

THE GAMBIA 1



Project: Institutional capacity building for the implementation of the Multilateral Environmental Agreements in The Gambia

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

RESULTS

Overall Assessment

The project demonstrated progress across all relevant Core Indicator Criteria and achieved its planned objectives to a significant degree. It conducted an inventory of asbestos-containing materials, developed a National Asbestos Profile, and drafted National Asbestos Management Regulations. The project also strengthened the chemicals control system through targeted capacity building efforts, comprehensive training for key stakeholders, and multi-stakeholder coordination, resulting in enhanced monitoring, enforcement, and awareness. Additionally, it developed and validated the National Solid Waste Management Strategy, addressing hazardous waste management and filling critical gaps in the country's waste management framework.

Implementing partner:
National Environment Agency

Agreement timeframe:
8 May 2018 – 31 December 2024 (initially to 31 October 2019, with 5 amendments)

Budget: 241,000 USD

Results & progress by Core Indicator Criteria

The project covered five 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 delivered comprehensive training to inventory teams, utilizing a validated study plan and questionnaire, conducted a detailed inventory of asbestos-containing materials, and developed a validated National Asbestos Profile. This effort aligns with the Basel Convention, which regulates the control and disposal of hazardous wastes, including asbestos. It is also linked to the Rotterdam Convention, as certain forms of asbestos, such as Actinolite, are listed under Annex III of the convention.

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

RATING



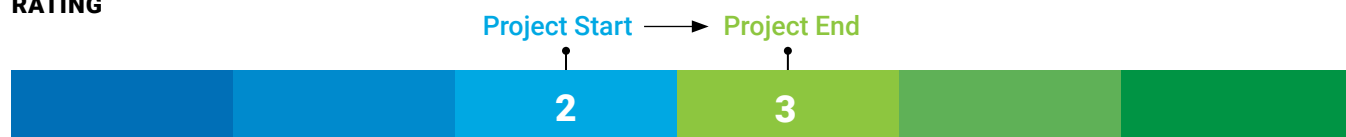
- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>0 No knowledge or expertise available</p> <p>1 Not enough personnel in at least one priority Ministry, Department or Agency have basic training in chemical and/or waste management</p> <p>2 Enough personnel in at least one priority Ministry, Department or Agency have basic training 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> |
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SPECIFIC RESULTS:

- Building on the foundation established by past chemicals and waste projects in The Gambia, the Special Programme (SP) project strengthened the existing expertise in chemicals and waste management through training sessions, workshops, awareness raising campaigns and consultative meetings. It also introduced emerging issues related to international conventions.
- Training programs mostly targeted key personnel from the National Environment Agency and law enforcement officials (Customs, Army, Police, Immigration), while consultative meetings encompassed representatives from a wide range of government bodies, including regional authorities, the National Assembly Select Committees on Health and the Environment and permanent secretaries of the targeted ministries.
- The project also conducted community sensitizations, reaching over 20 local communities through outreach programs and radio discussions. These efforts raised awareness about the harmful effects of chemicals, asbestos and hazardous wastes. Following these awareness initiatives, some communities reportedly began replacing asbestos roofs due to a growing understanding of the associated health risks. Additionally, the training prompted the Ministry of Health to partner with WHO on a rehabilitation project aimed at removing asbestos roofing materials from over 28 health facilities nationwide.
- The project's capacity-building efforts have significantly strengthened the chemicals control system in the country. According to the Registrar of Pesticides and Hazardous Chemicals, prior to the project, there was limited information and weak regulatory oversight of chemicals imports. Since the trainings, there has been a marked improvement in monitoring and enforcement, including several major interceptions of illegal pesticide imports through Gambia's porous borders. Legal actions are now taken more frequently against illegal imports, and more vendors are proactively seeking licenses and clearances, including requests from international vendors.

Criterion 1.4: Level of development of multi-stakeholder coordination mechanism for chemical/waste management

RATING



- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>0 There was no multi-stakeholder coordination mechanism</p> <p>1 There was a multi-stakeholder coordination mechanism with very limited and irregular participation from Government and non-Government bodies</p> <p>2 There was a multi-stakeholder coordination mechanism with more regular and structured participation from Government and non-Government bodies</p> | <p>3 There was a multi-stakeholder coordination mechanism with regular meetings and adequate participation from Government and non-Government bodies</p> <p>4 There was coordinated planning and a common knowledge exchange mechanism in addition to a multi-stakeholder coordination mechanism with regular meetings and adequate participation from Government and non-Government bodies</p> <p>5 The multi-stakeholder coordination mechanism reached full maturity with full participation from all Governmental and non-Governmental stakeholders and a joint community of practice</p> |
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SPECIFIC RESULTS:

The multi-stakeholder coordination body for chemicals management in The Gambia was established by the Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides Control and Management Act 1994. The Board has been collaborating with the National Environment Agency to coordinate the implementation of the SP project.

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 played a pivotal role in developing the recently adopted National Solid Waste Management Strategy. Unlike its predecessor, this new strategy includes provisions for hazardous waste management, addressing a critical gap in the country's waste management framework. The strategy has been shared with local councils and institutions across all seven administrative regions, enabling them to adopt it directly or use it as a template to develop their own localized strategies for waste management.

Criterion 2.3: Level of development of regulatory framework/secondary legislation

RATING



0 Nothing was done

2 The regulations were adopted

1 The relevant authority proposed to develop regulations

3 The regulations were in place and being implemented

SPECIFIC RESULTS:

- The project contributed to the development of the National Asbestos Management Regulation under the Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides Control and Management Act CAP. 60:01 Asbestos Regulations, 2023, which is currently a draft bill pending enactment.
- The project also developed a Technical Guideline for Chemicals and Pesticides Management in The Gambia: Enforcement and Monitoring, which is integrated into a comprehensive training manual

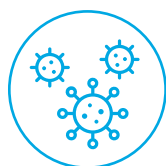
FACTORS AFFECTING PERFORMANCE



Gender: The project demonstrated gender responsiveness by achieving over 46% female participation in workshops and over 70% in community sensitizations, particularly targeting rural areas where women dominate gardening and small-scale farming. It addressed women's unique vulnerabilities by training them on safer agricultural practices, waste management, and asbestos risks, directly mitigating their disproportionate exposure in these sectors.



Socio-political factor: The implementation of the project was moderately affected by The Gambia's 2021 national presidential election, which disrupted planned activities. Additionally, parliamentary elections led to the rescheduling of activities, particularly in rural areas where election engagement was high. Changes in the administration of the responsible ministry also contributed to delays.



COVID-19: The SP project was substantially impacted by COVID-19, which halted all activities. Many of the project's key actions required public and stakeholder engagement, which became impossible during the pandemic, leading to significant delays in implementation.



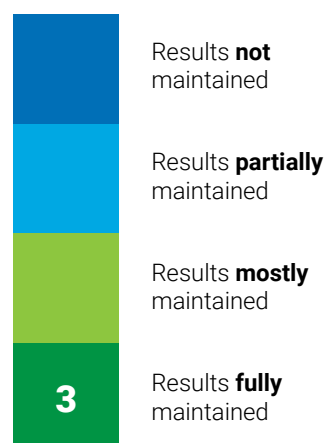
Other: The project experienced delays due to changes in national project coordinators (two since the start), caused by travel and job transitions outside the Agency. Additionally, there was a delay caused by the lengthy process of fund disbursement from the SP Secretariat, which further impacted project timelines.

SUSTAINABILITY

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

- The multi-stakeholder coordination body for chemicals management was built upon an existing structure that was strengthened by the project, enhancing human resource capacity to support the implementation of the chemicals and waste MEAs to which The Gambia is a signatory.
- Strategies, such as the solid waste and asbestos regulations, have embedded implementation and enforcement plans, that will help government with their implementation.
- The Gambia has a second project with the Special Programme which will start implementation in 2025 focusing on "Capacity Strengthening and Technical Assistance for Environmentally Sound Management of Chemicals and Wastes in The Gambia". It will build upon the achievements of the first SP project in The Gambia

RATING After the End of the Project



LESSONS LEARNED

Stakeholder engagement requires patience and dialogue: Involving multiple stakeholders proved challenging due to overlapping mandates and concerns over interference. However, personal discussions, group meetings, and continuous dialogue helped ease tensions and foster collaboration

Engaging stakeholders in their own environment and language can significantly enhance project impact and overcome potential communication challenges. Meeting stakeholders, such as pesticide vendors, in their place of business, like weekly markets, and communicating in local dialects, was instrumental in getting the messages across and fostering engagement. Additionally, radio discussions in local languages provided a platform for community members to ask questions and gain clarity, further strengthening outreach efforts.

Engaging a wide range of border officials improves the effectiveness of chemical and waste management: Training carefully selected representatives from each border crossing, including military, immigration, police, and customs officers, was crucial for enhancing chemical and waste management efforts, even though only a small percentage of officials were trained. The successful interception of hazardous shipments and the prevention of illegal chemical trade by trained officers underscores the value of such comprehensive training initiatives.

"According to a pesticides registrar: "Before the project, we did not have much information. Since I became a registrar, we came across a significant number of imports, conducted litigation, and taken legal actions for pesticides intercepted at the borders. In 2020 alone, we had four major interceptions. We have also seen more vendors come to get information and have required them to obtain clearances and permits. [...] Now, requests come from Ghana also, so I requested a lot of documentation. Because of this success, we submitted a follow-up project to the SP Secretariat, which was approved."

Sensitizing decision-makers is key for legislative support: Sensitization efforts targeted at parliamentarians were instrumental in increasing their understanding of chemicals management. This ultimately led to their support for a chemicals management bill (though not an output of the SP project), demonstrating the indirect impact of training.

Effective coordination simplifies the delivery of project outputs: Collaborating with the Customs Agency to organize trainings for border representatives in Gambia reduced logistical burdens and streamlined participant management, making the overall project delivery significantly more efficient.

Thorough planning is essential to anticipate challenges: While flexibility in project implementation was crucial, earlier identification of potential barriers—such as language issues, translation costs, and cross-border bureaucratic hurdles—could have mitigated the need for mid-project adjustments. Initially, the project aimed to conduct joint Gambia-Senegal crossborder training but had to refocus on Gambian border officers due to these unforeseen challenges.