



Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade

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Conference of the Parties to the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade

Tenth meeting

Geneva, 26–30 July 2021 and 6–17 June 2022*

Agenda item 5 (c)

Matters related to the implementation of the Convention: enhancing the effectiveness of the Convention

Information dissemination strategy

Note by the Secretariat

As mentioned in the note by the Secretariat on enhancing the effectiveness of the Rotterdam Convention (UNEP/FAO/RC/COP.10/13), the annex to the present note sets out a draft dissemination strategy for obtaining and using information to increase the understanding and usefulness of tools and guidance to effectively address obligations and procedures relevant to the Rotterdam Convention. The present note, including its annex, has not been formally edited.

* In accordance with decisions BC-15/1, RC-10/2 and SC-10/2 of the conferences of the Parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, the 2021/2022 meetings of the conferences of the Parties are being held in two segments: an online segment held from 26 to 30 July 2021 and a face-to-face segment to be held from 6 to 17 June 2022 in Geneva.

Annex

Information dissemination strategy

For increasing the understanding and usefulness of tools and guidance to effectively address obligations and procedures relevant to the Rotterdam Convention

April 2022

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I. Introduction

A. Background

1. At its ninth meeting, the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Rotterdam Convention by decision RC-9/6 on enhancing the effectiveness of the Rotterdam Convention requested the Secretariat, subject to the availability of resources, to develop, with the objective of increasing the understanding and usefulness of tools and guidance to effectively address obligations and procedures relevant to the Rotterdam Convention, a dissemination strategy for obtaining and using information that is based on the elements contained in section III of the note by the Secretariat on ways to facilitate effective and useful dissemination of information, tools and guidance and use in capacity-building and technical assistance activities¹ for consideration by the Conference of the Parties at its tenth meeting.

B. Rationale for this strategy

2. A dissemination strategy, in line with the joint clearing-house mechanism for information exchange strategy,² could serve to encourage involvement of Parties and stakeholders and take advantage of opportunities with established networks to help amplify the impact of dissemination. The strategy could therefore be used to reach a wider audience, including community and advocacy groups, students and researchers, media organizations, chemical scientific associations, relevant think-tanks, and other interested stakeholders. This process could be based on proactive consultations and collaboration with designated national authorities (DNAs) for example, fostering the establishment of additional dissemination channels to facilitate an effective use of information pertaining to the Convention.

3. A dissemination strategy that targets increased awareness, understanding and promoting actions at the national level, may also consider, subject to availability of financial resources, the relevance of making available guidance and tools in the six official languages of the United Nations. This could help broaden the scope of technical assistance and enhance dissemination activities by providing Parties access to information in all UN languages. Furthermore, Parties will be able to make an enhanced use of technical and policy guidance to assist them in the implementation of the Convention.

4. Overall, a dissemination strategy could be developed with the objective of providing Parties with new ways to obtain and use information, including communication channels that grant an improved and integrated access aimed at demonstrating the relevance and utility of the information for the implementation of the Convention. The dissemination strategy could also be supportive of efforts towards the ratification of the Convention.

5. The central objective of the strategy would be to increase the understanding and usefulness of tools and guidance to effectively address obligations and procedures relevant to the Rotterdam Convention. A monitoring task may be included to verify, at regular intervals, whether the approach is progressing, and whether changes call for adjustments in the content or delivery channel used. The strategy may include, subject to the availability of resources, activities that help to:

- (a) Strengthen existing methods and facilitate new ways to disseminate the information;
- (b) Pinpoint information needs of various target audiences and the key messages to convey;
- (c) Identify the need for new tools and guidance to assist Parties in the implementation of the Convention;
- (d) Conduct, as necessary, regular reviews and updates of information used for technical assistance;
- (e) Catalyze the exchange of new information, including knowledge, success stories, experiences and best practices collected from Parties;
- (f) Identify barriers and ensure that end-users are able to access information through various channels;
- (g) Review and analyze the impacts of the methods of delivery and dissemination.

¹ UNEP/FAO/RC/COP.9/INF/20.

² UNEP/CHW.13/INF/47-UNEP/FAO/RC/COP.8/INF/33-UNEP/POPS/COP.8/INF/50.

C. Summary of existing dissemination tools and processes

6. The various tools and guidance to assist Parties in the implementation of the Rotterdam Convention³ are used by the Secretariat, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and other partners within capacity-building workshops and online training sessions, and by the Parties themselves in the context of their implementation of the Convention.

7. The PIC Circular is one of the main implementation documents and is distributed to Parties twice a year to facilitate information exchange on hazardous chemicals.⁴ In addition, information on the procedures of the Convention and other documents developed for technical assistance, is made available on the Convention's website⁵ and to participants at meetings of the Conferences of the Parties and of their subsidiary bodies.

8. The Resource Kit⁶ is a tool that provides information of the Rotterdam Convention and it has been designed to assist countries in a simple, flexible and user-friendly format. It contains a selection of materials and guidance to help address the various aspects related to the ratification and implementation of the Convention.

9. The provision of these materials through technical assistance, the joint clearing-house mechanism for information exchange, awareness raising or cooperative activities is done in a variety of ways that take into account the objectives of the dissemination of information and the target audience. Overall, the dissemination of the information is carried out by the Secretariat through activities that focus on:

- (a) Enhancing understanding of the purpose of the PIC Circular and the operation of the PIC procedure;
- (b) Demonstrating the applicability of the Resource Kit⁷ to promote ratification and implementation;
- (c) Awareness-raising and training workshops and meetings;⁸
- (d) Assisting Parties in the development of elements of national action plans and other strategies for the implementation of the Convention;
- (e) Enhancing information exchange between trade partners;
- (f) Supporting Parties in the submissions of proposals for severely hazardous pesticide formulations;
- (g) Strengthening capacity for pesticide and industrial chemicals management;
- (h) Facilitate information exchange to identify alternatives to hazardous pesticides and industrial chemicals;
- (i) Facilitating the preparation of notifications of final regulatory actions, and import responses;
- (j) Building the capacity of Parties to gain access and use of the Rotterdam Convention components of the joint clearing-house mechanism;
- (k) Exhibiting information and guidance materials at meetings of the Conference of the Parties.

10. Moreover, technical assistance involves a series of national, sub-regional and regional meetings where Parties and other stakeholders benefit from access to a broad selection of tools and information to assist them in better understanding the specific procedures of the Convention. Proceedings, meeting and workshop reports and other related documents are disseminated and made available at the Convention's website and through the joint clearing-house mechanism. Table 1 below

³ For an overview of these, please see section II.A of document UNEP/FAO/RC/COP.9/INF/20.

⁴ See <http://www.pic.int/Implementation/PICCircular/tabid/1168/language/en-US/Default.aspx>.

⁵ <http://www.pic.int>.

⁶ <http://www.pic.int/Implementation/ResourceKit/tabid/1064/language/en-US/Default.aspx>.

⁷ See <http://www.pic.int/Implementation/ResourceKit/tabid/1064/language/en-US/Default.aspx>.

⁸ See <http://www.pic.int/Implementation/CapacityDevelopment/Workshops/Workshops/tabid/4637/language/en-US/Default.aspx> and <http://www.pic.int/Implementation/CapacityDevelopment/Webinars/WebinarsLibrary/tabid/4212/language/en-US/Default.aspx>.

shows some other examples, past and current, of ways to disseminate information used for training and capacity-building activities. The activities and areas of work listed therein include outputs from a variety of information sources, such as the technical assistance needs assessment survey⁹ and the technical assistance plan for the implementation of the Convention¹⁰.

Table 1. Examples of existing pathways to disseminate information on the Rotterdam Convention used for training and capacity-building activities.

Activity	Target audience	Use in technical assistance workshops and training activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidance for the identification of national action plans; • Guidance on the use of bridging information for final regulatory actions; • Guidance materials on vulnerable groups; • Information documents on alternatives to chemical substances considered under the Rotterdam Convention; • Information exchange obligations; • Effective participation in the work of the Chemical Review Committee; 	<p>DNAs, members of the Chemical Review Committee, other government officials.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of national action plans; • Rotterdam Convention obligations; • Legislation on pesticide management and implementation; • Orientation for members of the Chemical Review Committee.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation of notifications of final regulatory action; • Submission of import responses; • Alternatives to Annex III chemicals; • Monitoring programme on severely hazardous pesticide formulations; • Trade-related issues; • Customs training activities. 	<p>DNAs, Government officials, authorities responsible of the evaluation and authorization of pesticides and industrial chemicals.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training on Pesticide registration toolkit; Industrial Chemicals Toolkit and on Final Regulatory Action Evaluation toolkit; • Monitoring and identification of severely hazardous pesticide formulations; • Information exchange on alternatives; • Hazard and risk evaluations of priority chemicals.

II. Aim and objectives

A. Overall aim

11. The central aim of the strategy is to increase the understanding and usefulness of tools and guidance to effectively address obligations and procedures relevant to the Rotterdam Convention.

B. Objectives

12. The objectives of this information and dissemination strategy are to contributing:

(a) To raise awareness of Parties, DNAs and their support staff, as to the availability of information to build and strengthen capacity for implementing the Rotterdam Convention;

(b) To increase awareness among Parties and their DNAs for a better and more effective use of the PIC Circular and the information contained therein;

(c) To strengthen understanding of the applicability and relevance of tools and guidance based on specific needs from Parties and DNAs;

(d) To improve the interactivity of existing online tools and guidance in order to promote active engagement from users;

⁹

<http://www.pic.int/Implementation/TechnicalAssistance/NeedsAssessment/Informationcollectionthroughsurveys/tabid/3750/language/en-US/Default.aspx>.

¹⁰ UNEP/FAO/RC/COP.8/INF/26.

(e) To assist and facilitate the DNAs engender wider stakeholder involvement at national level in the implementation of the Rotterdam Convention, through greater awareness-raising, translation of materials into vernacular and official languages and capacity-building;

(f) To encourage greater involvement by country and regional experts, to assist DNAs with the implementation of the Rotterdam Convention, especially in developing countries;

(g) To facilitate information exchange on the use and effectiveness of alternatives to hazardous pesticides and industrial chemicals, especially in relation to human health and safety.

III. Opportunities to improve dissemination tools and channels

13. A dissemination strategy should regularly assess its effectiveness in a periodic manner, taking into consideration its relevance and accessibility to the key audiences. It should also aim at continuous improvement so that most up-to-date and effective dissemination tools and channels are available. It is suggested, therefore, that the following actions are implemented:

(a) A survey could be undertaken amongst users of the PIC circular to establish how effective and useful it is for their purposes;

(b) Regular monitoring should be undertaken of how often the Resource Kit is accessed by stakeholders, and which elements are being accessed;

(c) The Resource Kit could be updated to increase its interactivity and also be simplified so that each salient element can be accessed individually, without the need to navigate the entire document;

(d) Explore how the DNAs and other users can be lead through the various tools, guidance and other materials in a more efficient manner, with a view to enhancing ease of navigation and matching with the specific needs of each user in the most efficient manner;

(e) Identify the role and potential need to update the introductory course on the Rotterdam Convention on InforMEA, the Resource Kit, the Interactive Training on the Operation of the Rotterdam Convention (ITORC);

(f) The language of much of the information (disseminated by whatever means) should be simplified and tailored to target audiences, so that is comprehensible and appealing to all stakeholders, including, where appropriate, children and youth groups;

(g) The dissemination tools and information should be underpinned with better messaging.

(h) A concerted effort must be made to disseminate relevant tools and guidance to more country-level stakeholders

(i) Make use of regional centres under the Basel and Stockholm Conventions and FAO and UNEP Regional Offices.

14. Especially set against the context of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and other health related pandemics, webinars and other interactive training tools may need to be refocused so that:

(a) They are targeted more at the minority of DNAs and other stakeholders who have the most to learn;

(b) They are sufficiently sophisticated that stakeholders will use training tools outside training sessions hosted by the Convention Secretariat;

(c) The training sessions are less intensive, to cater for the fact that fewer in-person sessions can take place, with for instance, a three-day session to be divided over six weeks, with a total of four hours per week;

(d) There should be greater emphasis on gathering and sharing success stories/testimonials/case studies from the field and individual countries.

IV. Target audiences

15. The following country specific target groups/audiences are suggested for this strategy, set alongside the requisite dissemination rationale/approach. Several of the audiences, such as DNAs, have long been an audience for the Convention; as per the remit for this strategy, several new audiences and stakeholders have been added.

Table 2. Target audiences and suggested dissemination approaches

Audience	Rationale/approach
DNAs	The Secretariat could support DNAs in having access to all guidance and tools under the Convention to facilitate implementation.
Other government ministries, such as health, education, agriculture, customs' and enforcement agencies	Upon request by Parties, the Secretariat could support DNAs to engage with these sets of audiences to increase awareness about the availability of guidance and tools and their use in their areas of responsibility.
Industry/Private Sector	Upon request by Parties, the Secretariat could support the DNAs in disseminating tools and guidance under the Convention to producers of pesticides and hazardous chemicals with a view to raising awareness about obligations under the Convention.
Academia and think-tanks	Upon request by Parties, the Secretariat could support DNAs to raise awareness of academia and think-tanks about the tools and guidance under the Convention and also to engage with them to provide a full range of monitoring activities over the use and impact of pesticides and hazardous chemicals, suggesting and monitoring alternatives where requested and necessary.
NGOs, farmers' associations, extension agencies, trade unions, schools and other sectors of civil society	Upon request by Parties, the Secretariat could support the DNAs to disseminate tools and guidance under the Convention to NGOs and civil society.

V. Key messages

16. Crafting and delivery of a message are essential components of a communication or dissemination plan and should take into consideration the most relevant and priority issues for an audience. The following messages, as listed on table 3, have been identified as examples for this strategy, set alongside the requisite audience.

Table 3. Examples of deliverable messages for the dissemination strategy

Audience	Messages
DNAs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tools and guidance are available to DNAs and other stakeholders to support the implementation of the Rotterdam Convention. • The PIC Circular is a key implementation tool to for the operation of the PIC procedure. • Communication and information exchange between DNAs and the Secretariat is a two-way process. • The Resource Kit of the Rotterdam Convention provides a flexible, simple and interactive source of information
Other government ministries, such as health, education, agriculture, customs' and enforcement agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective national coordination is a powerful mechanism to strengthen the implementation of the Rotterdam Convention
other UN agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through their work, other entities of the UN system can have a positive multiplying effect for the successful implementation of the Convention.
Industry/private sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The pesticides' and chemicals' industries and the private sector in general can contribute to promoting innovative practices to identify alternatives to hazardous chemicals.
Academia and think-tanks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academia has a vital role to play while providing unique capability and skill-set in terms of training, collecting data, monitoring and surveillance.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scientific and evidence-based data on exposure to hazardous chemicals is essential to support decision-making in order to reduce risks to human health and environment.
NGOs, farmers' associations, extension agencies, trade unions, schools and other sectors of civil society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local stakeholders can play an important role in promoting the use of alternatives to hazardous pesticides and chemicals among smallholding farmers. Farming communities can exchange information and best practices on how to ensure the elimination of harmful farming practices, especially when it concerns child labour and forced labour.

VI. Dissemination tools, channels and activities

17. The following is a list of dissemination tools, channels and activities that may be used for the implementation of this strategy, subject to the availability of resources:

- (a) Increased interactivity of the PIC Circular to better demonstrate its structure, contents and benefits;
- (b) Webinars to be refocused and expanded and to follow a more structured programme. Training sessions to be delivered for DNAs on how to create the most effective webinars, and how to disseminate that information more effectively (such as through LinkedIn);
- (c) Resource Kit to be reconstituted, simplified and made more interactive;
- (d) Interactive Training on the Operation of the Rotterdam Convention (I.T.O.R.C.) to be re-functionalised;¹¹
- (e) Greater emphasis placed on existing digital forms of communication, such as the BRS social media, Instagram, online discussion forum on particular topics and threads;
- (f) The processes underpinning the Rotterdam Convention should be portrayed more visually, by means of infographics, 'cartoons', short videos all underpinned by key messages;
- (g) A series of best practice studies/ success stories/ testimonials from the field and individual countries, should be created and collected by the Secretariat, FAO offices and consultants, to be promoted in both written and visual form and for the purposes of both training and communications;
- (h) Encourage the deployment of educational and awareness-raising leaflets, banners and other visibility materials and forums, such as 'Town Hall' meetings, for farming communities;
- (i) Newsletter(s) to stakeholders;
- (j) A forum should be provided for more regional and sub-regional meetings, both physical (when possible) and online;
- (k) Multi-stakeholder in-country meetings or conferences could be organized and led by DNAs to raise awareness and share information on Convention procedures and obligations;
- (l) Deploying key international and regional experts to deliver training;
- (m) Collaboration with NGOs, UN agencies and other stakeholders to deliver training where value can be added;
- (n) Materials could be translated into more UN languages.

VII. Evaluation

18. The table below sets out indicators by audience/target group with the means of verification and feedback.

Table 4. List of suggested indicators as a tool to evaluate the effectiveness of the dissemination strategy.

Audience	Approach/rationale	Indicators	Verification
	The Secretariat could support DNAs in having access to all guidance and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relevant government 	Tracking table per Party of changes regarding information

¹¹ Currently not available as Adobe Flash is no longer supported.

DNAs	tools under the Convention to facilitate implementation.	personnel are well-informed about and use available guidance and tools to improve implementation.	transmitted to the Secretariat, e.g. texts of legislation, notifications of final regulatory action and import responses.
Other government ministries, such as health, education, agriculture, customs' and enforcement agencies	Approach/rationale Upon request by Parties, the Secretariat could support DNAs to engage with these sets of audiences to increase awareness about the availability of guidance and tools and their use in their areas of responsibility.	Indicators Other governmental entities and their personnel are well-informed about tools and guidance and use them in their areas of responsibility	Verification Tracking table recording information sessions.
Other UN agencies	Approach/rationale Through cooperation with other entities of the UN system, the Secretariat could have a positive multiplying effect for the successful dissemination of tools and guidance under the Convention.	Indicators Enhanced synergies through information sharing between the Secretariat and other UN entities	Verification Tracking of joint or collaborative sessions/events to disseminate information
NGOs, farmers' associations, extension agencies, trade unions, schools and other sectors of civil society	Approach/rationale Upon request by Parties, the Secretariat could support the DNAs to disseminate tools and guidance under the Convention to NGOs and civil society.	Indicators NGOs, farmers and others are well-informed about alternatives to pesticides and hazardous chemicals.	Verification <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information on safety techniques is provided. • Data on reduction in number of accidents and illnesses is provided.
Industry / private sector	Approach/rationale Upon request by Parties, the Secretariat could support the DNAs in disseminating tools and guidance under the Convention to producers of pesticides and hazardous chemicals with a view to raising awareness about obligations under the Convention	Indicators <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Industry/private sector have improved access to guidance and tools to support implementation of the Rotterdam Convention. 	Verification Tracking table recording information sessions.
Academia and think	Approach/rationale Upon request by Parties, the Secretariat could support DNAs to	Indicators Academia and think tanks are well-informed	Verification Tracking table with type and level of engagement with

tanks	raise awareness of academia and thin-tanks about the tools and guidance under the Convention and also to engage with them to provide a full range of monitoring activities over the use and impact of pesticides and hazardous chemicals, suggesting and monitoring alternatives where requested and necessary.	of the Convention and engage with Parties in activities to support its implementation	academia and think tanks.
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