



**Basel Convention on the Control of
Transboundary Movements of
Hazardous Wastes and their
Disposal**

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**Rotterdam Convention on the Prior
Informed Consent Procedure for
Certain Hazardous Chemicals and
Pesticides in International Trade**



**Stockholm Convention on
Persistent Organic Pollutants**

**Conferences of the Parties to
the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions
Simultaneous extraordinary meetings
Bali, 22–24 February 2010
Item 4 (c) of the provisional agenda***

**Matters for consideration or action by the conferences
of the Parties: final decisions on joint services
established on an interim basis**

Joint services

Note by the secretariats

Introduction

1. By paragraphs 4, 7 and 10 of section IV of their respective decisions on enhancing cooperation and coordination among the three conventions¹ (known as the “synergies decisions”), the conferences of the Parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions invited the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), in consultation with the Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), in providing the secretariat functions of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, to establish, on an interim basis, through the executive secretaries of the three conventions, the following joint services:

* UNEP/FAO/CHW/RC/POPS/EXCOPS.1/1.

¹ Decision IX/10 of the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention; decision RC-4/11 of the Conference of the Parties to the Rotterdam Convention; decision SC-4/34 of the Conference of the Parties of the Stockholm Convention.

- (a) Joint financial and administrative support service;
- (b) Joint legal service;
- (c) Joint information technology service;
- (d) Joint information service;
- (e) Joint resource mobilization service.

2. By paragraphs 12 of section IV and 4 of section V of the synergies decisions, the conferences of the Parties invited the Executive Director of UNEP, in consultation with the Director-General of FAO, to provide further information for presentation prior to the simultaneous extraordinary meetings of the conferences of the Parties on the costs and organizational implications of establishing the joint services identified above and to prepare proposals on a common arrangement for staffing and financing joint services of the three conventions, including financing shared posts. The requested information and proposals may be found in document UNEP/FAO/CHW/RC/POPS/EXCOP.1/INF/3.

3. By paragraphs 10 of decision SC-4/1 and 11 of decision RC-4/12, the conferences of the Parties to the Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions invited the Executive Director of UNEP to consider funding an officer to manage joint support services for the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions.

I. Implementation of interim arrangements

4. The Executive Director of UNEP, in consultation with the Director-General of FAO and through the executive secretaries of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, has prepared an implementation plan for the establishment of joint services on an interim basis.

5. The plan was designed with a step-wise approach to guarantee the uninterrupted delivery of services. It draws on the 20 years of experience of the Basel Convention Secretariat in the delivery of the relevant services and the success in the joint delivery of services of the secretariats of the Stockholm and Rotterdam conventions. To coordinate the implementation of this plan, the executive secretaries appointed, on an interim basis, a coordinator from among existing staff members. Plan implementation began on 15 June 2009.

6. The plan meets the need to begin expeditiously to implement the synergies decisions and to establish the joint delivery of services to allow for as much experience to be gained and lessons to be learned and reported on prior to the simultaneous extraordinary meetings to facilitate decision-making by the conferences of the Parties regarding the possible long-term establishment of joint services.

II. Progress report

7. Joint convention services have been established on an interim basis in the following areas:

- (a) Joint financial and administrative support service;
- (b) Joint legal service;
- (c) Joint information technology service;
- (d) Joint information service;
- (e) Joint resource mobilization service.

8. In line with the direction given by the executive secretaries and under the coordination of the interim Joint Services Coordinator, the individual services have developed their own implementation plans. These plans include activities to be accomplished prior to the simultaneous extraordinary meetings of the conferences of the Parties and medium-term and long-term objectives. In addition, some plans include cost estimates for activities not included under the current approved budgets of the three secretariats.

9. The joint financial and administrative support service provides services to the three convention secretariats on financial and administrative functions, including human resources, costing of the programme of work, budgets, contractual arrangements with service providers and consultants, procurement, payments and audits. In addition, it provides conference and support services to all three convention secretariats, such as conference logistical aspects, correspondence, registration of participants, travel and other related support functions.

10. The first phase of the implementation plan of the joint financial and administrative support service sets targets for close cooperation that include: ensuring that the programme of work and associated budgets are presented in the same format, improving the indicators of achievement, developing a common format for reporting on the implementation of the programme of work, developing common formats for invoices and financial reports to donors, sharing rosters of consultants and facilitating audits. Administrative staff will also be able to provide backup and assistance services to one another. Regarding conference services and support, the joint service is supporting staff members from all three secretariats in the organization of meetings.
11. The joint legal service provides legal support to the three secretariats. This includes both generic legal services and convention-specific legal services, including legal advice to the subsidiary bodies of the three conventions, legal technical assistance and legal capacity-building services to Parties and legal support to the programmes of the technical units of the secretariats, as necessary.
12. The joint information technology service covers the following functional areas: basic information technology operations and services, information technology services in support of projects (applications' development and maintenance), data management and quality control and the clearing-house mechanism.
13. The joint information service covers public awareness and outreach, including publications, media, the clearing-house mechanism and other information materials.
14. The joint resource mobilization service is not currently supported by direct secretariat staff as are the other joint services. Most resource mobilization work is undertaken by the executive secretaries with the assistance of secretariat staff members as required. This service area would benefit from a dedicated staff member to manage the resource mobilization efforts of the three conventions. The Executive Director of UNEP has provided 50 per cent of the costs for a resource mobilization officer to assist these efforts for the coming year and the UNEP Resource Mobilization Section has agreed to increase its assistance to the secretariats.

III. Benefits to Parties

15. It is important to note that the joint services have been established with the ultimate objective of improving support and services to Parties towards a strengthened implementation of the conventions at the national, regional and global levels. Given that the time to evaluate the effectiveness of the interim joint services has been limited, it has not been possible to set out conclusively lessons learned. Nevertheless, Parties have already felt some benefits, with more anticipated. These are described below.
16. *Joint financial and administrative support service.* The harmonization of secretariat practices, especially in communicating with Parties on issues such as the management of Parties' financial contributions and the preparation of the programmes of work and budgets for the three conventions, are expected to facilitate Parties' work associated with meeting their financial obligations under the conventions and with their effective participation in meetings of the conferences of the Parties. This service also provides a cohesive and more efficient approach to the logistical arrangements of all technical assistance activities organized by the three secretariats.
17. *Joint legal service.* It is anticipated that this service will focus on opportunities to harmonize legal tools, not only across the three conventions but also in cooperation with other relevant instruments and organizations. The same approach will be followed for the technical assistance components associated with this service's work, including supporting the development of national legal frameworks.
18. *Joint information technology service.* The development of a joint clearing-house mechanism is envisaged to facilitate Parties' work in gaining access to and disseminating harmonized technical and general information relevant to the work of the three conventions and the substances that they cover. Capacity-building activities to assist Parties in gaining access to and sharing the information needed for the implementation of the three conventions are also envisaged under this service.
19. *Joint information service.* To undertake joint outreach and promote public awareness, the delivery of a common and cohesive message focusing on the life-cycle approach among the three conventions and on the impacts of chemicals and wastes on human health and the environment should support Parties in increasing general understanding of the three conventions' work and raise the profile of chemicals and wastes issues at all levels.
20. *Joint resource mobilization.* The UNEP Resource Mobilization Section has raised funding for the simultaneous extraordinary meetings of the conferences of the Parties and a strategy is being developed for future joint resource mobilization. It is expected that this service will help to facilitate

Parties' access to the financial resources needed to meet their obligations under the conventions, help to mobilize increased resources to support the implementation of the conventions and ensure that these resources are better utilized. This will include the development of joint funding proposals for activities for consideration by donors.

21. Generally, efforts towards greater coordination have resulted in a broader pool of support and expertise available to the technical staff of the three convention secretariats, uniformity in the application of procedures and tools to facilitate increased opportunities for joint planning, greater continuity of services through an effective backup system and more efficient use of staff members' skills and training. In the short and medium terms, it is thus anticipated that the efficiency gained through the joint support services will free up the capacities of the technical staff of the three secretariats to provide substantive support and services to Parties, including towards the implementation of the three conventions at the national, regional and global levels. The benefits to Parties achieved through enhanced cooperation and coordination on joint activities among the three conventions are described in document UNEP/FAO/CHW/RC/POPS/EXCOPS.1/2.

22. Gains in effectiveness and efficiency, in addition to cost savings, can be further anticipated in the medium and long terms. For example, new needs arising from future decisions of the three conferences of the Parties may be met through the coordinated use of existing staff, which may lead to greater efficiency and enable relevant costs to be totally or partially offset.

IV. Possible action by the conferences of the Parties

23. The conferences of the Parties may wish:

(a) To welcome the progress made by the Executive Director of UNEP, in consultation with the Director-General of FAO and through the executive secretaries of the three conventions, in the establishment and implementation of joint services on an interim basis and to take note of the information and lessons learned set out in the present note;

(b) To invite the Executive Director of UNEP, in consultation with the Director-General of FAO, in providing the secretariat functions of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, to establish, through the executive secretaries of the three conventions, taking into account the experiences gained during the interim period, the following joint services:

- (i) Joint financial and administrative support service;
- (ii) Joint legal service;
- (iii) Joint information technology service;
- (iv) Joint information service;
- (v) Joint resource mobilization service.

(c) To consider, in establishing the joint services listed above, the information on the costs and organizational implications of establishing the joint services as requested in the synergies decisions and to approve the proposals on a common arrangement for staffing and financing joint services of the three conventions, including financing shared posts for 2010–2011 as set out in document UNEP/FAO/CHW/RC/POPS/EXCOPS.1/INF/3, in particular:

- (i) To invite the Executive Director of UNEP to consider funding an officer to head the joint services of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions from that portion of the income from programme support costs not required to ensure the provision of services, oversight and guidance from UNEP, the United Nations Office at Nairobi, the United Nations Office at Geneva, the Office of Internal Oversight Services and the United Nations Board of Auditors;
- (ii) To establish a post of Joint Resource Mobilization Officer, to be part of the joint services of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions within the secretariats in Geneva, to provide the services indicated in paragraph 4 of section IV of the synergies decisions and to provide the resources necessary for the post;

- (iii) To invite Parties and the donor community to consider providing funding, through voluntary contributions, to the amount of \$80,000 to cover the integration of the information technology platforms throughout the three secretariats and \$360,000 to implement the joint clearing-house mechanism for workplan of the three conventions for 2010–2011 referred to in paragraphs 9 and 10 of document UNEP/FAO/CHW/RC/POPS/EXCOPS.1/2 and set out in document UNEP/FAO/CHW/RC/POPS/EXCOPS.1/INF/2;
 - (d) To request the Executive Director of UNEP, in consultation with the Director-General of FAO and through the executive secretaries of the three conventions, to continue efforts towards the implementation of the joint services and to report on progress at the ordinary meetings of the conferences of the Parties in 2011.
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