

Meeting Report

Expert Consultation Meeting on Final Results of the UNEP/GEF GMP POPs Projects in
the Africa, Asia, Pacific and GRULAC Regions

5-6 June 2022, Geneva, Switzerland

1. Background

Article 16 of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) requests parties to evaluate the effectiveness of the Convention four years after the date of entry into force of the Convention and periodically thereafter. The Global Monitoring Plan (GMP) was established by the Conference of Parties of the Stockholm Convention with the objectives to identify spatial and temporal changes of POPs concentrations in the environment and human and to assess POPs regional and global transport.

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Chemicals and Health Branch provides technical assistance to strengthen the capacities of countries for the implementation of the GMP to support the implementation of the Stockholm Convention and the effectiveness evaluation of it. Following the success of the two pilot test projects on the GMP guidance document and the first round of UNEP/GEF POPs GMP projects (2009-2012), the second round of POPs GMP projects (UNEP/GEF POPs GMP II) are being implemented since 2016, in 42 developing countries and countries with economies in transition in Africa, Asia, Pacific Islands and Latin American and the Caribbean (GRULAC) regions. The main activities of the projects include the provision of quality and comparable data on POPs in the core matrices air, water, human milk and additional matrices of national interest, and capacity building at global, regional and levels to strengthen conditions for sustainable monitoring of POPs.

With a wealth of data generated and experience gained during the implementation of these projects, and taking into consideration the increasing needs for scientifically sound facts to support informed decision making at global, regional and national levels, this meeting aims to discuss with data generators and experts to identify key findings and messages of the UNEP/GEF POPs GMP II projects in four regions, identify gaps in data generation and capacities based on the outcomes of the projects, and to discuss on follow-up steps towards conclusion of the projects. The outputs of this meeting are expected to contribute to a successful closure of the projects and to provide food for thoughts for sustainable monitoring of POPs.

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2. Objectives

Taking into consideration the wealth of information and experience generated through UNEP/GEF POPs GMP projects, the consultation is to engage key experts to:

- Identify key messages of the UNEP/GEF POPs GMP II projects
- Identify gaps in data generation and capacities based on the outcomes of the projects
- Discuss on follow-up steps towards conclusion of the projects

3. Participants

Experts of the UNEP/GEF GMP II project, UNEP, BRS Secretariat and the GEF were invited to participate in the expert consultation. The list of participants is set out in the Annexes.

Day 1

4. Opening of the meeting

The expert consultation started 9 am on Sunday, 5 June.

Ms. Jacqueline Alvarez, Director of UNEP Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean and former project manager of the UNEP/GEF POPs GMP projects welcomed all participants and gave a brief introduction of the scope and progress of the UNEP/GEF POPs GMP projects and the background and objectives of the stakeholder consultation meeting.

Mr. Gamini Manuweera, former UNEP Programme Management Officer and project manager of the UNEP/GEF POPs GMP projects, introduced the agenda for the consultation and gave a presentation on opportunities to enhance the contributions of the projects.

Participants adopted the provisional meeting agenda (see Annexes).

Ms. Mihaela Paun, Programme Management Officer, UNEP Chemicals and Health Branch gave a presentation on the emerging needs for data generation and capacity building towards informed decision making. She emphasized that successful implementation of the Stockholm Convention relies on informed decision making and underlined that there is limited scientific data at the national level and limited understanding of its interpretation.

5. Technical sessions

5.1 Water monitoring

Presentations

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Ms. Heidelore Fiedler, Professor of School of Science and Technology, MTM Research Centre of Örebro University, presented the facts and figures of the outputs and outcomes of the water monitoring activities under the UNEP/GEF POPs GMP II projects.

Mr. Jochen Mueller, professor for Environmental Toxicology at University of Queensland presented on water monitoring in the Pacific Islands. He also mentioned about translating the passive water monitoring results into loads per capita taking into consideration the flow value for a river, to estimate the amount of releases the population faces for example.

Discussions

Based on comments to the presentations, participants remarked that the methodology works as levels of POPs were detected while it is hard to draw out trends from one snapshot monitoring. Participants agreed while for national governments the data it is not always as meaningful.

It was proposed that criteria that can guide decision making needs to be defined, for example, recommending timeframes for monitoring for effectiveness evaluation. Another suggestion was it might be better to consider supporting regional or subregional capacity rather than individual countries.

5.2 Human Milk Survey

Presentations

Mr. Rainer Malisch, Head, Residue Department at CVUA Freiburg gave a presentation on the human milk survey. He stated that the current concept of preparation and analysis is cost effective and encouraged repeated participation for updated trend analyses. Results showed high chlorinated paraffin (CPs) concentrations caused predominantly by MCCPs which have not been listed by the Stockholm Convention. In most cases countries have 2 or 3 data points but at least 5 are required to derive statistically significant trends. Overall conclusions at national and regional levels and on time trends, and suggestions for future improvements were shared in the presentation slides.

Ms. Heidelore Fiedler then gave a brief presentation on PFOS, PFOA and PFHxS in Human milk. A number of figures and tables were presented to introduce the findings and outcomes of analysis of PFAS in human milk. A list of highlights was shared in the PowerPoint presentation.

Discussions

In the pursuant discussions, it was summarised that without the GEF funded work, data from many developing countries and regions would not be available for effectiveness evaluation. Countries that participated in the past should continue being assessed. Gaps in the coverage of the human milk survey were also discussed as the milk study does not include many chemicals producing and using countries. Self-funded countries should be encouraged to continue their efforts following the criteria of the GMP to allow comparability.

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Participants heard that through the human milk bank, it is possible to analyse new POPs when they become of interest depending on whether there is sufficient sample amount left.

Regarding whether results of POPs in human milk can support drawing conclusions on human exposure, it was emphasized that GMP data needs to be linked to the sources of samples and other environmental and health dimensions in order to support such discussions. Furthermore, considering the unique values of human milk survey for measuring human exposure, as well as the requirements of the effectiveness evaluation of the Convention, both the continuity of human milk survey and the inclusion of new POPs are of great importance.

Mr. Jitendra Sharma, Programme Officer, GEF Unit, UNEP Chemicals and Health Branch commented that as the use of these chemicals is very defined, it is possible attribute the decline over time to their management. He raised the question, on how to attribute increases or decreases in new POPs, such as chlorinated paraffins, for example in a case where there is no legislation yet? He highlighted that most countries of these eligible for the project will not know countries where the chemicals are used or are using them in products and raw materials to make products? Mr. Sharma also raised the issue that some countries are still registered for the use of DDT, and there are others, e.g. in Zambia and South Africa who have increased the amount of DDT they are importing. He called for more data on trends in concentrations related to this. One response to this question was to consider the human milk study as a pilot study for the levels of chlorinated paraffins. From this follow up studies can be encouraged.

5.3 Passive and active air monitoring

Presentations

Mr. Jacob De Boer, Professor in Environment and Health, Vrije Universiteit, gave a presentation on the passive and active air sampling activities supported by VU. Observations and key messages are provided in the PowerPoint slides including that most POPs are still around, in several countries at elevated levels including DDT, PCB, dieldrin, endosulfan, BDE209. There is a lot of PFAS, and farmers still seem to be spraying DDT, but it is not clear where this is coming from. With the growing POPs list, the fact that some companies are adding chlorine or fluorine to PFAS to change the chemical slightly and avoid bans should be paid more attention to.

Mr. Esteban Abad Holgado, Researcher at the Laboratory of Dioxins, CSIC, presented the passive and active air sampling efforts in the GRULAC region. He reported that all of the samples detected levels of DDT, DDE and HCB and that dieldrin was detected in all countries except in Chile, which was a very remote area. The highest levels of alpha endosulfan and toxaphenes were seen in Mexico, the sampling point was close to a rural area and to a small airport used by planes mainly tasked with mitigation. Conclusions and proposals were provided on the PowerPoint slides, including among others, the need for additional information about sample sites and need to prioritize analysis components of concern.

Ms. Heidelore Fiedler gave a presentation on passive and active air sampling supported by MTM. She reported that there were low concentrations of PFASs throughout all samples and around 54% of the samples were so deteriorated that FOSAs couldn't be detected by LC-MS/MS. The 9 samples from Zambia were outliers for all four PFAS, and for 2 years there was

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construction at the airport near the sampling location. In Small Island States and Africa, PFOS levels were high which might be related to firefighting foams. For PCDD results the highest TEQ median values were seen in GRULAC, for PCDF and PCB they were highest in Asia, and the differences between regions are remarkable. More details were provided in the PowerPoint presentation.

Ms. Katerina Sebkova, Director, National Centre and Stockholm Convention Regional Centre RECETOX, gave a presentation on passive and active air sampling supported by RECETOX. She concluded that active sampling is possible in Africa, but maintenance is an issue, and power outages are a big challenge. Dealing with equipment issues was a challenge as their producers do not have branches in Africa and repairs could take several months. A list of key messages and lessons learned were provided on the PowerPoint slides, including that solar panels can help with the power outages, and that it is not possible to determine trends from only 2 years of activity.

Discussions

There was a discussion on the representativity of the sampling sites. For trend analysis, air sampling needs to be conducted at the same sites. While to support usage of data for different purposes, revaluation of the sampling sites is needed, and more criteria are expected for the classification of sampling sites. When discussing the detection of DDT participants pointed out that in some developing countries there is access to DDT for vector control and that illegal use and old stocks are particularly problematic in developing countries. Mr. Jitendra Sharma agreed and highlighted that there is a perception issue in developing countries. Where there is limited literacy, farmers might call whatever they are spraying DDT or endosulfan as these are the most common names on the ground. Furthermore, that despite being banned, other technical grade pesticides might be sold on the market under the name DDT.

It was acknowledged that the messages shared, and inputs provided by the expert group are valuable for the relevant discussions of the Science Policy Panel being developed by UNEP. Links were also drawn between POPs monitoring and other national and regional initiatives such as the national implementation plans. It was also mentioned that data generation for chemical producing countries should also be encouraged, given the case that little toxaphene was detected in Africa and Asia, with high levels detected in human milk in Nicaragua, however it was heavily used and produced in North America and the north of Europe.

Participants also concluded that dialogue may be needed to connect the GMP data with areas where countries can benefit from this work, e.g., though the NIPs work or pesticide concern. As some countries have large contamination of products, if this data was used for import and export decisions, countries would be more interested. Governments or at least a designated responsible focal point needs to be able to understand what the data signifies, and countries need to have a level of ownership over the information for them to be encouraged to continue engaging.

During the discussion the work was categorised in two tracks. Firstly, a track on how to help countries understand the data and second, a track on supporting the effectiveness evaluation.

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Taking into consideration the different requirements for data generation, the aims of each track need to be clearly defined and not mixed.

Participants agreed that it is essential to have a 3rd phase of this project, which should be rethought taking on characteristics that are defined based on the knowledge accumulated by this expert group. Collaboration with other existing networks should also be strengthened.

Mr. Gamini Manuweera closed the discussions for the first day of the consultative meeting, to be resumed the next morning.

Day 2

Mr. Gamini Manuweera resumed the to the consultative meeting at 8:30 AM Monday, 6 June.

5.4 Monitoring of matrices of national interest

Presentations

Mr Jacob de Boer provided a presentation on matrices of national interest, reporting that many concentrations were below the detection limits. Sediments and fish samples were the most submitted samples and in general there were relatively low values. The presentation included slides containing concluding remarks and putting forward three categories of key messages. Of note, participation by the countries in the mirror study was limited. Further consideration is needed to enable countries to truly benefit from this activity.

Ms. Heidelore Fiedler gave a presentation on national samples for PFOS, PFOA, PFHxS and dioxin/like POPs. She shared observations of challenges occurred to receive samples from countries, and the limited capacity for countries to conduct mirror analysis. She also presented that PFOS, PFOA, or PFHxS were detected in most samples. Overall Fish, chicken and sediments were the most submitted sample types, however preferences differed by region. Conclusions were provided in the PowerPoint slides.

Mr. Esteban Abad Holgado presented on matrices of national Interest from the GRULAC region. He noted that there were complications with sample imports and some countries did not send any samples at all. Information about samples including sampling location and POP sources in the area was essential in order to interpretate the results. Conclusions and proposals were provided on a slide in the PowerPoint presentation.

Mr. Jochen Mueller gave a presentation on matrices of national interest focusing on the Pacific Region. Samples were analysed for PFASs, and most values were below the limit of detection. He reflected that an analytical laboratory might not understand which samples are of national interest. People who understand what samples are important and meaningful to national interest are needed. To enhance engagement, sampling should be hypothesis or needs driven to have actions of national interest.

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5.5 Strengthening national and regional capacity and capability for sustainable monitoring of POPs

Presentations

Mr Jacob de Boer gave a presentation on training of laboratories and interlab studies. In two rounds of interlabs completely under the UNEP/GEF POPs GMP II projects, a large number of new laboratories participated, indicating an increase of interest, however their overall performance was not great, with some exceptions. The percentage of satisfactory data is often around 30% for PCBs, or lower for OCPs. Several observations were shared on the slides including that the process should be more selective and target one or two central labs per continent and make them a centre of excellence. Conclusions, recommendations and key messages were also provided on the slides, including that continuation of the interlab studies is needed.

Ms. Katerina Sebkova presented slides on RECETOX's contribution to capacity building activities. Power outages, equipment failures are common reasons why national labs could not perform analysis. Training in Morocco had no impact due to poor equipment. One institute that regularly analyses samples showed great standards, however they are limited by legislation to testing a very specific water segment. It is suggested to have a linkage between the laboratory and the working cycle of data generation, and to have continuity in a country.

Mr. Esteban Abad Holgado gave a presentation on the achievements of capacity building and how countries can further benefit from them in the GRULAC Region. A few trainings were provided online due to COVID. Conclusions and proposals were provided in the slides including that there did not appear to be further analytical improvements in some cases. Some training participants were not involved in POPs analysis and there was a lack of permanent staff. There was also a lack of adequate and functional analytical equipment. These indicate the importance of national interest in POPs monitoring and analysis in order to enhance sustainability at the national labs.

Ms. Heidelore Fiedler gave a presentation on capacity and performance for POPs analysis. For test solutions there was very good performance but for other matrices performance decreases. There is no capacity in Africa for PFAS analysis in water and human plasma, and none in GRULAC for human plasma. With dioxin like POPs and PFASs, performances were often satisfactory but for OCPs and PCBs, performances were often unsatisfactory. There are often big differences between the national lab and the expert lab results from mirror analyses.

Mr. Jochen Mueller shared UQ's experience with capacity building in Fiji. A second-hand GC-MS was sent to Fiji and due to COVID remote training was provided. While their interest is to do other testing, PFAS can still be analysed. It would be good to maintaining close contact with certain people in these nations through training as part of the capacity building. It was also observed that nations see the plastic and mercury rather than the POPs issues, and they have strong interest in analyzing goods for export. Further considerations are needed to connect the importance of POPs monitoring with national priority setting and with national needs in order to strengthen sustainability of capacity building activities, and to ensure that countries truly

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benefit from enhanced capacity for the analysis of POPs. Some further thoughts are provided in the PowerPoint presentation.

Discussions

Participants in the meeting agreed that the UNEP/GEF GMP projects should continue especially with new chemicals coming in as POPs for which the levels are not yet known.

Considering the needs for quality data and the limited capacities in developing countries, "Centre of Excellence" was discussed, which could be regional labs or could also be POPs based for the whole world. Given the fact that in the past it was not possible to reach an agreement on a regional or a sectoral lab by POP, criteria need to be developed to support the identification of "Centre of Excellence".

Participants agreed that moving forward, there should be some criteria involved when selecting labs including an analysis of the sustainability, the regular routine for POPs analysis and the matrices they usually work. Regional "Centers of Excellence" should be able to generate high quality data which satisfies the requirements of the effectiveness evaluation of the Convention. Countries on the other hand may only need to know whether or not they have a POPs issue thus data generation and capacity building at national labs could be more demand driven. Good criteria for sending representative samples of national interest needs to be established.

5.6 Key messages to support informed decision making

Based on earlier discussions, participants agreed that GMP is essential to continue to have data and align spatial-temporal distribution, to facilitate the assessment of trends and to fill in gaps for the Stockholm Convention effectiveness evaluation, including for example global human milk survey and air monitoring in the global south, Asia and the Pacific, and the Central Asia and Middle East regions. However, a revision of the modality is needed to ensure results are representative and can serve targeted purposes. In addition, the harmonization and interpretability of data should be strengthened to link previous data with new data.

While data generation remains a key pillar for assessment and decision making, there is a need to have different levels of intervention. Clear objectives need to be defined and followed. Effective monitoring and effectiveness evaluation with high quality data, needs to rely on strategic partners and centers of excellence as global capacities are not consistent enough to contribute at national and regional levels. This should not be mixed with helping countries develop national capacities. More information on local contexts such as hotspots are needed to better understand the sources and the impacts of secondary sources and releases on levels POPs in the environment.

Understanding of data is key for effective actions to implement the Stockholm Convention at national level and beneficial for the NIPs. Demand driven monitoring and capacity building activities—including the selection of matrices, intervals, sites and POPs—can further support

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enhancing country ownership at the same time contributing to fulfilling the obligations of the Stockholm Convention.

Prevention of regrettable substitutions is essential to avoid the continuous addition of new POPs into the environment and people. The steep growth of new POPs will not only bring problems for monitoring but also for countries with putting in control measures and waste treatment. The results generated under the UNEP/GEF GMP projects should be used to inform decision making towards prevention of the introduction of regrettable substitutions or the early recognition of regrettable substitutions.

It is also important to have understanding at the global and regional levels as well. Data and knowledge generated through this project is critical to address other international priorities, including plastics, climate change and biodiversity loss.

The expert group further discussed and agreed on 5 key messages shown below.

- a) High quality data remains a key pillar for assessment and decision making.
- b) It is essential to continue investing in generation of critical data to support The Stockholm Convention Effectiveness Evaluation.
- c) Understanding of data is key for effective actions to implement the Stockholm Convention at national level.
- d) Prevention of regrettable substitutions is essential to avoid the continuous additions of new POPs.
- e) Knowledge generated on POPs is critical to address other global challenges such as plastics, climate change and biodiversity loss.

It was decided that after the meeting, UNEP would populate these 5 key messages with paragraphs to further explain the messages.

5.7 Discussion with BRS Secretariat on key messages and next steps

Ms. Kei Ohno Woodall, Programme Officer, BRS Secretariat joined the discussion following a recap of the progress of the expert meeting and a summarization of the key messages developed by the group. Ms. Kei Ohno introduced the recent considerations of the BRS Secretariat including for example new POPs under discussion, future monitoring activities including consideration of other media and indoor environment, source tracking and the increasing needs to connect the data to policy making and action.

Ms. Kei Ohno also mentioned about the importance of data visualization in supporting the governing structures. She supported the suggestion for UNEP to give a statement on the five key messages of this expert consultation during the COP plenary.

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5.8 Proposed strategies to communicate the key findings to stakeholders and policy makers

Ms. Jacqueline Alvarez recapped the discussions that data generation and capacity building should distinguish the objectives for the effectiveness evaluation and for national or other needs, which are 1) generation of high quality and comparable data for the effectiveness evaluation and 2) support countries with data, information and knowledge to effectively implement the Stockholm Convention.

Bearing in mind the objectives of POPs monitoring, the group also suggested that better characterization is needed to justify the representativity and necessity of a sample, including the matrices, sampling location, intervals and POPs analyzed. Criteria on where to sample and what to analyse can be further defined in a proposal, along with other aspects to be replaced or enhanced. Based on some of the trends seen, additional criteria to select and classify remote sites and hotspots need to be looked at.

It was also mentioned that there is a need to engage more with industry, producers, recyclers, innovation, green and sustainable chemistry and those elements. Besides, guidance and support are needed for the assessment and usage of GMP results in NIPs to connect to articles 10 and 11 of the Convention on information exchange, research and monitoring. It is for the Secretariat to prepare guidelines on how to assess monitoring within the NIPs as part of the methodological process. Furthermore, the outcomes of this discussion are important for the science policy panel, to inform the panel with real world examples rather than hypothetical situations.

A follow-up proposal was that for reporting to the next COPs it would be beneficial to

- strengthen connection with relevant stakeholders;
- finalize the project regional and theme report which is on the agenda for this year;
- determine the experience gained, future needs and the approach;
- use lessons learnt from this project for systematic thinking;
- Look into the sampling sites in project countries as well as relevant guidance and criteria to support the selection of representative sites and matrices in future activities.

Regarding the communication of the key findings, Ms. Haosong Jiao, Associate Programme Management Officer, UNEP Chemicals and Health Branch, informed the experts that different initiatives have expressed interest in the POPs GMP work. The next step will be to digest the key messages from these discussions and understand how to communicate them to targeted audience.

Clarifications were also given on the project mandates for the preparation of national, regional and sectoral reports, as well as the status of these reports. The UNEP publication process was explained including the need to undergo internal review processes, and the projects' obligation to make the results of the UNEP/GEF POPs GMP projects publicly available through UNEP reports first. It was decided that an email from UNEP would be sent to the experts clarifying that after the results are publicly available, they may make use of the information for non-commercial purposes with acknowledgement to UNEP given. No further concerns on this were raised.

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It was agreed during the discussions that a communications strategy would be beneficial to enhance the POPs GMP project and speak beyond the data. For communicating results and findings, to generate interest in the reports in the meantime, Mr. Jacob de Boer offered his expertise noting his experience with public speaking.

A short presentation was provided by Ms. Nina Baijens, brand and communications strategist, UNEP, Chemicals and Health Branch on the approach is being taken for the communications strategy on the POPs project, connecting with the NIPs and SADC PCB projects as well.

Regarding the project closure, the group exchanged thoughts and proposed February 2023 for the organization of the final meeting of the projects.

6. Meeting closure

Ms. Jacqueline Alvarez made the final remarks of the meeting. In closing the meeting Mr. Gamini Manuweera thanked the participants their contributions.

Annexes

List of participants

**EXPERT CONSULTATION MEETING / UNEP GEF GMP PROJECTS IN THE
AFRICA, ASIA, GRULAC AND PACIFIC ISLANDS REGIONS
5 – 6 June 2022, GENEVA, SWITZERLAND**

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Agenda

Expert Consultation Meeting on Final Results of the UNEP/GEF GMP POPs Projects in the Africa, Asia, Pacific and GRULAC Regions

5-6 June 2022, Geneva, Switzerland

Objectives

- Identify key messages of the UNEP/GEF POPs GMP2 projects
- Identify gaps in data generation and capacities based on the outcomes of the projects
- Discuss on follow-up steps towards conclusion of the projects

Venue: Centre de conférence Genève (CICG), Room 16, Geneva, Switzerland

Time	Agenda Item	Presenter
Day 1 Sunday 5 June 2022		
Key Messages of the UNEP/GEF POPs GMP Projects		
8:30 – 9:00	Registration	All participants
9:00 - 9:05	Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda	Gamini Manuweera, Moderator
9:05 - 9:10	Opening remarks	Jacqueline Alvarez, Director, UNEP GRULAC Regional Office
9:10-9:20	Opportunities to enhance the contributions of the UNEP/GEF POPs GMP projects	Gamini Manuweera, Expert, former UNEP programme manager
9:20 – 9:40	The emerging needs for data generation and capacity building towards informed decision making	Mihaela Paun, UNEP Haosong Jiao, UNEP
9:40 - 10:20	Key messages of the UNEP/GEF POPs GMP Projects: What conclusions decision makers can/cannot draw from the POPs monitoring results	

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Time	Agenda Item	Presenter
	Water monitoring This session will include two presentations (10min each) by the data generators, followed by a group discussion. The session aims to identify key messages going beyond the levels of specific POPs and look into the conclusions that decision maker can/cannot draw from the results. Below are some examples of categories for consideration where the key Messages can fit in: • Environmental and health relevance • Global capacity and knowledge gaps • Recommendations for policy making and control actions • Suggestions for future POPs monitoring mechanisms • etc...	Heidelore Fiedler, MTM Jochen Mueller, UQ
10:20 - 10:35	<i>Coffee break</i>	
10:35 - 12:00	Human milk survey § Following the same approach as the previous session, this session will include two presentations (~10-20 min each) by the data generators, followed by a group discussion.	Rainer Malisch, CVUA Heidelore Fiedler, MTM
12:00 - 13:00	<i>Lunch break</i>	
13:00 - 14:30	Passive and active air monitoring Following the same approach as the previous session, this session will include four presentations (~10 min each) by the data generators, followed by a group discussion.	Jacob de Boer, VU Heidelore Fiedler, MTM Esteban Abad, CSIC Katerina Sebkova, RECETOX
14:30 - 15:15	Monitoring of matrices of national interest Following the same approach as the previous session, this session will include four presentations (~5-10 min each) by the data generators, followed by a group discussion.	Jacob de Boer, VU Heidelore Fiedler, MTM Esteban Abad, CSIC Jochen Mueller, UQ
15:15 - 15:30	<i>Coffee break</i>	

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Time	Agenda Item	Presenter
15:30 - 17:25	Key messages of the UNEP/GEF POPs GMP Projects: Achievements of capacity building activities and how countries can further benefit from them	
	Strengthen national and regional capacity and capability for sustainable monitoring of POPs In this session, participants will share experience around the following questions: 1. What are the three key limitations for countries to enhance capacities to monitor POPs at national level? 2. What are the three key limitations for the capacity assistance to bring sustainable changes in countries? 3. What are the key components that could have be included to improve the capacity building approaches? Wrap-up: key messages on capacity building and strategies for future stakeholder engagement	Jacob de Boer, VU Heidelore Fiedler, MTM Esteban Abad, CSIC Katerina Sebkova, RECETOX Jochen Mueller, UQ
	Capacities and capabilities for the interpretation and usage of data In this session, participants will discuss about strategies to strengthen data usage around the following questions: 1. Key sectors of data users. 2. What areas to be focused to strengthen the contribution of scientific community on informed decision-making process? 3. What are main gaps in data usage for decision-making? 4. What are the key components that should be considered to improve data usage in decision-making? Wrap-up: key messages on strategies for data usage for informed decision-making	All participants
17:25 - 17:30	Wrap up the first-day meeting	Jacqueline Alvarez, UNEP
Time	Agenda Item	Presenter
Day 2 Monday 6 June 2022		
From POPs monitoring to informed decision making		
08:30 - 9:00	Monitoring of matrices of national interest	Jacob de Boer, VU Heidelore Fiedler, MTM Esteban Abad, CSIC Jochen Mueller, UQ

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Time	Agenda Item	Presenter
9:00 – 11:00	Key messages of the UNEP/GEF POPs GMP Projects: Achievements of capacity building activities and how countries can further benefit from them Strengthen national and regional capacity and capability for sustainable monitoring of POPs and usage of data	Jacob de Boer, VU Heidelore Fiedler, MTM Esteban Abad, CSIC Katerina Sebkova, RECETOX Jochen Mueller, UQ All participantes
11:00-11:15	<i>Coffee break</i>	
11:15-13:00	Recap of key messages con.: • Messages obtained from the project outputs/outcomes and what countries can do with them • Opportunities and needs for sustainable monitoring of POPs to support informed decision making	All participants
13:00- 14:45	<i>Lunch break</i>	
14:45 - 15:45	Proposed strategies to communicate the key findings to stakeholders and policy makers • Sectoral reports • Publications • Communication plan	All participants
15:45 - 16:00	<i>Coffee break</i>	
16:00 -16:50	Proposed strategies to communicate the key findings to stakeholders and policy makers con. • Knowledge and data sharing platform • Events and meetings • AOB	All participants
16:50 - 17:00	Closing remarks	Jacqueline Alvarez, UNEP

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Concept Note

UN Environment/GEF project “Continuing Regional Support for the POPs Global Monitoring Plan under the Stockholm Convention” in the Africa, Asia, Pacific and Latin America and Caribbean Region (GMP2)

Expert Consultation Meeting on Final Results of the UNEP/GEF GMP POPs Projects in the Africa, Asia, Pacific and GRULAC Regions

5-6 June 2022, Geneva, Switzerland

A) Operational Details

- ✓ Subject: Expert Consultation Meeting to follow up on the key findings and messages of the UNEP/GEF POPs Global Monitoring Plan projects
- ✓ Dates and time: 5-6 June 2022
- ✓ Venue: CICG, Geneva, Switzerland
- ✓ Hosting institutions: UNEP Chemicals and Health Branch
- ✓ Participants: Experts of the UNEP/GEF GMP2 project, UNEP, BRS Secretariat (TBC), GEF (TBC), WHO (TBC)
- ✓ Contact in UNEP: Victor Estellano (email: victor.estellano@un.org)

B) Objectives

- Identify key messages of the UNEP/GEF POPs GMP2 projects
- Identify gaps in data generation and capacities based on the outcomes of the projects
- Discuss on follow-up steps towards conclusion of the project

C) Overview

Article 16 of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) requests parties to evaluate the effectiveness of the Convention four years after the date of entry into force of the Convention and periodically thereafter. The Global Monitoring Plan (GMP) was established by the Conference of Parties of the Stockholm Convention with the objectives to identify spatial and

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temporal changes of POPs concentrations in the environment and human and to assess POPs regional and global transport.

UNEP Chemicals and Health Branch provides technical assistance to strengthen the capacities of countries for the implementation of the GMP and on data generation and capacity building for the monitoring of POPs to support the implementation of the Stockholm Convention and the effectiveness evaluation of it. Following the success of the two pilot test projects on the GMP guidance document and the first round of UNEP/GEF POPs GMP projects (2009-2012), the second round of POPs GMP projects (UNEP/GEF POPs GMP II) are being implemented since 2016, in 42 developing countries and countries with economies in transition in Africa, Asia, Pacific Islands and Latin American and the Caribbean (GRULAC) regions. The main activities of the projects include the provision of quality and comparable data on POPs in the core matrices air, water, human milk and additional matrices of national interest, and capacity building at global, regional and levels to strengthen conditions for sustainable monitoring of POPs.

With a wealth of data generated and experience gained during the implementation of these projects, and taking into consideration the increasing needs for scientifically sound facts to support informed decision making at global, regional and national levels, this meeting aims to discuss with data generators and experts to identify key findings and messages of the UNEP/GEF POPs GMP II projects in four regions, identify gaps in data generation and capacities based on the outcomes of the projects, and to discuss on follow-up steps towards conclusion of the projects. The outputs of this meeting are expected to contribute to a successful closure of the projects and to provide food for thoughts for sustainable monitoring of POPs