suggest further guiding principles that may be relevant for its implementation.
13. The conference may wish to consider the following additional principles in the development of the strategy for the new framework instrument:
- a. Promote tailored and demand-driven capacity-building that responds to identified needs and priorities;
 - b. Strengthen institutions at all levels for the sound management of chemicals and waste;
 - c. Encourage national and regional delivery of capacity-building activities/interventions;
 - d. Foster collaboration and coordination across multilateral environmental agreements and other international instruments relating to chemicals and waste, as well as across different sectors and stakeholders;
 - e. Foster a strategic, coherent, and gender-responsive approach to capacity-building for the Beyond 2020 framework instrument in the context of a lifecycle approach for the environmentally sound management of chemicals and waste.
 - f. Promote and facilitate North-South, South-South, and triangular cooperation to support capacity-building.
 - g. Promote an adaptive and iterative implementation of the strategy to allow for the identification of gaps, needs, and priorities over time;
 - h. Seek alignment with capacity-building activities developed under other multilateral environmental agreements and by stakeholders, engaging with and building on existing initiatives as appropriate. This includes seeking alignment with the technical assistance plan for the implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions for the period 2022–2025;³²
 - i. Promote partnerships and encourage and support multi-stakeholder engagement and participation in the implementation of the strategy, including at local, national, regional, and global levels.

VII. Strategic priorities for the implementation of the strategy

14. The strategy could include a range of strategic priorities that would provide the basis for the implementation of the strategy towards achieving the objectives set out above. In this regard, the Conference may wish to consider the following strategic priorities, among others:
- a. *Promoting a coordinated approach to delivering capacity-building for the implementation of the new framework instrument, ensuring relevance and alignment with the framework instrument's strategic objectives and targets:* During the interviews, several stakeholders noted the need to align the process for developing a strategy, as well as its content, to the framework instrument under negotiation.³³ The draft intersessional process co-chairs single consolidated document includes five strategic objectives and a series of targets relating to, *inter alia*, implementing and enforcing legal and policy frameworks for the sound management of chemicals and waste, establishing appropriate institutional capacities at the country and regional levels, and securing funding for national chemicals management. Operative Paragraph A(1) also proposes the adoption by the Conference of "Implementation Programmes to support actions to achieve the strategic objectives and targets of the instrument" and their respective mandates, terms of reference, and work plans. Similarly, section VIII of the consolidated document outlines proposals (in brackets) for capacity-building.³⁴ Pending the outcomes of the intersessional process and the fifth session

of the Conference, the strategy could be an adequate instrument to provide guidance on the alignment between the delivery of capacity-building for the sound management of chemicals and the new framework instrument;

- b. *Building the capacity of regional and national focal points and other government officials, as appropriate, for the implementation of the new framework instrument:* Stakeholders highlighted during the interviews the need to support all national focal points and other government officials in building their capacities on the scope, objectives, and governance structure of the Strategic Approach.³⁵ In the draft intersessional process co-chairs single consolidated document, there are propositions for the designation of regional and national focal points in alignment with current practice.³⁶ Such strategic priority would respond to the needs identified in the interviews and improve the engagement of regional and national focal points in the implementation of the new framework instrument;
 - c. *Building the capacity of stakeholders, as appropriate, for the implementation of the new framework instrument at all levels and across different sectors relevant to the sound management of chemicals and waste;* and
 - d. *Support countries and stakeholders in building their capacities to address emerging policy issues and issues of concern, if applicable:* In the interviews, stakeholders have underscored the importance of seeking alignment between the objectives and priorities of the strategy and emerging policy issues and other issues of concern.³⁷ Paragraph 24 of the Overarching Policy Strategy enumerates several functions of the Conference, including focusing attention and calling for appropriate action on emerging policy issues as they arise and forging consensus on priorities for cooperative action (paragraph 24(j)).³⁸ The current modalities for considering emerging policy issues are set out in the annex to resolution II/4 of the second session of the Conference.³⁹ The draft intersessional process co-chairs single consolidated document includes bracketed language on further identifying issues of concern and developing work plans with clear timelines and milestones for implementing actions to address them.⁴⁰ If applicable, such strategic priority would provide the building blocks for capacity-building activities and interventions to support the implementation of emerging policy issues and other issues of concern.
15. Additional strategic priorities may focus on different stakeholder groups (e.g., regional and national focal points, countries, and other stakeholders) and at different levels (e.g., local, national, regional, and global).

VIII. Institutional arrangements

16. In implementing the strategy, the Conference may wish to consider defining specific roles for the Conference, an Open-Ended Working Group, the Bureau, and the Secretariat. These may include:
 - a. Conference: Approving the strategy and related instruments, inviting countries and stakeholders to report on progress made in the implementation of capacity-building strategy/activities, and providing strategic guidance and advise on the implementation of the strategy.
 - b. Open-Ended Working Group: Reviewing progress in the implementation of the strategy as well as delivery of capacity-building activities, preparing updates to the strategy and related instruments as needed, and submitting them to the Conference for consideration.
 - c. Bureau: Providing oversight on the implementation of the strategy and related instruments.
 - d. Secretariat: Facilitating the implementation of the strategy, liaising with stakeholders, establishing partnerships for the implementation of the strategy, exploring fundraising options for the delivery of the capacity-building strategy, *inter alia*.
17. Additionally, the Conference may wish to consider establishing an ad hoc working group or liaison group on capacity building to assist the implementation of the strategy, bringing together the secretariats of multilateral environmental agreements from the chemicals and waste cluster, the Ozone secretariat, the nine Participating Organizations of the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals, and other relevant stakeholders as appropriate.

IX. The roles of different stakeholders in the implementation of the strategy

18. Paragraph 2 of the Overarching Policy Strategy provides for the involvement of all relevant sectors and stakeholders in the implementation of the Strategic Approach.⁴¹ The following groups are listed as key in achieving the goals of the Strategic Approach: (a) governments, (b) regional economic integration organizations, (c) intergovernmental organizations, (d) non-governmental organizations, and (e) individuals⁴² involved in the management of chemicals throughout their life-cycles from all relevant sectors, including, but

not limited to, agriculture, environment, health, industry, relevant economic activity, development cooperation, labour, and science.⁴³

19. The study commissioned by the secretariat also identified the relevant contribution and role of local, national, and regional public interest civil society organizations and networks, including grassroots organizations, community-based organizations, and faith-based organizations; youth groups and networks; women's groups and networks; the private sector; and the informal economy sector for the sound management of chemicals, *inter alia*.⁴⁴
20. During the interviews, several stakeholders stressed the importance of further engaging civil society organizations and networks in designing and implementing capacity-building initiatives for the Beyond 2020 framework instrument. Stakeholders also underscored the need for more ownership and clearly defined roles in the delivery of capacity-building under the new framework instrument. Similarly, they expressed their concerns with the lack of representation of sectors other than the environment in the current governance structure of the Strategic Approach and called for increased cross-sectoral collaboration and exchange.
21. Within this context, the Conference may wish to consider identifying the possible roles and contributions of different stakeholders and sectors in implementing the strategy. Such possible roles and contributions could be identified through a consultative process facilitated by the secretariat, as part of the development of a future action/work plan to deliver the strategy.

X. Means of implementation

22. The Conference may wish to consider proposing the development of action/work plan(s) to implement the strategy. Such plan(s) could include, among others, clearly-defined outcomes, outputs, actions, and milestones; and sustainability and monitoring requirements for capacity-building interventions and actions. The plan(s) could also include provisions for their periodic update as appropriate.
23. During the interviews, stakeholders have expressed concerns with the status of funding for capacity-building activities in the context of the Strategic Approach, as well as the difficulty in accessing institutional programmes such as the Special Programme. One stakeholder also noted the need to recognize the value of in-kind contributions. Within this context, the Conference may wish to request the secretariat to explore innovative ways to fund the strategy and seek alignment with existing programmes and initiatives under other multilateral processes and multilateral environmental agreements.

XI. Monitoring, review, and reporting

24. Capacity-building is a long-term and continuous process that requires effective planning, monitoring, and review of outcomes and outputs. In the context of the implementation of a strategy, monitoring and review are key to understanding progress, identifying challenges and needs, and allowing for adjustments as needed.
25. Depending on the resources and funding sources available, and the engagement of key stakeholders, including regional and national focal points, the Conference and/or an Open-Ended Working Group may wish to consider reviewing, at regular intervals, progress in the implementation of the strategy, including the effectiveness of activities employed in achieving its objectives and outcomes. Such an analysis may take into consideration the short, medium, and long-term impacts of capacity-building actions and interventions.
26. Section XI of the draft intersessional process co-chairs single consolidated document includes a proposal for taking stock of the progress in the implementation of the Beyond 2020 framework instrument, in line with current provisions of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management.⁴⁵ For instance, operative paragraph XI(1) of the consolidated document outlines an invitation to all stakeholders to report on their implementation efforts to the Conference through the secretariat.⁴⁶ The Conference may wish to invite countries and stakeholders to also report on capacity-building activities in such a stocktaking exercise for the new framework instrument.