

INDIA

Project: Institutional capacity building for sustainable management of chemical and wastes with special focus on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs)

Second Independent Assessment of the Closed Projects under
the Special Programme Report (December 2024)

RESULTS

Overall Assessment

The India SP project demonstrated progress across four relevant key Core Indicator Criteria, achieving its planned objectives to varying degrees. It contributed to establishing an inventory on POPs and an action plan aligned with the National Implementation Plan under the Stockholm Convention. The project also established a Directorate for Information and Knowledge Sharing within CSIR-NEERI, which has played a central role in coordinating stakeholders and facilitating knowledge exchange. However, challenges remained in operationalizing certain components, such as the interactive toolkit intended to support decision-making. The project's results have largely been maintained, with funding secured to continue key initiatives under the GEF-financed NIP renewal project.

Implementing partner:

CSIR-National Environmental
Engineering Research
Institute (CSIR-NEERI)

Agreement timeframe:

27 Dec 2018 – 30 Jun 2024
(initially to 28 Feb 2022, with
two amendments)

Budget: 164,677 USD

Results & progress by Core Indicator Criteria

The project covered four of the existing eight Core Indicator Criteria, namely:

Criterion 1.1: Level of development of national chemical/waste database

RATING

Project Start → Project End



0 No database or registry

1 Database or registry covering 1 Multilateral
Environmental Agreement (MEA)

2 Database or registry covering 2 MEAs

3 Database or registry covering 3 MEAs

4 Database or registry covering 4 MEAs

5 Database or registry covering 4 MEAs and SAICM

SPECIFIC RESULTS:

- The project established an inventory on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs), focusing on the requirements of the Stockholm Convention. The inventory included data on sources, usage, and environmental presence of POPs, aiming to support the updating of India's National Implementation Plan (NIP) and ensuring compliance with the Stockholm Convention. The inventory was also supplemented with data from research articles and studies.
- It should be noted that the project developed a new methodology to address analytical gaps in monitoring emerging POPs. The team established Standard Operating Procedures and protocols, using advanced instruments to detect and measure these pollutants in air, water, soil, and sediment samples.
- Furthermore, the project reportedly developed an interactive electronic toolkit using a Microsoft PowerPoint-based application; however, it is not currently available online. The toolkit was primarily designed for regulators, policymakers, and stakeholders involved in waste management. As explained by the project manager, it categorizes different types of waste (e.g. municipal solid waste, biomedical waste, plastic waste) and provides detailed information on their management, regulatory framework, and waste generation statistics in India. The interactive toolkit is planned to be hosted on the CSIR website once certain challenges are addressed. (For the interactive toolkit to be effective, it would require well-organized, accessible and up-to-date data/information that can be easily navigated.)
- As opposed to an interactive electronic toolkit, the project produced a report on Toolkit for Environmentally Sound Management of Persistent Organic Pollutants, which is intended for stakeholders involved in the management of chemicals and waste, policymakers, environmental agencies, and industry professionals. The toolkit provides a clear framework for understanding the key regulations, conventions, and best practices governing the management of POPs.

Criterion 1.2: level of necessary for chemical/waste management expertise

RATING

Project Start → Project End



- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>0 No knowledge or expertise available</p> <p>1 Not enough personnel in at least one priority Ministry, Department or Agency have basic training in chemical and/or waste management</p> <p>2 Enough personnel in at least one priority Ministry, Department or Agency have basic training in Chemical and/or waste management</p> | <p>3 Enough personnel from 1 or 2 Ministry, Department or Agency have been trained in chemical and /or waste management and know how to apply it into country planning</p> <p>4 Enough personnel in 3 or 4 Ministries, Departments or Agencies have been trained in chemical and/or waste management and can transfer their knowledge to colleagues for day-to-day use</p> <p>5 All the required personnel have necessary expertise and can integrate chemical management into the development planning process</p> |
|--|---|

SPECIFIC RESULTS:

- The project contributed to capacity building of scientists, researchers, industry professionals, regulators, and policymakers in India by organizing training sessions and workshops on monitoring POPs, chemicals, and waste management. It developed scientific capacity through specialized training in POPs analysis and the use of advanced monitoring tools, focusing on enhancing stakeholders' ability to assess and manage emerging pollutants and hazardous waste.
- According to one of the key informants for this assessment, years of government officials' participation in various capacity building events across different projects, presenting policy briefs, and providing scientific research translated into accessible formats, have increased policymakers' understanding of chemicals and waste management issues. *"Earlier, officials were in denial when we spoke about POPs. Now they are in acceptance."*

Criterion 1.3: Existence and level of development of chemical/waste management unit or department

RATING

Project Start

Project End



- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>0 Nothing had been done</p> <p>1 The Government decided on a mandate to establish a unit</p> <p>2 The Government developed a framework document detailing how the unit would be established and would operate</p> | <p>3 The unit was established and had an executive director</p> <p>4 The unit was established and had an executive director. In addition, standard operating procedures were developed, and staff were hired</p> <p>5 The unit had all human, financial and physical resources and was fully operational</p> |
|--|--|

SPECIFIC RESULTS:

- The project established a Directorate for information and knowledge sharing under CSIR-NEERI, which plays an important role in providing technical assistance to relevant government agencies in chemical and waste management. According to the project manager, the Directorate is composed of 25 members from various institutions, representing a significant increase from the network NEERI had prior to the project's initiation, including researchers and experts primarily focused on POPs. Information exchange occurs mainly via email, but also through the organization of various events and discussions. Members from different institutions share their knowledge and data with NEERI, which consolidates and forwards the information to government agencies requesting specific data. In this way, the Directorate functions as a data consolidation hub and centralized provider of POPs-related information.

Criterion 2.1: Level of development and implementation of chemical/waste management policy, plan or strategy

RATING



0 There was no strategy, policy or plan

2 The strategy, policy or plan was adopted

1 The strategy, policy or plan was proposed

3 The strategy, policy or plan was in place and being implemented

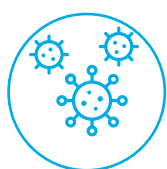
SPECIFIC RESULTS:

- The project facilitated the development of a prioritized list of actions based on a gap assessment and needs analysis, aimed at reducing and eliminating POPs and hazardous wastes. Aligned with the objectives of the National Implementation Plan (NIP) under the Stockholm Convention, this plan addressed key gaps in India's chemical and waste management systems. By the end of the project, the action plan was reportedly fully adopted; however, evidence of its adoption was not provided to the SP Secretariat. Meanwhile, India is in the process of updating its NIP under the Stockholm Convention, with CSIR-NEERI involved in its preparation. Therefore, the outputs produced under the project are expected to inform the NIP's preparation.

FACTORS AFFECTING PERFORMANCE



Gender: The project demonstrated gender responsiveness by integrating gender considerations into its activities. A gender study was conducted to explore the roles of men and women in hazardous chemicals and waste management, highlighting the need for gender-sensitive policies and practices. Additionally, another study focused on the differential health impacts of POPs on men and women, emphasizing the importance of understanding these differences in the context of public health. These studies and a follow-up workshop on gender mainstreaming helped raise awareness about the lack of gender-responsive approaches in the sector. However, follow-up actions at the national level regarding specific gender-related policy changes remain unclear, though at the industry level, there were some positive shifts in terms of awareness and practices, as per one of the key informants for this assessment. It should be noted also that over a third of participants in the project's activities, such as workshops, consultations, and capacitybuilding sessions, were women.



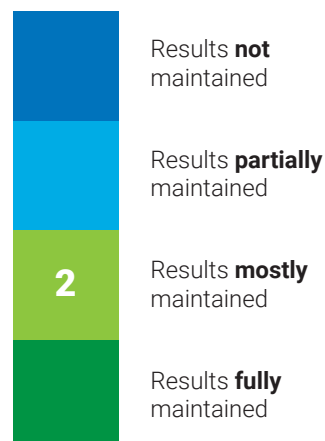
COVID-19: The Covid-19 pandemic severely disrupted fieldwork activities, including sample collection and industrial surveys, as restrictions on movement and safety concerns limited access. Moreover, due to government restrictions, only essential work was permitted, leading to the resignation of some project staff. The project recruited and trained new staff, causing delays in project progress. These challenges led to the need for project extensions to accommodate delays and ensure the completion of key tasks.

SUSTAINABILITY

The project results are **mostly maintained** due to the following:

- The results achieved by the project are largely maintained, with full financing secured to sustain these outcomes. Funds have been obtained through GEF projects, such as the one for the renewal of the National Implementation Plan (NIP) under the Stockholm Convention.

RATING After the End of the Project



LESSONS LEARNED

Incorporating high-ranking government officials into decision-making structures is essential for policy influence and sustainability: Both the project's advisory board and the Special Directorate were composed of a limited number of technical government regulatory staff, with no high-ranking policymakers involved (most members were researchers, scientists and industry representatives). Including senior officials in these decision-making bodies would ensure better policy integration, secure political support, and facilitate the allocation of resources necessary for the long-term success and scalability of projects. Regarding waste packaging regulations, the country has also seen an increase in the registered EPR associations on e-waste.

Building trust through confidentiality is important for obtaining honest feedback: During interviews with industry staff members (under the gender study), many were initially reluctant to participate due to fears of potential consequences. However, once the project assured them of confidentiality, respondents became more open and willing to share their insights. This highlights the importance of establishing trust and emphasizing confidentiality in sensitive discussions, which can encourage greater participation and more honest, valuable feedback.

Sustainability requires secure financing: Achieving project sustainability goes beyond successful implementation and requires securing long-term financing. A follow-up GEF-financed project on NIP renewal, that started at the end of 2022, along with government financing, will facilitate further implementation of the Stockholm Convention in India.

Finding ways to document project successes is important for sustainability/scaling up: Informal feedback from gender study participants indicated some positive shifts in industry practices, but these changes were not formally documented. This documentation not only helps in identifying lessons learned but also provides opportunities for sustaining engagement with stakeholders, securing future funding, and ensuring the continuation of the project's objectives. This also highlights the need for better mechanisms to track, record, and report such shifts, ensuring that positive developments are captured for future reference and sustainability.

Evaluations that lack sound methodologies hinder learning: The evaluation report submitted by the implementing organization lacked sound methodologies and focus. This results in missing opportunities to validate all the achievements, identify lessons, and provide actionable recommendations, ultimately weakening their ability to guide future programme designs.