

Guiding Principles for Selection of Work to be Considered under the Sound Management of Chemicals North American Agenda for Chemicals Management

The Sound Management of Chemicals (SMOC) Working Group is a trilateral initiative under the auspices of the Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) to reduce the risks to human health and the environment of chemicals of mutual concern in Canada, Mexico and the United States. Upon its establishment in 1995 by the CEC Council of Ministers, the initial focus of the SMOC Working Group was for the three Parties, working with stakeholders, to develop action plans for substances of mutual concern that are persistent and toxic.

The SMOC WG recognizes the importance of identifying and keeping abreast of emerging issues, utilizing flexible approaches with the potential for a broad impact, and increasingly engaging stakeholders in its work. As such, the SMOC Working Group is expanding its approach to identify and address issues related to chemicals management by utilizing policy instruments, applying broad based strategies to industrial sectors, and developing information for decision making through monitoring and assessment of chemicals, in addition to its ongoing work on specific toxic substances and groups of substances. Four main areas of work have been proposed, including:

1. *Develop and implement a sustainable regional approach to monitoring, including biomonitoring*; this area will include work under the Environmental Monitoring and Assessment Standing Committee with the objective to enhance North American monitoring capacity, with an emphasis on Mexico;
2. *Establish a foundation for chemicals management in North America*; this area seeks to increase comparability of chemical management tools across North America, with a special emphasis on assisting Mexico to build their capacity in the sound management of chemicals at the national level. Work under this area may include increasing the comparability of chemical management protocols between the three countries (e.g. chemical inventories), and alignment with similar global initiatives;
3. *Reduce the risk from chemicals of concern to North America*; the objective of this area is to reduce and/or eliminate the risks from chemicals of concern to the people and environment of North America. This area will include chemical specific work such as the current implementation of the North American Regional Action Plans, and should include work on chemicals or groups of chemicals of emerging concern as determined by governments and/or stakeholders; and
4. *Improve environmental performance of sectors*; the objective of this area is to reduce the risks from toxic chemicals in North America by working strategically with key industrial sectors. This area may include work on greening design and supply chains, pollution prevention and recycling in sectors of tri-lateral concern.

The SMOC WG will work in an open, inclusive, participatory and transparent manner, which will include making linkages to other relevant activities sponsored by the CEC and other activities sponsored by the Parties, leveraging resources with other funding

institutions, and actively involving industry, business, trade unions, environmental nongovernmental organizations, Aboriginal organizations, academic institutions and other members of civil society in chemicals management initiatives.

In its efforts to employ a transparent process for selection and prioritization of future initiatives under the Sound Management of Chemicals program, the SMOC Working Group will take into account the following when considering proposals to achieve its goals and move forward with work trilaterally under the CEC, bilaterally between governments, and in collaboration with stakeholders.

A Proposed Approach

Multi-stakeholder Workshop

The SMOC Working Group will convene a multi-stakeholder workshop every three to five years to elicit input from stakeholders regarding work to be considered under the North American Agenda for Chemicals Management. In advance of the workshop, the Secretariat will inform stakeholders of the upcoming session and invite them to participate at multiple levels.

The workshop will include:

- presentation of proposals for areas of work by the proponent (SMOC WG or stakeholder), to include rationale for undertaking the work, including an explanation of how the topic area and projects under each area will help to meet the objectives under the CEC's North American Agenda for Chemicals Management;
- comment and discussion by participants on the outlines/ proposals with an eye to identifying and resolving issues or barriers and broadening collaborative engagement where appropriate;
- explanation of how strategies to address work under the proposed areas and projects will be finalized and timelines developed; and
- discussion on consideration of funding issues and opportunities (including international funding bodies).

For the first multi-stakeholder workshop, in efforts to ensure continuation of work under the SMOC program, the four areas of work above have been proposed by the SMOC Working Group based on the publicly reviewed [*SMOC Strategy to 2020 under the Puebla Priority Areas*](#). The SMOC Working Group will meet with stakeholders at the next workshop to request guidance towards areas of work as well as projects under these areas.

Selection of Areas and Projects for Future Work

The SMOC Working Group, taking in consideration selection factors described in this document, the *SMOC Strategy to 2020 under the Puebla Priority Areas*, the direction provided by Council, the SMOC project budget, and informed by the discussion and recommendations from stakeholders at the priority setting workshop, will make final selection of topics and will communicate the decisions back to the stakeholders.

Selection factors for areas to be considered for work under the North American Agenda for Chemicals Management may include but are not limited to:

- topic areas should address issues identified as priorities of mutual concern to the Parties, and initially, those priorities identified in the SMOC document, [Strategy to 2020 under the Puebla Priority Areas](#);
- topic areas should aim to build capacity in all three countries in North America, with specific opportunities to expeditiously build capacity in Mexico;
- topic areas should highlight identified public concern or interest and in which a variety of stakeholders – ENGO, academic, and industry – would be motivated to participate;
- topic areas should have clearly stated objectives focussed on risk assessment/reduction, including pollution prevention; and
- topic areas should make concrete contributions to sound management of toxic substances and sectors producing, utilizing or disposing of such substances.

Selection factors for projects to be considered for work under the selected areas may include, but are not limited to, projects that will:

- specifically support the goals of a selected topic area of work;
- respond to a specific issue or problem and lead to concrete results that can be evaluated or measured;
- reflect cooperative and equitable partnerships between or among organizations from different sectors and/or countries within North America;
- promote transparency and accountability;
- emphasize sustainability; link environmental, social and economic issues;
- build the capacities of local people, organizations, institutions and/or governments;
- build sustainability of national infrastructures to promote a level playing field for the North American sound management of chemicals;
- include mechanisms to ensure the institutionalization or long-term sustainability of the project if applicable;
- have the potential to consider support through leveraging of additional resources;
- be compatible with the objectives of the [North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation](#); and
- link to, or be compatible with, the wider goals of other international initiatives, in particular the WSSD and SAICM¹.

Development of Strategies for Implementing Work under Selected Areas

The SMOC Working Group will collaborate with stakeholders to develop strategies to address projects agreed to under the selected topic areas. As the scope of work is discussed, outside experts may be called upon to focus efforts and maximize resources for impact on a North American scale. Strategies describing work to be undertaken tri-laterally, bilaterally between governments, and by stakeholder groups will be finalized and implementation plans developed. Strategies and implementation plans will be presented to the SMOC Working Group for their approval.

¹ SAICM, Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management: <http://www.chem.unep.ch/saicm>
WSSD, World Summit on Sustainable Development: <http://www.un.org/events/wssd>

Implementation

The SMOC Working Group, the CEC Secretariat and stakeholders will work to implement projects under each selected area of work. Implementation groups will be formed and led by the Parties, or stakeholders depending upon the project. The SMOC Working Group will convene to meet once per year with leads of implementation groups to review progress and provide feedback to ensure success of the project.

Appendix - Proposal format

The proposal should not exceed four pages. It must include the following components in the order shown and under the headings that follow:

1. **Participants:** Provide a brief description of the applicant organization(s) and key personnel. Identify collaborating organizations and individuals. Describe the participation of a clearly defined community in the design and implementation of the project and explain how the project will empower and build the capacity of local people and institutions.
2. **Background/problem statement:** Describe the issue that the project will resolve or address.
3. **Proposed work and outcomes:** Outline what will be done, how, under what timetable, and the specific outcomes.
4. **Evaluation:** Explain how the impact of the project will be measured (in the short- and long-term). Include clear timelines for planning, implementation, and reporting; benchmarks for measuring success of the project; plans for promoting infrastructure sustainability and communication of outcomes.
5. **Support SMOC priority areas:** Describe how the proposed project will support the goals of a selected topic area. Describe any policy implications of your project.
6. **Wider impact/relationship to the CEC program:** Describe the impact or significance of your project at the North American level. Explain how your proposed work is linked to projects within the CEC Operational Plan (see <www.cec.org> for details) and the Puebla Priorities.
7. **Budget:** Estimate the budget for the proposed work by summary categories: salaries and benefits, equipment and supplies, travel, consultants, and other. Provide a list of funds that are being pursued or have been committed to your project, by funding agency and amount, include estimates of in-kind contributions from all agencies where applicable. And the funding you would expect from the CEC.