UN environment programme | CHEMICALS AND WASTE MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME

IRAN

Project: Strengthening institutional capacity for the sustainable sound management of chemicals and waste throughout cleaner production approach in order to implement the Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) in I.R. Iran Oil Industry

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

RESULTS

Implementing partner:
The Research Institute of Petroleum Industry (RIPI)

Agreement timeframe:
5 Nov 2019 – 30 Nov 2022 (initially to 31 May 2021, with three amendments)

Budget: 250,000 USD

Overall Assessment

The project made significant progress in strengthening the sound management of chemicals and waste in the oil sector and demonstrated progress across three relevant Core Indicator Criteria. It conducted a comprehensive chemical inventory at the Lavan Oil Refinery, identifying pollution sources and evaluating chemical management options in alignment with international conventions. The project also enhanced the knowledge of oil industry managers and planners through capacitybuilding activities, particularly in cleaner production and pollution prevention approaches. Finally, it provided guidance on minimizing environmental contamination in the oil industry, which was subsequently shared with policymakers.

Results & progress by Core Indicator Criteria

The project covered three 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 | 1

- **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

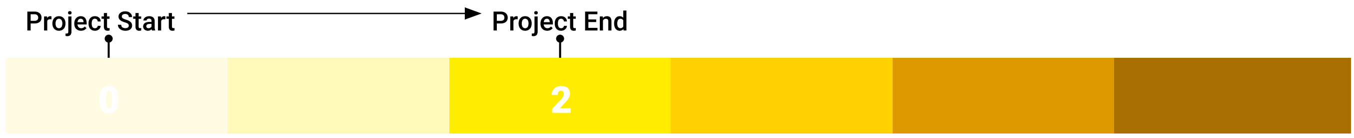
SPECIFIC RESULTS:

- The project conducted a comprehensive chemical inventory at the Lavan Oil Refinery Company (LORC) in accordance with the Stockholm Convention, identifying sources of pollution and waste, and evaluating possible options for the sound management of chemicals and conducting a risk assessment.
- Furthermore, the project reviewed the legislative framework, policy options, institutional structure, and economic/financial instruments, and also analyzed existing opportunities, motivations, and major obstacles facing the oil industry in promoting cleaner production techniques.
- The project team also conducted baseline studies and assessments in LORC, including a social impact assessment in a nearby village. The social impact assessment team performed both qualitative and quantitative studies, providing recommendations for improving the lives of the local community, including gender mainstreaming strategies.

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

The yellow color coding reflects the fact that the progress is measured at a non-governmental level: Progress on this indicator reflects the enhanced expertise in Responsible Care, closely aligning with SAICM objectives. However, the indicator does not assess the capacity of government agencies regarding chemicals-related MEAs.

RATING



- 0 **No knowledge or expertise available**
- 1 **Not enough personnel in at least one priority Ministry, Department or Agency have basic training in chemical and/or waste management**
- 2 Enough personnel in at least one priority Ministry, Department or Agency have basic training in Chemical and/or waste management
- 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
- 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
- 5 All the required personnel have necessary expertise and can integrate chemical management into the development planning process

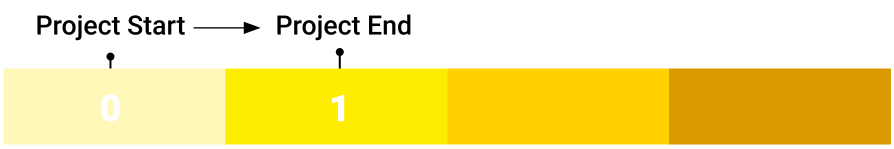
SPECIFIC RESULTS:

- The project significantly increased awareness of cleaner production approaches within the oil industry through capacity building events, leading to a notable rise in the number of informed individuals by the end of the project. According to key informants the use of cleaner production approaches had not been implemented in Iran's oil industry prior to the project's initiation, nor was there a focus on pollution prevention at the source. However, through this project and the introduction of cleaner production practices, the knowledge of managers and planners in the oil industry significantly increased. Thanks to the capacity building, particularly in corrosion management, waste, and wastewater management, the oil industry has initiated numerous projects to reduce and manage pollution even after the conclusion of the Special Programme project.
- A positive outcome of the project was the collaboration among three key government entities: the Iranian oil industry, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Environmental Organization, all of which were actively engaged in the project's activities and got insights of the gaps and challenges. This cooperation played a significant role in raising the standards and requirements established by the Environmental Organization.

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

The yellow color coding reflects the fact that the progress is measured at a non-governmental level: Progress on this indicator reflects the enhanced expertise in Responsible Care, closely aligning with SAICM objectives. However, the indicator does not assess the capacity of government agencies regarding chemicals-related MEAs.

RATING



- 0 **There was no strategy, policy or plan**
- 1 **The strategy, policy or plan was proposed (for Oil Refinery Compagny)**
- 2 The strategy, policy or plan was adopted
- 3 The strategy, policy or plan was in place and being implemented

SPECIFIC RESULTS:

The project developed recommendations for improved wastewater treatment and oil separation systems, influencing operational changes at the Lavan refinery. It also proposed better management practices, including the segregation of oily wastewater and the introduction of automated valve systems to minimize environmental contamination.

FACTORS AFFECTING PERFORMANCE

Gender: The project was gender responsive as it mainstreamed gender considerations into its activities. It identified gender disparities in employment opportunities, particularly the lack of jobs for women at the Lavan Oil Refinery, and suggested increased job opportunities and vocational training for women. It also promoted the integration of women into workforce planning and corporate social responsibility programs in the oil industry, advocating for gender equality in job offerings.

Financial constraints: Although no UN Security Council sanctions were in place that directly related to the partners in the project, feedback provided during the assessment process indicated that the imposition of economic sanctions delayed access to the project's financial resources, making it difficult to maintain the project's momentum. Despite these challenges, all stakeholders worked together to minimize the negative impacts.

COVID-19: Due to a significant portion of the project being carried out on Lavan Island, travel restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic caused delays in some aspects of the project. Additionally, many training courses faced long interruptions, and in some cases, they were held online instead.

SUSTAINABILITY

RATING
After the End of the Project

	Results **not** maintained
1	Results **partially** maintained
	Results **mostly** maintained
	Results **fully** maintained

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

- The government is committed to continuing in-kind financing following the completion of the project. Additionally, the Research Institute of Petroleum Industry, as a government research institution, plans to make the most of the capacities developed during the project, including knowledge packages and a range of services aimed at addressing challenges across various sectors of the oil industry. This approach is expected to lead to the implementation of several subsequent projects, further contributing to the oil industry. Consequently, the revenue generated can be managed effectively to sustain and stabilize the results achieved by the project.

LESSONS LEARNED

Building trust with local communities and government officials is crucial for project success: Securing the support of influential figures, such as community and religious leaders, significantly improved data collection and project acceptance, especially in sensitive and isolated regions.

Addressing small operational issues can significantly impact environmental sustainability and operational efficiency: Identifying and resolving issues like drainage problems in oil refineries can lead to substantial improvements in both sustainability and efficiency.

Thorough planning and engagement with decision-makers are necessary to overcome operational challenges: Projects in highly regulated environments, such as oil refineries, require securing permissions and addressing political sensitivity.

Focusing on gender integration can enhance social equity: A clear focus on creating job opportunities for women and supporting their participation in the workforce can improve gender equality.