



BASEL CONVENTION

SUCCESS STORY #3

BASEL CONVENTION PROVIDES INVALUABLE SUPPORT FOR TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Model frameworks for legislation and National Implementation Plans provide platform for positive change

Compliance with the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm (BRS) Conventions is not necessarily an easy task for national governments and especially Small Island Developing States. It requires in-depth professional expertise and know-how, much of which may not be readily available to civil servants and other key players in the national infrastructure. That's where the regional centres of the Conventions play an invaluable role, as their very purpose and mission is to readily provide such advice and guidance.

A good example of such support is that provided by the Basel Convention Regional Centre (BCRC) Caribbean, hosted by the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, in helping countries implement the Stockholm Convention. The Centre helped develop and implement a comprehensive sustainable management mechanism for Persistent Organic Pollutants

(POPs) for eight Caribbean countries: Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago.

This outstanding project - Development and Implementation of a Sustainable Mechanism for Persistent Organic Pollutants - funded generously by the Global Environment Fund and implemented together with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), focused on the updating of National Implementation Plans (NIPs). These NIPs form a key part of each country's obligations under the Stockholm Convention, need to be updated and shared with the Conference of the Parties (COP) within two years of the Convention entering into force, and are updated on a continuous, rolling basis, with the addition of new chemicals at the subsequent COPs.

This project necessarily included the updating of national inventories on all POPs identified up until 2017, as well as the development of a plan for future decisions and actions. The categories of POPs included in the inventory involve pesticides, waste and electric and electronic equipment, waste in the transport, construction and textile sectors, equipment and oils (transformer oils) used in the power generating industry, firefighting foams, unintentional production, and potentially contaminated sites.

The inventories all followed an identical five-step process, in accordance with the Stockholm Convention's technical guidance on the NIP Update Process and the POPs Inventory Technical Guidance documents for each respective POPs group or category. They examined the current legislative framework for the management of the POPs, and the technical and institutional arrangements and capacity for the management of the POPs were also explored.

The findings of the inventories allowed for the identification of the gaps and barriers to POPs management on a national basis. Once identified, these issues were then prioritised within the given country's national action plan.

There has already been notable progress in the implementation of several priorities for each of the national action plans. To exploit inter-agency cooperation to the full, Project Working Committees have been created in each country, comprising of a balanced cross-section of stakeholders. There has also been much development on the need for comprehensive and far-reaching legislation to manage chemicals and waste, including POPs. The project team has drawn up model legislation - 'The Regional Integrated Chemical Management Act' - which countries are adapting and customising to meet their specific needs.

There has also been much focus on the reduction of unintentional POPs (UPOPs) with greater training in landfill operations in several of the countries covered by the project. Assessments have also taken place at all sites contaminated by POPs, along with a demonstration of remediation of the leachate treatment system - the process of decontamination - at a landfill in Trinidad and Tobago. There has been similar progress and success for the Medical Waste Management project in Belize and the Design of the Best Available Technology and Best Environmental Practices for Solid Waste Management project in Suriname.

There has also been a strong emphasis on capacity building, which helps ensure that government agencies will henceforth be able to better cope with these challenges themselves. Training has taken place across a range of disciplines: on analytical techniques on POPs; environment site assessments; environmentally sound management of POPs and related wastes; reporting requirements under the Stockholm Convention; and training of customs agencies.

But it is not just sectoral experts who require a greater understanding of the issues at hand. Public information and awareness campaigns - involving a dedicated website, animated videos and lesson plans for schools - have also been established across each country, with a view to familiarising the population at large about the dangers of POPs, and what they can do to help combat their prevalence.

The successes and lessons learned from the NIPs are already being deployed in the next phase of NIP development, in Guyana, the Bahamas and Dominica, working in cooperation with additional POPs and mercury management programmes which are already being addressed through the GEF Islands Programme.



BASEL / ROTTERDAM / STOCKHOLM
CONVENTIONS

