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ON MERCURY**

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Item 4 (g) of the provisional agenda*

**Matters for consideration or action by the Conference
of the Parties: financial resources and mechanism**

**Activities of the Special Programme to support institutional
strengthening at the national level for implementation of the
Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, the Minamata
Convention and the Strategic Approach to International
Chemicals Management**

Note by the secretariat

The annex to the present note sets out a report on the activities of the Special Programme to support institutional strengthening at the national level for implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, the Minamata Convention and the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management. The report was submitted by the United Nations Environment Programme, which provides secretariat services for the Special Programme. It is presented as received, without formal editing.

* UNEP/MC/COP.5/1.

Annex*

Activities of the Special Programme to support institutional strengthening at the national level for implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, the Minamata Convention and the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management

I. Introduction

1. With a view to addressing the increased need for sustainable, predictable, adequate and accessible financing for the chemicals and waste agenda, the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) proposed the establishment of an integrated approach to financing the sound management of chemicals and waste to the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme at its twenty-seventh session, in February 2013.
2. The Governing Council, in its decision 27/12¹, section VIII, welcomed the integrated approach to address the financing of the sound management of chemicals and wastes, and underscored that the three components of the integrated approach, namely, mainstreaming, industry involvement and dedicated external finance, were mutually reinforcing and were all important for the financing of sound management of chemicals and wastes.
3. Furthermore, the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEA), in its resolution 1/5², section II, also welcomed the integrated approach to the financing of chemicals and waste management and adopted the terms of reference for a special programme, to be funded by voluntary contributions, to support institutional strengthening³ at the national level to enhance the implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, the Minamata Convention on Mercury and the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM).
4. The Special Programme was subsequently established and now forms part of chemicals and pollution action thematic subprogramme within the UNEP programme of work.
5. The objective of the Special Programme is to support country-driven institutional strengthening at the national level, in the context of the integrated approach to address the financing of the sound management of chemicals and wastes, taking into account the national development strategies, plans and priorities of each country, to increase sustainable public institutional capacity for the sound management of chemicals and wastes throughout their life cycle. The Special Programme is one of two complementary elements of dedicated external financing under the integrated approach, with the Global Environment Facility (GEF) being the further element.
6. The terms of reference of the Special Programme stipulate eligibility for support from the Programme as follows:
 - (a) Support from the Special Programme will be available for developing countries, taking into account the special needs of least developed countries and small island developing states, and for countries with economies in transition, with priority given to those with least capacity;
 - (b) Applicants will be eligible if they are party to any one of the relevant conventions or have demonstrated that they are in the process of preparing for ratification of any one of the conventions; and

* The annex has not been formally edited.

¹ Available at <https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/12221/Governing%20Council%20Decision%2027-2.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>.

² Available at <https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/17285/K1402364.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y>.

³ For the purposes of the Special Programme, institutional strengthening is defined as enhancing the sustainable institutional capacity of Governments to develop, adopt, monitor and enforce policy, legislation and regulation, as well as to gain access to financial and other resources for effective frameworks for the implementation of the Instruments for the sound management of chemicals and wastes throughout their life cycle.

- (c) Applications are to include identification of the associated domestic measures to be taken to ensure that the national institutional capacity supported by the Special Programme is sustainable in the long term.
7. The terms of reference also stipulate the following operational arrangements:
- (a) The Special Programme will receive applications directly from national Governments;
- (b) Applications should be outlined within the context of an overall country approach to strengthening institutional capacity;
- (c) Applications should contain proposed measures and performance targets and information relating to long-term sustainability;
- (d) Cumulative allocations to a country should be decided by the Executive Board, based on the contributions received and the needs expressed in the applications submitted. Of that total, an amount not exceeding 13 per cent may be retained for administrative purposes;
- (e) Beneficiary countries will contribute resources equal to the value of at least 25 per cent of the total allocation. The Executive Board may reduce that percentage, commensurate with consideration of the specific national circumstances, capacity constraints, gaps and needs of the applicant; and
- (f) Beneficiary countries are to submit annual reports on progress achieved; a final report and financial audit, including a full accounting of funds used and an evaluation of outcomes, as well as evidence of whether performance targets have been met, are to be submitted upon completion of each project.
8. In March 2022, UNEA adopted resolution 5/7 on chemicals and waste, paragraph 16 of which decided to extend the duration of the Special Programme for a period of five years, in accordance with paragraph 24 of the terms of reference adopted in Environment Assembly resolution 1/5, and to include the Strategic Approach and the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020 in the Special Programme. Paragraph 10 of the same resolution encouraged the Executive Board of the Special Programme to review the procedures for application for funding in the light of the needs and challenges expressed by developing countries, including those related to operating costs, with a view to promoting an effective and efficient application of the eligibility criteria in line with the terms of reference of the Special Programme, without jeopardizing the ability of the Special Programme to receive funding from existing sources.
9. Following discussion on the matter, the Executive Board during its eighth meeting, held in February 2023, decided to revise the eligibility and appraisal criteria for funding under the Special Programme as set out in section III.J below.
10. The present document provides information on activities of the Special Programme to date.

II. Governance of the Special Programme

11. The Executive Board is the decision-making body overseeing the Special Programme with the support of the Secretariat. The term of its representatives is in a two-year rotation. The composition of the Executive Board reflects a balance between donors and recipients as follows:
- (a) Four representatives of recipient countries, reflecting equitable, geographical representation, drawn from the following United Nations regions: Africa, Asia-Pacific, Central and Eastern Europe, and Latin America and the Caribbean;
- (b) One representative from a least developed country or a small island developing State on a rotational basis;
- (c) Five donor representatives, which are not also recipient countries.
12. The countries that are serving on the Executive Board during its 2022-2024 term are:
- (a) Africa: Ghana (member); Algeria (alternate)
- (b) Asia and Pacific: Sri Lanka (member and alternate)
- (c) Central and Eastern Europe: Georgia (member); Armenia (alternate)
- (d) Latin America and the Caribbean: Argentina (member and alternate)
- (e) Small island developing states: Maldives (member and alternate).

13. The donor representatives on the Executive Board are the European Union, Germany, Sweden, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America.
14. At their first meeting held online from 28 March to 1 April 2022, the Executive Board elected Ms. Irma Gurguliani (Georgia), representing recipient countries, and Ms. Kay Williams (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland), representing donor countries, as co-chairs of the Executive Board.
15. The term of the current Executive Board will end on 2 February 2024. The Secretariat will work with UNEP's Governance Affairs Office to issue a call for nominations for the Executive Board in August 2023.

III. Meetings of the Executive Board

A. First meeting of the Executive Board

16. At its first meeting, held from 2 to 3 February 2016 in Geneva, Switzerland⁴, the Executive Board reached an agreement on the Rules of Procedure for the operations of the Executive Board of the Special Programme, the application guidelines, and application forms.
17. The Executive Board also agreed to launch the first round of applications in April 2016.

B. Second meeting of the Executive Board

18. The first round of applications for funding from the Special Programme was launched on 4 April 2016. The deadline for the submission of applications to the Secretariat was 4 July 2016. Following the application deadline, the Secretariat received 54 applications from 45 countries.
19. The second meeting of the Executive Board was held from 11 to 13 October 2016 in Bangkok, Thailand⁵. The meeting was attended by 10 of the 10 Executive Board members and represented quorum for decision making in accordance with Rule 17 of the rules of procedure for the Executive Board of the Special Programme.
20. The main objective of the meeting was to review the 42 eligible and complete applications submitted for the first and pilot round of applications.
21. The Executive Board approved projects for the first and pilot round of applications, as outlined in table 1 of the appendix, amounting to US\$ 1.75 million, taking into consideration regional balance and the special needs of least developed countries and small island developing States.
22. The Board agreed that the second round of applications would be launched in February 2017.

C. Third meeting of the Executive Board

23. The second round of applications for funding from the Special Programme was launched on 22 February 2017. The deadline for the submission of applications to the Secretariat was 20 June 2017. Following the application deadline, the Secretariat received 43 applications from 37 countries.
24. The third meeting of the Executive Board was held from 2 to 3 December 2017 in Nairobi, Kenya⁶. The meeting was attended by 8 of the 10 Executive Board members and represented quorum for decision making in accordance with Rule 17 of the rules of procedure for the Executive Board of the Special Programme.
25. The Executive Board reviewed each of the applications submitted and approved 17 projects, as outlined in table 2 of the appendix, amounting to US\$ 5,096,735, taking into consideration regional balance and the special needs of least developed countries and small island developing States.

⁴ The report of the first meeting of the Executive Board is available at https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/22904/Special%20Programme%201st%20ExecutiveBoard_meeting_Report.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.

⁵ The report of the second meeting of the Executive Board is available at http://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/17014/2nd_EBMR_Oct2016_advance_copy.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.

⁶ The report of the third meeting of the Executive Board is available at <https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/27357/boardRep.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>.

26. It was also decided that applicants whose projects were not approved during the second round would be invited to revise and submit their applications to the third and subsequent rounds of applications.
27. In addition, a communications strategy and a resource mobilization strategy were considered and endorsed by the Executive Board. The Executive Board noted that such strategies would allow the Special Programme to attract well-developed applications and donors in a competitive environment.
28. Furthermore, the Executive Board agreed that the third round of applications would be launched in early 2018.

D. Fourth meeting of the Executive Board

29. The third round of applications for funding from the Special Programme was launched on 23 February 2018. The deadline for the submission of applications to the Secretariat was 21 June 2018. Following the application deadline, the Secretariat received 37 applications, from 34 countries.
30. The fourth meeting of the Executive Board was held from 29 to January 2019 in Geneva, Switzerland⁷. The meeting was attended by 9 of the 10 Executive Board members and represented quorum for decision making in accordance with Rule 17 of the rules of procedure for the Executive Board of the Special Programme.
31. The Executive Board approved 18 projects amounting to US\$ 4,703,849. The approved projects were selected taking into account the project's merits, regional balance and priority to countries with least capacity, taking into account the special needs of least developing countries and small island developing States, as outlined in table 3 of the appendix.
32. It was also decided that applicants whose projects were not approved during the third round would be invited to revise and resubmit their application to the fourth and subsequent rounds of applications.
33. In addition, the Executive Board requested the Secretariat to initiate the midterm evaluation for the Special Programme internal UNEP project in early April 2019.
34. With regards to resource mobilization, the Executive Board requested the Secretariat to develop a focused action plan that outlines activities and necessary resources to showcase the Special Programme's priorities over the following two years.
35. In addition, the Executive Board approved the proposed branding and visual identity of the Special Programme, and requested the Secretariat to use them, as appropriate. It was also agreed that relevant slogans would be included alongside the logo to highlight key aspects of the Special Programme, such as institutional strengthening. The Board also emphasised the importance of widely using the approved branding and visual identity of the Special Programme in order to facilitate the Programme's visibility to both donors and recipient countries.
36. The Board welcomed the proposed improvements to the Special Programme project database to include a search engine to facilitate the retrieval of information and the development of the application guidelines and e-learning modules and hoped that they would facilitate the application process and contribute to the improvement of the quality of the applications submitted.
37. Finally, the Board welcomed the proposed activities to be implemented under Phase II of the communications strategy.

E. Fifth meeting of the Executive Board of the Special Programme, October 2019, Bangkok, Thailand

38. The fifth meeting of the Executive Board of the Special Programme was held from 6 to 7 October 2019 in Bangkok, Thailand, taking place back-to-back with the third meeting of the SAICM Intersessional Process⁸.
39. At the meeting the Board members endorsed the revised documents of the application package for the fourth round of applications for funding from the Special Programme and the e-learning

⁷ The report of the fourth meeting of the Executive Board is available at <https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/27772/SPEB.4.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>.

⁸ The report of the fifth meeting of the Executive Board is available at <https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/30853/SPEB5.8.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>.

platform. The Board also agreed to make the guidance and guidelines available in five of the UN languages.

40. Furthermore, the Board requested the Secretariat to launch the fourth round of applications in the margins of the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention on Mercury. The launch was set to take place at a side event scheduled for Friday, 29 November 2019.

41. The Board also reflected positively on the findings of the midterm evaluation of the Special Programme and approved the proposed timeline for the finalization of the evaluation report, which was expected to take place in January 2020.

42. The Executive Board endorsed the resource mobilization action plan as presented by the Secretariat. In addition, the Board requested that representatives from the private sector be invited the next meeting of the Board to discuss how to strengthen private sector engagement in the context of the Special Programme and the integrated approach to financing of chemicals and waste.

43. Furthermore, the Executive Board approved the proposed Request for Proposals for targeted communications with a view to facilitating the implementation of the second Phase of the Special Programme Communications Strategy.

F. Teleconferences of the Executive Board of the Special Programme

44. The second teleconference on the Executive Board took place on 3 February 2020. During the meeting, the Board adopted the report of the fifth meeting of the Executive Board, received an update on the progress with respect to nominations to the Board for 2020-2022, and an update on the operations of the Special Programme, including Secretariat activities and project implementation status. The meeting also discussed the final report of the mid-term evaluation of the Special Programme, the draft outline of a monitoring, evaluation and learning strategy and action plan, and received an update on the procurement process for the implementation of the Special Programme Communications Strategy.

45. An ad hoc extraordinary teleconference was held on 26 March 2020 with the (at the time) eight confirmed members of incoming Executive Board, to discuss the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the fourth round of applications for funding. The Executive Board recognized that the pandemic had resulted in the imposition of requirements for social distancing and quarantine guidelines by many countries, which hindered the ability of stakeholders to conduct the necessary inter-sectoral meetings to discuss and validate proposals and seek letters of support. The Executive Board therefore decided to extend the application deadline to 4 September 2020 and postponed the sixth meeting of the Executive Board, at which the applications submitted during the fourth round of funding would be submitted for approval, from November 2020 to March 2021.

46. The fourth teleconference of the Executive Board was held online from 27 to 28 October 2020. During the meeting, the Board considered the difficulties it had encountered in finalising its membership for the current term and requested the Secretariat to prepare a report inventorying analogous processes that had been established under similar mechanisms, and in doing so to identify possible solutions to the challenges in constituting the Executive Board.

47. The Board provided guidance to the Secretariat in dealing with requests for extension of projects beyond the normal maximum of 36 months, particularly in light of the delays caused by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and requested the Secretariat to maintain a list of the extensions granted and the reasons provided for the delays.

48. During the teleconference, the Board approved the revised proposal submitted by Brazil in response to comments provided by the Board upon its conditional approval of the original proposal under the second round of funding and requested the Secretariat to follow up with the country to finalize the implementation arrangements.

49. The Board considered the possibility of the one-time extension of the duration of the Special Programme, in the context of paragraph 24 of the Terms of Reference adopted by UNEA resolution 1/5. In light of the likely impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the timing and format of UNEA-5, it was decided to postpone the adoption of the proposed draft recommendation. The Executive Board requested the Secretariat to refine the language of the draft recommendation, taking into account the comments made during the meeting, in order to facilitate discussions at a later stage. The Secretariat was also requested to prepare a brief background document addressing the future added value of the Special Programme.

50. The Executive Board endorsed the draft monitoring, evaluation and learning strategy and action plan and the related toolkit, which would be accompanied by training to assist countries in its implementation.

51. Finally, the Board considered a request from the Secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions that copies of project documents for projects approved under the Special Programme to be shared with the Implementation and Compliance Committee (ICC) of the Basel Convention. The Executive Board expressed its reservations about the request, noting that the Special Programme and the ICC each have their own distinct mandates and responsibilities. In addition, the Board noted that a large amount of information was already available on the Special Programme website in an easily accessible format through the PowerBI knowledge management tool⁹. The Board indicated that if more information was needed than was available in the public domain, it would be more appropriate for the ICC to request the required information directly from the country concerned, and if clarification was required, the Special Programme Secretariat could be asked to provide it.

G. Sixth meeting of the Executive Board

52. Owing to the travel restrictions imposed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and given the heavy agenda, the co-chairs of the Executive Board decided to split the sixth meeting into separate sessions.

53. The first session of the sixth meeting of the Executive Board was held online from 1 to 5 March 2021¹⁰. During this session, the Board considered 24 eligible and complete applications submitted under the fourth round of funding and decided to approve 15 of them, with a total budget of US \$3,768,824, as outlined in table 4 of the appendix. The Board also endorsed the arrangements for the launch of the fifth round of applications, including the guidance and guideline documents and application forms, subject to some edits. The fifth round was subsequently launched on 7 April 2021 with a closing date of 7 August 2021.

54. The Board received an update on the operations of the Special Programme, including an update on progress made in specific projects and an update on progress made under the recently concluded contract for implementation of the phase II of the communications strategy. The Board provided guidance to the Secretariat on allowing flexibility with respect to requests to move funds across budget lines of existing projects under the Special Programme in light of the pandemic and endorsed a proposed approach to dealing with protracted delays in finalising implementation arrangements on projects and approved the revised budget for 2021.

55. At the resumed session of the sixth meeting¹¹, held on 1 and 2 September 2021, the Executive Board adopted a recommendation to the United Nations Environment Assembly for the one-time extension of duration of the Special Programme for a period of five years, in accordance with paragraph 24 of the Terms of Reference of the Special Programme. The Board also adopted amendments to its Rules of Procedure, to streamline the nominations process for Executive Board membership and provide for the identification of alternates to Board members. The Board received an update on the operations of the Special Programme and approved the indicative budget for 2022.

H. Seventh meeting of the Executive Board

56. The seventh meeting of the Executive Board was held online from 28 March to 1 April 2022¹². During this meeting, the Board approved nine new projects under the fifth round of funding with a total budget of US \$2,641,160, as outlined in table 5 of Appendix I and endorsed the arrangements for the launch of the sixth round of funding. The sixth round was subsequently launched on 11 April 2022 with a closing date of 12 August 2022.

⁹ <https://www.unep.org/explore-topics/chemicals-waste/what-we-do/special-programme/special-programme-projects-database>.

¹⁰ The report of the first session of the sixth meeting of the Executive Board is available through the following link: <https://www.unep.org/events/working-group-meeting/sixth-meeting-executive-board-special-programme-support-institutional>.

¹¹ The report of the resumed session of the sixth meeting of the Executive Board is available through the following link: <https://www.unep.org/events/working-group-meeting/sixth-meeting-executive-board-special-programme-support-institutional>.

¹² The report of the seventh meeting of the Executive Board is available through the following link: <https://www.unep.org/events/working-group-meeting/seventh-meeting-executive-board-special-programme-support>.

57. The Board held an initial discussion on the request from UNEA that the Board review the procedures for application for funding in the light of the needs and challenges expressed by developing countries, including those related to operating costs, with a view to promoting an effective and efficient application of the eligibility criteria in line with the terms of reference of the Special Programme, without jeopardizing the ability of the Special Programme to receive funding from existing sources. On that point, the Executive Board requested the Secretariat to arrange an intersessional meeting in the last quarter of 2022 to discuss the matter further and to provide a number of relevant documents to inform the discussion.

I. Intersessional meeting of the Executive Board

58. The intersessional meeting of the Executive Board was held online on 5 December 2022¹³. The Board considered the updated document prepared at its request by the Secretariat on classification of countries, including a legal opinion from UNEP and a comparative table depicting different classification lists, and exchanged views to better understand the issues surrounding the use of the OECD DAC list of ODA recipients as the basis for eligibility for funding. These discussions were held in preparation for further consideration of the matter in the context of the preparations for the seventh round of funding, during the eighth meeting of the Executive Board in February 2023.

J. Eighth meeting of the Executive Board

59. The eighth meeting of the Executive Board took place in hybrid format in Geneva, Switzerland, from 15 to 17 February 2023¹⁴. The Board considered eligible and complete applications under the sixth round of funding and approved nine new projects with a total budget of US \$2,207,875, as outlined in table 6 of Appendix I.

60. The Board also endorsed arrangements for the launch of the seventh round, and in doing so revised the eligibility and appraisal criteria for funding under the Special Programme. The revised eligibility and appraisal criteria are as set out in the text box below and have been included in the documentation for the seventh round of funding, which launched on 6 April 2023¹⁵. In addition, the Board received an update on operations of the Special Programme including feedback from the assessment of closed projects¹⁶ undertaken by the Secretariat in 2022

a. Under section 2.2 of the Guidance on the Scope of the Special Programme, ‘Who can apply for funding under the Special Programme?’:

“Eligible Governments can apply to the Special Programme.

‘Governments’ specifically refers to the national government ministry or department in charge of the chemicals and waste agenda at the national level. Affiliations of Governments and local governments are not eligible.

Countries should refer to paragraph 6 of the Terms of Reference for eligibility which states that ‘Support from the Special Programme will be available for developing countries, taking into account the special needs of least developed countries and small island developing States, and for countries with economies in transition¹, with priority given to those with least capacity’.

Note that a number of donors have strict policies of funding only applications that meet the eligibility requirements of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) list of Official Development Assistance (ODA)² at the time of application.

¹ See United Nations World Economic Situation and Prospects Report available at https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/document_gem/global-economic-monitoring-unit/world-economic-situation-and-prospects-wesp-report/ with annexes available at

¹³ The report of the intersessional meeting of the Executive Board is available on the Special Programme website at the following link: <https://www.unep.org/events/working-group-meeting/intersessional-meeting-executive-board-special-programme>.

¹⁴ The advance report of the eighth meeting of the Executive Board is available on the Special Programme website at the following link: <https://www.unep.org/events/unep-event/eighth-meeting-executive-board>.

¹⁵ <https://www.unep.org/explore-topics/chemicals-waste/what-we-do/special-programme/applying-funding-through-special>.

¹⁶ Available at the following link: <https://wedocs.unep.org/handle/20.500.11822/42168?jsessionid=27DCA23788110B7A372B7DBF3F12B8C1>

https://desapublications.un.org/file/1113/download?_ga=2.247642817.739791176.1676889344-1020178047.1591942680

² <https://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-standards/daclist.htm>”

b. Under Annex III to the Guidance on the Scope of the Special Programme dealing with Appraisal Criteria:

“1.5 Questions for prioritization on the basis of country capacity, in accordance with paragraph 6 of the Terms of Reference

These questions are for the Board to consider:

P1. What is the level of ownership, impact and sustainability of the project?

P2. Is the country classified as high income by the World Bank?

If yes,

P2.1. Is the country able to implement the project by its own financial means and capabilities?

P2.2 Does the beneficiary contribution from the applicant exceed the minimum 25% threshold provided for in paragraph 21 of the Terms of Reference and if so by how much?

P 3. Are there other factors relating to the country’s capacity that should be taken into account?”

IV. Status of the Special Programme Trust Fund

61. The generous contributions of donors to the Special Programme trust fund and its operations continue to be greatly appreciated by the recipient countries.

62. An update of donor contributions since the establishment of the Special Programme Trust Fund in September 2015 is shown in table 1 below.

Table 1

Contributions and pledges received 2015 – 2021 (all amounts in US\$ as 1 June 2023)

<i>Donor</i>	<i>Total Amount USD (Pledge)</i>
European Union	19 631 656
Sweden	3 735 847
United States of America	1 640 000
Norway	2 102 459
Germany*	2 551 210
Finland	314 560
Netherlands (Kingdom of the)*	905 802
Austria	287 611
Denmark	2 078 362
Belgium	214 190
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	849 115
Switzerland	430 353
Total Pledges and Contributions	34 741 165

* Pledge amounts will be adjusted with the exchange rate on the day of receipt

63. In line with the Special Programme terms of reference, all signatories and parties to the conventions and other Governments with the capacity to do so, as well as from the private sector, including industry, foundations and non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders, are encouraged to contribute to the Special Programme Trust Fund.

V. Status of the Implementation of Special Programme Funded Projects

64. The Special Programme has to date completed six rounds of applications for funding bringing the total number of approved projects to 75 in 65 countries. Arrangements for implementation of nine projects approved under the sixth round in February 2023 is under way. Detailed information on the project portfolio is provided in the Secretariat's PowerBI tool¹⁷, available on its website. An update on project progress by round of funding is set out in the following paragraphs.

A. First (pilot) round of applications

65. At its second meeting, the Executive Board approved seven projects in Argentina, Benin, the Dominican Republic, Iraq, the Kyrgyz Republic, the United Republic of Tanzania, and Ukraine following the first (pilot) round of applications for funding from the Special Programme.

66. The project in Ukraine was subsequently cancelled following financial difficulties encountered by the project's implementing entity. Five of the remaining projects have completed implementation and closed, and a summary of their achievements is provided below.

(a) Argentina established a Directorate of Chemicals, covering chemical substances, hazardous and pathogenic waste and transboundary movements; undertook extensive engagement with the private sector on a range of issues related to chemicals management; established four Scientific-Academic Working Groups which have produced key reports on substances of concern; created a national inventory of chemicals; prepared draft laws to improve the management of plastic waste, hazardous waste, batteries and PCBs and to improve safety in regard to the application of phytosanitary products; carried out extensive training in the public and private sector; and developed communications products including an awareness campaign on the use of chemicals in the home.

(b) The Dominican Republic established an electronic system for import and registration of chemical substances; updated regulations for the transport of hazardous substances and for the management of chemical substances and hazardous waste; developed two technical standards based on the Globally Harmonized System for the Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS); designed a website to promote the exchange of information among stakeholders engaged in chemicals management; adopted a risk management guide to support the national plan for emergency care for nuclear, biological, chemical, radioactive and explosive substances, and established a national coordination mechanism to respond to emergencies with chemical substances with a related training programme.

(c) Iraq's project was implemented in the context of support from other resources. It contributed to the country's ratification of the Minamata Convention, established a unit responsible for the Stockholm Convention, promoted intersectoral coordination through the formation of intersectoral committees related to the sound management of chemicals and waste in Iraq; adopted a chemical security strategy, as well as issuing classification controls for the oil industry and industrial and service sectors; and formed a committee to unify the chemicals related law and develop a plan for the implementation of the national chemical policies in place. In addition, training was delivered on the GHS and e-Licensing and two project proposals were developed in efforts to mobilize additional funding for future chemicals and waste related work.

(d) Kyrgyzstan developed an action plan to strengthen and improve the national legislative framework of the country, with proposed actions based on the identified gaps and deficiencies in the national legislation; issued a decree of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Industry and Land Irrigation "On approval of the Catalogue of pesticides and agrochemicals allowed for use in the Kyrgyz Republic"; and adopted legal regulatory acts to amend the government Resolution "On measures aimed at protecting the environment and public health from the adverse effects of certain hazardous chemicals and pesticides".

(e) The United Republic of Tanzania established a national strategy on sound management of chemicals and waste; enhanced capacity of pesticides and industrial chemicals inspectors and improved the inspection modality of imports for controlled substances under Rotterdam Convention, to enhance the control of illegal trafficking of pesticides and chemicals at entry points; established an empty pesticide container collection programme in local agricultural communities; established a chemicals and waste information management system to facilitate reporting under the chemicals and

¹⁷ <https://www.unep.org/explore-topics/chemicals-waste/what-we-do/special-programme/special-programme-projects-database>.

waste related Conventions; and put in place regulations on the control and management of mercury releases, to strengthen enforcement on import of mercury including the management of mercury waste.

B. Second round of applications

67. At its third meeting, the Executive Board approved seventeen projects in Afghanistan, Belarus, Brazil, China, Ecuador, North Macedonia, the Gambia, Ghana, India, Kenya, Kiribati, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, Republic of Moldova, Serbia, Uganda and Viet Nam.

68. Eight of these projects have completed implementation and have either closed or are in the process of closing. An overview the achievements of these eight completed projects is provided below.

(a) Afghanistan made excellent progress, with completed project deliverables laying the foundation for future activities to build upon; however, a change of regime in country resulted in the final activity under the project being halted and the project was closed. Key achievements of the project included the establishment of a national chemicals unit, development of a data acquisition and management plan, to support the government in obtaining and managing data on hazardous chemicals and wastes; a review of the available literature on chemicals and waste in the country, identifying gaps and recommendations to address them; and development of a handbook on sampling Standard Operation Procedures (SOPs) along with survey forms, with training provided on sampling procedures. The terminal assessment of the Special Programme project rated the project's success before the change in government as satisfactory or highly satisfactory.

(b) Belarus created a national infrastructure for the ratification and implementation of the Rotterdam Convention, including the necessary legislative, information and institutional arrangements. This involved intersectoral and multilateral coordination and cooperation for the consolidation of functions aimed at mainstreaming the implementation of the Rotterdam Convention, along with existing infrastructures that have been put in place for the implementation of the Basel and Stockholm Conventions and the Minamata Convention.

(c) China analyzed regulatory gaps in terms of chemicals and waste management throughout their life cycle and proposed policy recommendations; strengthened the national inter-sectoral coordination mechanisms for Stockholm and Minamata Conventions; conducted a study on the international synergy process among the MEAs in the chemicals and waste cluster; developed a database of toxic and hazardous chemicals databases; undertook research on inter-sectoral mechanisms on the management of chemicals and waste transboundary movement, and developed a scheme for such a mechanism with policy recommendations; carried out studies on selected technical documents relevant to the MEAs ; and developed training materials and video courses on the Basel, Rotterdam, Stockholm, Minamata Conventions and SAICM as well as undertaking awareness raising activities.

(d) Ghana developed a 10-year strategic plan (2021-2030) which was published in July 2022. The Industrial and Consumer Chemicals Bill 2021 was forwarded to the Attorney General's Department for onward transmission to Cabinet and Parliament for approval and gazetting. The Environmental Protection Agency Act, 1994 (Act 490) Amendment Bill (The Environmental Protection Bill, 2022) which establishes a functional unified multi-sectoral/multi-stakeholder coordinating mechanism for SCMW will be considered for approval in the coming months and gazetted. Satellite Focal Persons from identified Focal Institutions were trained alongside the staff of the Chemicals Control and Management Centre (CCMC) of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

(e) Kenya developed a National Chemical Policy which is linked to the Kenya Vision 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals 2030. The inter-ministerial and inter-sectoral coordination committee on Sound Chemical Management (MCCSCM) was established and launched with the mandate to guide on the issues of chemicals and waste in the country including endorsing draft policies and regulations. Kenya established a chemical portal with the necessary legal and policy framework established to support the development and sustainability of the database including and developed a Pollutant Release and Transfers and Register (PRTR).

(f) Republic of Moldova adopted a framework law on chemicals which promoted several normative documents into law, including the creation of a chemicals agency; created a mechanism for the implementation of the Rotterdam Convention to provide more clarity on the import and export of certain hazardous chemicals; facilitated the enforcement of waste legislation including by building capacity of relevant private sector organizations to implement EPR principles; and supported the promotion and adoption of regulations on packaging and packaging waste.

(g) Nigeria prepared a chemicals and waste management co-ordination bill, along with reports on mainstreaming aspects in the national development process, the baseline status of cost

recovery measures in a selected sector, the outcomes of the pilot study to test the feasibility of the recommended options for national cost recovery measures, a national implementation plan for cost recovery of chemicals and waste management in Nigeria as well as a training and awareness raising strategy on chemicals and waste management. The terminal evaluation of their project in 2022 provided a very positive report.

(h) Serbia worked towards the improvement of the overall management of chemicals and waste at the national level, in line with obligations towards the key MEAs, by, amongst other things, establishing an information system to facilitate data collection for national reporting as well as developing an enabling policy environment for synergistic implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions and the Minamata Convention. Through the project, Serbia has conducted an assessment of remediation costs in line with national and EU legislation, guidelines and best available practices for two mercury contaminated sites in Serbia, to provide decision makers with detailed information for ratification of the Minamata Convention.

C. Third round of applications

69. At its fourth meeting, the Executive Board approved eighteen projects in Albania, Angola, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Cambodia, Ethiopia, El Salvador, Eswatini, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Kazakhstan, the Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, Pakistan, Palau, State of Palestine, South Africa, Tajikistan, Tunisia and Vanuatu.

70. Two of these projects have completed implementation and have either closed or are in the process of closing. An overview the achievements of these completed projects is provided below.

(a) Kazakhstan updated its national chemicals profile; produced a report and recommendations on the barriers to national legislation for the coordinated implementation of all chemical conventions, including a recommendation to ratify the Minamata Convention; drafted a number of regulations related to chemicals and waste management; and included mercury in the list of pollutants, emissions of which are subject of environmental regulation as well as the list of mandatory monitoring in environment. In addition, training and awareness raising activities were undertaken.

(b) Tajikistan created a national website on the sound management of chemicals and waste to provide multisectoral stakeholders with reliable and comprehensive information on new approaches to sound chemicals and waste management. Sixteen trainings were held to substantially increase Tajik ministries' capacity and local authorities, businesses and NGOs' knowledge on sound chemicals and waste management. These capacity building trainings also provided significant input into strengthening institutional capacity in Tajikistan and improving coordination among relevant stakeholders working on chemicals and waste in the country. The project also resulted in preparation and verification of draft legal documents for the accession to the Rotterdam and the Minamata Conventions.

D. Fourth round of applications

71. The Executive Board at its sixth meeting, in March 2021, approved fifteen projects in Armenia, Belarus, Burundi, Georgia, Malawi, Moldova, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Peru, Rwanda, Sao Tome Principe, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Uzbekistan. These fifteen projects are currently under implementation. An overview of the projects and updates on their status of implementation is available on the Special Programme website¹⁸.

E. Fifth round of applications

72. At its seventh meeting held in March 2022, the Executive Board approved nine projects from Argentina, Belize, Burkina Faso, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Madagascar, Serbia, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The project in Burkina Faso is on hold owing to the 2022 coup in the country, the projects in Argentina, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Madagascar, Serbia and Zimbabwe have been signed are either under way or about to begin implementation, and the Secretariat is working with the remaining three countries to finalise their project implementation arrangements.

¹⁸ Available at <https://www.unenvironment.org/explore-topics/chemicals-waste/what-we-do/special-programme/special-programme-projects-database>.

F. Sixth round of applications

73. At its eighth meeting, held in Geneva, Switzerland, from 15 to 17 March 2023, the Executive Board approved nine projects under the sixth round of funding, in Ecuador, the Gambia, Georgia, Kenya, Lesotho, Maldives, Mali, Rwanda and Togo. The Secretariat is working with the successful applicants to finalise their project implementation arrangements and sign project cooperation agreements.

G. Seventh round of applications

74. At its eighth meeting, the Executive Board endorsed the package of documents prepared for the launch of the seventh round of funding, including the revised eligibility and appraisal criteria set out in section I above.

75. The seventh round launched on 6 April 2023 with a closing date of 11 August 2023. On 23 and 24 May 2023 the Secretariat, in collaboration with the secretariats of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, the Minamata Convention and SAICM, held a series of online webinars to provide prospective applicants with information and guidance on what the Special Programme is and how to apply for funding. Applications under the seventh round will be decided upon by the Executive Board at its ninth meeting, to be held in March 2024.

Appendix

Table 1
List of projects approved by the Executive Board at its second meeting

<i>Country</i>	<i>Project Title</i>
Argentina	Strengthening national capacity for the sound management of chemicals and waste
Benin	Legal and institutional strengthening for the sound management of chemicals in Benin
Dominican Republic	Strengthening institutional capacity for the implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, the Minamata Convention and SAICM in Dominican Republic
Iraq	Develop and strengthen the institutional structure for the management of chemicals and waste in Iraq
Kyrgyz Republic	Strengthening capacities for national implementation of chemicals and waste related international agreements
United Republic of Tanzania	Strengthening institutional capacity for sound management of chemicals and waste in the United Republic of Tanzania
Ukraine	Strengthening the enforcement of the Rotterdam Convention in Ukraine, and building capacity to counteract illegal trafficking of chemical

Table 2
List of projects approved by the Executive Board at its third meeting

<i>Country</i>	<i>Project Title</i>
Afghanistan	Enhancing the sustainable institutional capacity to regulate toxic chemicals
Belarus	Establish a sustainable national infrastructure to join and support the implementation of the Rotterdam Convention in the Republic of Belarus
Brazil	Strengthening Institutional Capacity for the Sound management of Chemicals through the Establishment of necessary structure to implement the national legislation on industrial Chemicals
China	China-Strengthening institutional capacity for the implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam, Stockholm and Minamata conventions and SAICM
Ecuador	Strengthening of the national control system for the management of dangerous materials in Ecuador
Gambia (the)	Institutional Capacity Building for the Implementation of the Multilateral Environmental Agreements in The Gambia
Ghana	Strengthening Institutional Capacity for the Sustainable Sound Management of Chemicals and Waste throughout their Life-cycle and the Effective Implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam, Stockholm and Minamata conventions and the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) in Ghana
India	Institutional Capacity Building for Sustainable Management of Chemical and Wastes with Special Focus on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs)
Kenya	Support to chemicals and wastes MEAs and SAICM implementation in Kenya
Kiribati	Strengthening legal systems, institutions and data collection infrastructure in Kiribati
Nigeria	Strengthening of the legal and institutional infrastructures for sound management of chemicals (SMC) in Nigeria
North Macedonia	Strengthening Institutional capacities for mainstreaming quadruple synergy schemes in implementation of the National Action Plans (NAPs) for implementation of SAICM and Inclusion of Minamata convention
Papua New Guinea	Strengthening the institutional framework and national capacity of key stakeholders in Papua New Guinea in wastes and chemical management
Republic of Moldova	Improving sustainable institutional and regulatory framework for chemicals and waste management throughout their lifecycle in the Republic of Moldova
Serbia	Strengthening the synergies between the Basel, Rotterdam, Stockholm and Minamata conventions at the national level in the Republic of Serbia
Uganda	Strengthening national institution capacity in sound management of chemicals and waste in Uganda
Viet Nam	Strengthening national capacity in sound chemical and waste management for the implementation of the Stockholm, Basel, Rotterdam, Minamata conventions, SAICM in Viet Nam

Table 3
List of projects approved by the Executive Board at its fourth meeting

<i>Country</i>	<i>Project Title</i>
Albania	Strengthening sound chemicals and waste management in Albania, demonstrating improvement of Health Care Waste (HCW) management.
Angola	Strengthening Angola's National Chemicals and Waste Management Programme by establishing sustainable, integrated, and coherent national structure with emphasis on Private Sector participation
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Special Program for the Strengthening of National Capacities for Chemical Substances and Hazardous Waste Management in the Plurinational State of Bolivia
Cambodia	Institutional strengthening in Cambodia for efficient and coordinated implementation of the chemicals and waste management international agreements
Ethiopia	Enhancing Ethiopia's Institutional Capacity for Sound Management of Hazardous Wastes and POPs Chemicals and Improving Reporting Obligation under Basel and Stockholm conventions
El Salvador	Institutional strengthening for El Salvador in the implementation of the Basel, Stockholm, Minamata and Rotterdam conventions and the Strategic Approach for the Management of Chemical Products at the International Level
Eswatini	Institutional Capacity development and strengthening for the Sound Management of Chemicals and Waste in the Kingdom of Eswatini
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	The Implementation of Cleaner Production Practices to Manage Chemicals and Waste in Oil Refinery
Kazakhstan	Strengthening the National Capacity of the Republic of Kazakhstan to Regulate Chemicals Through Ensuring Compliance with Obligations Under International Multilateral Environmental Agreements
Micronesia (Federated States of)	Strengthening Institutional Capacity for the Chemicals Management in the FSM
Nauru	Strengthening the national capacity for integrated chemicals and waste management in Nauru
Pakistan	Strengthening of national legislation and capacity building of stakeholders for sound chemicals and hazardous waste management in Pakistan
Palau	Strengthening the national institutional capacity for chemicals and waste management in Palau
Palestine (State of)	Strengthening the institutional capacity of the State of Palestine for sound waste and chemicals management and fostering stakeholder buy-in under the BRS conventions and supporting process towards ratification of the Minamata Convention
South Africa	Phasing out of lead in paint and the development of an action plan for SAICM emerging contaminants (lead in paint, HHPs, EPPPs, EDCs, & Cd)
Tajikistan	Strengthening institutional capacity for national implementation of the Stockholm and Basel international conventions and building capacity for accessing the Rotterdam Convention in Tajikistan
Tunisia	Institutional strengthening and capacity building project towards achieving Environmental Sound Management (ESM) of hazardous wastes and chemicals at the industrial level as well as enhancing compliance and implementation of chemicals and waste Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) including Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions
Vanuatu	Strengthening the National Institutional Capacity for Chemicals and waste management in Vanuatu

Table 4
List of projects approved by the Executive Board at its sixth meeting

<i>Country</i>	<i>Project Title</i>
Armenia	Strengthening National Capacity of the Republic of Armenia in Sound Chemicals and Waste Management for Implementation of the Stockholm, Basel, Rotterdam, Minamata conventions and SAICM
Belarus	National capacity strengthening for the sound management of chemicals by sustainable implementation of the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals in the Republic of Belarus (GHS)
Burundi	Strengthening chemicals and waste management within a circular economy framework in Burundi
Georgia	Enhancing national capacities, reporting and synergies between Basel, Rotterdam, Stockholm and Minamata conventions and SAICM for the sound management of chemicals and waste in Georgia
Malawi	Strengthening institutional capacity to plan, monitor and coordinate the implementation of policies, strategies and national programmes for the sound management of chemicals and waste
Republic of Moldova	Promoting good governance and building platforms on better coordination on sound management of chemicals and waste in the line with SAICM beyond 2020 in Moldova
Mongolia	Improvement of human resource and analytical capacity for enforcement of hazardous waste management legislations in Mongolia
Montenegro	Strengthening synergies between the Basel, Rotterdam, Stockholm and Minamata conventions
Morocco	Strengthening institutional national capacities for the sound management of chemicals, especially the pesticides used in hygiene and public health
Peru	Strengthening national capacities for the integral management of chemicals in Peru
Rwanda	Strengthening the institutional capacity for sound management of chemicals and hazardous wastes
Sao Tome and Principe	Strengthening São Tomé and Príncipe's National Chemicals and Waste Management Programme by establishing sustainable, integrated, and coherent national structure using plastic waste management pilot to demonstrate private sector and community participation.
Sierra Leone	Institutional strengthening for the environmentally sound management of chemicals and waste within the framework of Basel, Rotterdam, Stockholm and Minamata conventions and the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) in Sierra Leone.
Sudan	Enhancing the institutional capacities for sound and synergistic management of chemicals and waste in Sudan
Uzbekistan	Strengthening the institutional capacity of the Republic of Uzbekistan in the implementation of the Basel and the Stockholm conventions and GHS, as well as facilitate the accession to the Rotterdam and the Minamata conventions

Table 5
Fifth round of funding
List of projects approved by the Executive Board at its seventh meeting

<i>Country</i>	<i>Project Title</i>
Argentina	Strengthening of national capacities in the environmentally sound management of emerging pollutants and other dangerous substances in Argentina
Belize	Institutional Strengthening of the Department of the Environment for the Sound Management of Chemicals and Wastes in Belize
Burkina Faso	Strengthening Burkina Faso's national capacities for sustainable management of chemicals and hazardous waste
Democratic Republic of the Congo	Strengthening DRC's National capacity to implement the Basel, Rotterdam, Stockholm and Minamata Conventions including SAICM.
Madagascar	Strengthening preventive, promotional and preparatory health sector interventions for an effective response to chemical events and accidents in Madagascar
Serbia	Further strengthening of national capacity and risk management of Substances of International Concern throughout their life cycle
Uganda	Strengthening National Capacity to Implement Control Procedures under the Rotterdam, Stockholm Basel and Minamata Conventions in the Republic of Uganda
Zambia	To strengthen institutional capacity for the sound management of chemicals and wastes in Zambia
Zimbabwe	Strengthening Legal and Institutional Infrastructures for the Sound Management of Chemicals and Wastes in Zimbabwe

Table 6
Sixth round of funding
List of projects approved by the Executive Board at its eighth meeting

<i>Country</i>	<i>Project Title</i>
Ecuador	Improvement and sustainability for the management of hazardous and special waste and chemical products for industrial use in Ecuador.
Gambia (the)	Capacity strengthening and technical assistance for environmentally sound management of chemicals and wastes in the Gambia.
Georgia	Establish of a Poison Control Center (PCC) as an essential infrastructural element of sound chemicals management system and prevention of chemicals exposure and management of poisonings in Georgia
Kenya	Sound Chemicals and Waste Management Kenya (Sound Management of Chemicals and Waste)
Lesotho	Strengthening Institutional Capacity for Coordination of Chemicals and Waste Multi-lateral Environmental Agreements and Mainstreaming Gender in their Implementation in Lesotho.
Maldives	Institutional strengthening and capacity building for the sound management of chemicals and wastes in the Maldives.
Mali	Strengthening Mali's National capacity to implement the Basel, Rotterdam, Stockholm and Minamata Conventions including SAICM.
Rwanda	Strengthening institutional capacity to reduce environmental and health risks from lead exposures and contamination in Rwanda.
Togo	Setting up a cost recovery mechanism to support the establishment of a sustainable legal and institutional framework for the sound management of chemicals with a special focus on the implementation of the Rotterdam Convention