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## **Work Plan - Thematic Working Group (TWG) on Toxic Chemicals and Hazardous Substances**

By: Thematic Working Group members on  
Toxic Chemicals and Hazardous Substances

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## **Work Plan - Thematic Working Group (TWG) on Toxic Chemicals and Hazardous Substances**

### **1. Background**

The South-east and East Asian Region has many rapidly industrializing countries, where an increasing number and volume of chemicals are used in mining, forestry, fishery, manufacturing, energy and construction industries, as well as in shops, offices and households. Several economies are agriculture-based, and the improper management of agro-chemicals, particularly pesticides, is a major health hazard.

There are over 100,000 existing chemicals, a third of which are used in industry, agriculture and households. While most are beneficial to economic development, their inadequate management sometimes results in adverse impacts on human health and ecosystems.

Unnecessary exposure to toxic chemicals can cause disease, disability and death. Children who work from an early age in cottage industries such as bangle or fireworks production are often exposed to toxic and hazardous chemicals. Chronic exposure is linked to damage to the nervous and immune systems and to ill effects on reproductive function and development. Evidence of the multiple adverse health impacts derived from chemicals used in agriculture, industry, commerce and in households calls for urgent action to improve the quality of their management.

Legislative and regulatory control of chemicals may include the registration and inventory of chemicals, risk assessment and notification, labelling and information on chemicals, tracking systems, treatment and disposal of waste chemicals, and occupational health and safety requirements for production, use, storage, transport and disposal. Many developing countries in the region lack adequate legislative and institutional infrastructure and the capacity to manage chemicals effectively.

This Thematic Working Group will be divided into three subgroups on:

- (1) prevention and reduction of pesticide poisoning;
- (2) reduction of exposure to heavy metals (e.g. mercury, lead, cadmium, arsenic);
- (3) food related chemicals (food preservatives, antibiotics, hormones, etc.)

### **2. Objectives**

The following objectives are generic and apply to both the subgroups:

- (1) To share information and data on the chemicals and their health and environmental impacts (e.g. cases of poisoning) and good practices including infrastructure model (e.g. legislative model) and innovative approach to reduce the health and environmental impacts among member countries;
- (2) To improve the technical knowledge and skill among personnel of member countries on risk assessment and risk management of the chemicals; and
- (3) To strengthen regional institutions networking and collaboration on toxic chemicals

### **3. Activities and timelines**

To meet the objectives, the key activities and timelines comprises of sharing information capacity building and collaboration of networking Activities

Activity	Timelines		
	2007	2008	2009
<b>Objective 1:</b> To share information and data on the chemicals and their health and environmental impacts (e.g. cases of poisoning) and good practices including infrastructure model (e.g. legislative model) and innovative approach to reduce the health and environmental impacts among member countries.			
1.1 Compile the data from member countries on; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the high priority (refer to national chemical profiles) chemicals and their health and environmental impacts, (requires collection of case studies on chemical impacts)</li> <li>- the information on good practices, BAT Best Available Techniques BEP Best Environmental Practice</li> <li>- the information on approach to reduce the health and environmental impacts</li> </ul>		X	X
1.2 Develop an inventory of institutions and experts specializing in the risk assessment and risk management of the chemicals at regional and national levels	X	X	
1.3 Establish web-site for regional cooperation for toxic chemicals and hazardous substances. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The web-site would be used to exchange information and guide member countries in addressing the safety and management of the chemicals.</li> <li>- The information would include but not limited to the data on the chemicals and their health and environmental impacts, good practices and innovative approaches for toxic chemicals management an inventory of specialized institutions and experts of member countries.</li> <li>- The web-site will be linked to other sites deemed necessary e.g. WHO, UNEP, FAO.</li> <li>- Member countries will be required to provide necessary information to update the centralized web-page. Each country may develop their own websites. Certain theme will be addressed on the main webpage. (We have to consider language, format, accessibility and others.)</li> </ul>	X	X	X
<b>Objective 2:</b> To improve the technical knowledge and skill among personnel of member countries on risk assessment and risk management of the chemicals.			

2.1 Provide training and capacity building on risk assessment and risk management of the chemicals to member countries. 2.1.1 Assess training and capacity building needs 2.1.2 Develop training and capacity building programs/modules 2.1.3 Conduct training and capacity building 2.1.4 Revise training and capacity building module and lesson learned		X	X
2.2 Conduct regional (annual /specific theme) meetings on the risk assessment and management of the chemicals. Member countries will be encouraged to participate in such events.		X	X
<b>Objective 3:</b> To strengthen regional institutions networking and collaboration on toxic chemicals			
3.1 Creating collaborative mechanism.		X	
3.2 Organizing workshop on creating mechanism		X	X
3.3 Collaborating among existing program		X	X

#### 4. Outputs and indicators

- (1) A regional knowledge management network established,
- (2) Technical knowledge and skill of key personnel in member countries improved;
- (3) Regional institutions networking and collaboration mechanism on toxic chemicals improved.

Outputs	Indicators
1. A regional knowledge management network established	(1) Compilation of the data and information on the chemicals, health impacts and good practices and number of member countries providing the information/data.  (2) Establishment of a web-page for regional knowledge management
2. Technical knowledge and skill of key personnel in member states improved	(1) Number of training opportunities provided through the TWG; and Number of key personnel undertaking the training  (2) Number of regional technical meetings organized
3. Regional institutions networking and collaboration mechanism on toxic chemicals improved	(1) Collaborating among existing program on toxic chemicals

#### 5. Monitoring and reporting

The monitoring and reporting of the progress of implementing the work plan will be carried out in the following ways:

- (1) Conduct of regular on-line conference – semi-annual on-line conference will be held among TWG members to discuss latest issues or development on environmental health emergencies, including extent of implementation of the work plan.
- (2) Perform annually an evaluation of the work plan, and submit an annual report to the secretariat.
- (3) Post the summaries of TWG meetings and evaluation reports on the web-site.

## 6. Resources

Outputs	Resources required
1. A regional knowledge management network established	(1) Experts to design a database for compilation of data and information on the chemicals, health impacts and good practices and compile the data/information into the database
	(2) Experts to develop a roster of specialized institutions and experts
	(3) Institution and their personnel to host and maintain the website
2. Technical knowledge and skill of key personnel in member states improved	(1) Cost of training programs
	(2) Cost of regional technical meetings
3. Regional institutions networking and collaboration mechanism on toxic chemicals improved	(1) Cost of organizing workshop on creating mechanism