

Regional Workshop for Latin America and the Caribbean: POPs and Border Control–HS Code Classification and Practical Application

September 18, 2025| 16:00 -18:00 CEST, GMT+2

Register here: bit.ly/POPsCustoms

Introduction

Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) are hazardous chemicals that remain in the environment for long periods, accumulate in living organisms, and pose risks to human health and ecosystems. Under the Stockholm Convention, Parties are required to develop and regularly update National Implementation Plans (NIPs), which rely on accurate inventories of POPs and POPs-containing products. For many countries, customs import and export data serve as a key source of information for these inventories. However, effective use of trade data requires a solid understanding of the Harmonized System (HS) of tariff codes, including how POPs are classified, how articles and products such as electrical equipment, vehicles, textiles, foams, or construction materials may contain them, and how gaps in HS coverage can hinder detection. Strengthening the capacity of customs authorities and fostering collaboration with environmental focal points is therefore essential for ensuring that POPs are properly identified and controlled through trade, and that NIP updates are based on reliable, comprehensive data.

This workshop, organized by the Green Growth Knowledge Partnership (GGKP) under the GEF-funded and UNEP-led Global NIP Update project (GEF ID 10785) is designed to build a shared understanding between customs authorities and Stockholm Convention focal points on how to effectively apply the Harmonized System (HS) for controlling Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) in trade. In addition to customs officers and Stockholm Convention official and national focal points, the workshop welcomes other national experts working in the area of chemicals and waste, regional centres, and other related stakeholders to share country experiences in identifying POPs in trade flows. While primarily targeting participants from Latin America and the Caribbean, the session is open to interested stakeholders from other regions.

Format

This virtual workshop will be held in an interactive format, fostering the exchange of diverse perspectives and collaborative problem-solving practice.

Workshop will be conducted in English, with simultaneous interpretation into Spanish provided.

Objectives

- Raise awareness on how the Stockholm, Rotterdam, and Basel Conventions intersect with customs operations, including key trade provisions and regulatory gaps.
- Clarify POPs coverage under the Stockholm Convention and their presence in products and articles such as electrical equipment, vehicles, construction materials, textiles, and foams.
- Strengthen technical capacity on HS codes for POPs, including current and upcoming codes, and address cases where multiple codes may apply.
- Demonstrate practical customs approaches for chemical identification, labelling, and use of databases, supported by good practices in data collection and border control.
- Show real-world enforcement cases of illegal traffic and smuggling to highlight common challenges and workable solutions.
- Promote cooperation between customs and Stockholm Convention focal points across trade stages, backed by national legislation and inter-agency coordination.

Target Audience

The workshop is designed for a mixed audience of technical and policy practitioners engaged in chemicals management and trade control. Participants will include:

- Stockholm Convention focal points: Official Contact Points (OCPs), National Focal Points (NFPs), and National Assistants, particularly from the project countries.
- Customs and data experts: National Customs officers and, where relevant, representatives from National Statistical Committees to strengthen links between trade data and POPs inventories.
- National experts on NIPs: Practitioners involved in the review, update, and drafting of National Implementation Plans (NIPs), as well as technical experts supporting their development and implementation.
- Cross-sectoral representatives: Members of National Coordinating Mechanisms, Project Coordination Units, and Thematic Task Groups engaged in NIP or related chemical management processes.
- Project teams: Units working on GEF 10785 or related chemicals and hazardous waste projects, ensuring cross-project learning and synergies.
- Regional institutions: Representatives of Stockholm and Basel Convention Regional Centres supporting Parties in the region.

This event will be conducted in the convenient time zone of the following countries: The Bahamas, Bolivia, Dominica, Peru, Uruguay, Trinidad and Tobago. Participation is open to all countries.

Date and Time

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Speakers

- Ms. Melisa Tin Siong Lim (Project Management Officer, BRS Secretariat/UNEP)
- Mr. Daniel Cardozo, a Chemical Engineer and International Trade Expert with extensive experience in customs classifications and chemicals management, including service as staff of the World Customs Organization (WCO).

Contacts

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