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**Conference of the Parties of the Stockholm  
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Item 5 (f) of the provisional agenda\*

**Matters for consideration or action by the Conference of the Parties:  
information exchange**

**Revised draft of a strategic plan for establishing procedures for  
the operation of the clearing-house mechanism under the  
Stockholm Convention\*\***

**Note by the Secretariat**

As referred to in the note by the Secretariat on the clearing-house mechanism for information exchange on persistent organic pollutants contained in document UNEP/POPS/COP.3/13, the annex to the present note contains a revised draft, prepared by the Secretariat, of a strategic plan for establishing procedures for the operation of the clearing-house mechanism under the Stockholm Convention. The draft is for consideration and possible endorsement by the Conference of the Parties as a framework for the further development of the clearing-house mechanism. The annex has not been formally edited.

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\* UNEP/POPS/COP.3/1.

\*\* Stockholm Convention, Article 9; report of the Conference of the Parties on the work of its second meeting (UNEP/POPS/COP.2/30), annex I, decision SC-2/17.

## Annex

### Revised draft of a strategic plan for establishing procedures for the operation of the clearing-house mechanism under the Stockholm Convention

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## **I. Situational analysis**

### **A. Background and mandates**

1. Paragraph 4 of Article 9 of the Convention states: “The Secretariat shall serve as a clearing-house mechanism for information on persistent organic pollutants, including information provided by Parties, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations.” Article 9 also defines different groups of information providers, including Parties, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations.
2. Pursuant to Article 20 of the Convention, the Secretariat needs to undertake, among other things, the following information-exchange activities:
  - (a) To make available information relevant to meetings and conferences;
  - (b) To provide the information that might be required to facilitate assistance to the Parties in the implementation of the Convention;
  - (c) To coordinate information-exchange activities with the secretariats of other multilateral environmental agreements and relevant international bodies;
  - (d) To collect and re-package data, reports, evaluations and other information as information products and undertake their dissemination;
  - (e) To perform any other information-exchange function as may be assigned to it by the Conference of the Parties.
3. At its seventh session, the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for an International Legally Binding Instrument for Implementing International Action on Certain Persistent Organic Pollutants noted the important function that an effective clearing-house mechanism for information exchange would have on the successful implementation of the Convention. It also noted the importance of providing funds for a dedicated staff member to work on the clearing-house mechanism beginning in 2005 and requested the Secretariat to prepare a detailed workplan for the initiation and maintenance of such a mechanism.
4. The Secretariat prepared and presented for comments to the Conference of the Parties, at its second meeting, the first draft of a strategic plan for establishing procedures for the operation of the clearing-house mechanism. The Secretariat has collected and taken into account comments from Governments on the first draft at the request of the Conference of the Parties.
5. The present draft strategic plan has been prepared by the Secretariat as a discussion document with the aim of providing a framework to guide the further development of the mechanism.

### **B. Other guidance**

6. Countries’ submissions in response to the request for comments by the Negotiating Committee at its sixth session in relation to the design, development, operation and scope of the clearing-house mechanism,<sup>1</sup> as well as discussions and interventions at the Negotiating Committee’s sixth and seventh sessions, provide further guidance for the development of procedures for the operation of the mechanism. The Secretariat’s analysis of Parties’ information-exchange needs, based on those submissions and discussions, is contained in document UNEP/POPS/COP.3/INF/1. Some common suggestions can be identified, including that the mechanism should:
  - (a) Be cost-effective and have a reasonable budget and be implemented in a phased manner, with the Conference of the Parties guiding the process and approving each phase and budget;
  - (b) Provide the means to identify and address the lack of specific information in several areas; the need for mechanisms to identify further information needs should be addressed;
  - (c) Take into account the need to focus on issues related to the provision of technical and financial assistance; the information provided by the mechanism should aim at the provision of technical and financial assistance;

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<sup>1</sup> The submissions are contained in document UNEP/POPS/INC.7/INF/16.

(d) Take into account and integrate information acquired through feasibility and case studies on regional and subregional centres;

(e) Address the need to ensure the availability of information in the six official languages of the United Nations;

(f) Provide methods for selecting countries for case studies related to the clearing-house; elaboration of selection criteria for case studies related to the mechanism;

(g) Take into account the importance of searching for synergies and efficiencies by coordinating with and linking to related initiatives.

7. In preparing the revised draft strategic plan for establishing procedures for the operation of the clearing-house mechanism, the Secretariat has:

(a) Reviewed mandates from the Conference of the Parties and guidance from Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee meetings;

(b) Conducted a SWOT<sup>2</sup> analysis of the Secretariat situation, evaluating its strengths and weaknesses and the opportunities and threats that it faces in developing and undertaking a leading role for information exchange on persistent organic pollutants (POPs). The analysis is presented in document UNEP/POPS/COP.3/INF/10.

(c) Studied how clearing-house mechanisms have been developed under other environmental conventions.

(d) Taken into account the comments provided by Parties on the draft strategic plan, in response to requests from the Conference of the Parties at its second session.

## **II. Mission**

8. The clearing-house mechanism shall facilitate or undertake the collection, management, distribution and exchange of information on POPs to enable Parties to make sound decisions on POPs, including the promotion of communication and exchange of sound measures and valuable experiences, in the implementation of the Convention.

## **III. Vision**

9. The aim is to develop a global clearing-house mechanism that empowers stakeholders and users with the means to contribute and access up-to-date, quality information necessary to make sound decisions on POPs and to implement the Stockholm Convention, in a transparent, neutral, efficient and user-friendly manner.

10. The clearing-house mechanism will provide Parties, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders with the means and capacity to contribute valuable information on POPs that is easily channelled and incorporated into the mechanism. The information will be validated, re-packaged and integrated, translated if necessary, processed and made accessible to different user groups in a user-friendly format by means of information products and services. Other multilateral environmental agreements and information exchange initiatives will profit from and contribute to the mechanism; cooperation and coordination will be enhanced, resulting in the further development of synergies.

11. The clearing-house mechanism will embrace all traditional, scientific and technological ways and means of transmitting information, including paper-based, electronic components and internet-based tools. It will operate as a global, open and transparent network. It will take a proactive and collaborative approach to identifying, prioritizing and meeting the information needs of its wide range of users.<sup>3</sup> In so doing, it shall, under guidance from the Conference of the Parties, be responsive in meeting the evolving needs of its stakeholders and users and contribute to achieving the broader objectives of the Convention.

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<sup>2</sup> SWOT stands for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

<sup>3</sup> This will include developed and developing countries, governmental and non-governmental organizations, scientific establishments, businesses and other private organizations, civil society and communications media.

## IV. Goals

12. In order to achieve the above mission, two major areas of work need to be developed and integrated. The first is related to the **information content** itself and the **means and tools** to collect, manage, process and re-distribute it. The second is linked to the **network of people and institutions** that will provide and use the information.

13. The two strategic goals set out below will guide the work to be undertaken in these areas towards the achievement of the clearing-house mechanism mission and vision.

### A. **First goal: Establishment of infrastructure and procedures to facilitate identification, integration and exchange of information and the creation of a global knowledge base on POPs.**

#### 1. **Focus**

14. The focus of this goal is content and information flow on a global scale. The purpose is to facilitate the identification and integration of information content and the sources of the information and to facilitate information exchange. The driving forces include Convention requirements, mandates from the Conference of the Parties and stakeholder and user needs.

15. This goal involves providing improved and integrated access to existing information sources, identifying information gaps and fostering the establishment and development of new information sources accordingly; and promoting and catalyzing the exchange of information, knowledge, experience and best practices.

16. Set out below are measurable objectives for guiding and evaluating progress towards this goal, strategies for achieving those objectives and corresponding roles and responsibilities.

#### 2. **Objectives**

17. The objectives set out below reflect desired growth in seven necessary and complementary areas of action:

##### (a) **Value added**

18. The objective is to improve steadily the value of information available through the clearing-house mechanism for achieving the goals of the Convention.

19. Possible performance indicators include the number and percentage of surveyed users perceiving improvement in the value of the information, the number of information gaps identified and addressed and the number of new information sources established and integrated into the mechanism.

##### (b) **Use**

20. The objective is to achieve continuous expansion in the use made of clearing-house mechanism information products and services by diverse user groups, including use and provision of information.

21. Possible performance indicators include the number of providers and users of the clearing-house mechanism, the number of information products and services and the number of different user groups using the mechanism.

##### (c) **Quality**

22. The objective is to improve steadily the overall quality of clearing-house mechanism information, products and services and the ability of users to assess the quality of specific information.

23. Possible performance indicators include the number and percentage of surveyed users perceiving improvement in the quality of clearing-house mechanism information, products and services and the amount of quality-related feedback received.

##### (d) **Speed and facility**

24. The objective is to enhance progressively the speed and facility of clearing-house mechanism transactions, including the ability of users to contribute, locate and retrieve desired information.

25. Possible performance indicators include the number and percentage of surveyed users perceiving improvement in the speed and facility of clearing-house mechanism transactions, the number and percentage of successes in contributing, locating and retrieving desired information and the number of information products and services, user applications and features available.

**(e) User needs responsiveness**

26. The objective is to improve continuously the ability of users to articulate individual and collective information needs and of the clearing-house mechanism to meet those needs in a timely manner.

27. Possible performance indicators include the number and percentage of surveyed users perceiving improvement in the timeliness of the clearing-house mechanism in meeting their information needs and the number of individual and collective information requests received.

**(f) Integration**

28. The objective is to achieve steady growth in the helpfulness of the clearing-house mechanism for enabling comparisons between data and in providing summaries and syntheses of resulting information.

29. Possible performance indicators include the number and percentage of surveyed users perceiving improvement in the helpfulness of the clearing-house mechanism for enabling data comparison and providing summaries and syntheses and the number of features and services in the mechanism allowing for the comparison, aggregation and segregation of information.

**(g) Volume**

30. The objective is to expand progressively the amount of POPs information referenced or directly accessible via the clearing-house mechanism in key areas of interest and focus (e.g., national reports; legislation and policies; scientific, technical and thematic issues, etc.) and from diverse sources.

31. Possible performance indicators include the number of documents, reports, articles, etc. available per category, the number of information sources covered and the number and size of websites, databases, publications, etc.

**3. Strategies**

32. The objectives relating to the first goal will be achieved through five strategies, which are described below. Information on building the information networks themselves is provided in the section of the document dealing with the second goal.

**(a) Ensuring compatibility through standardization and interoperability**

33. The strategy involves providing and achieving acceptance of tools, guidelines, protocols and standards for promoting the compatibility of information content and network structure and processes, and can be achieved by:

- (a) Monitoring and facilitating the progress of appropriate standards organizations;
- (b) Coordinating with related initiatives (e.g., CIEN, INFOCAP, pollutant release and transfer registers, etc.) For example, attend their meetings and convene joint meetings;
- (c) Identifying areas where information and infrastructure compatibility are necessary, while keeping standardization requirements to a minimum;
- (d) Identifying best practices, standards and protocols regarding:
  - Clearing-house mechanism website formats, topic areas and terminologies,
  - Quality and reliability of information and methods for enabling users to assess them;
  - Information sharing protocols;
  - Indexing and searching protocols (including the use of metadata);
- (e) Documenting standards and protocols to provide clear guidance and guidelines for countries and organizations creating or expanding their own applications within the POPs clearing-house mechanism;

(f) Developing criteria and procedures for the full involvement of other POPs actors, such as international businesses and non-profit organizations, as thematic focal points or partners;

(g) Ensuring, where feasible, the use of standard protocols and formats for efficient data exchange between systems (e.g. Z39.50, web services, XML etc.);

(h) Regularly updating and enhancing the user guide for building applications for the clearing-house mechanism, associated training, and related compatibility and interoperability checklists.

**(b) Tracking information needs, priorities and best practices**

34. The strategy involves tracking gaps in information and expertise and national needs, priorities, best practices and lessons learned, on an ongoing basis. This can be achieved by developing and using multiple vehicles for enabling users to articulate individual and collective information needs and priorities, including national reports, user surveys, user requests and complaints, workshops and user conferences.

**(c) Prioritizing and promoting expansion**

35. The strategy involves identifying priorities for clearing-house mechanism growth and improvement based on user needs and strategic considerations, and promoting expansion accordingly. Measures to undertake this include:

(a) Coordinating with related initiatives at all levels, for example by attending their meetings and convening common meetings;

(b) Using funding to promote country involvement, partnering and progress in priority areas;

(c) During the periods between meetings of the Conference of the Parties, focusing information expansion and synthesis on issues and topics to be covered at upcoming meetings;

(d) Prioritizing information expansion and synthesis for chemicals that are under consideration for inclusion in the Convention pursuant to Article 8 of the Convention.

**(d) Providing open, worldwide access to existing POPs information**

36. The strategy involves engaging national focal points and other actors in providing access through the clearing-house mechanism to existing information within their countries.

**(e) Rationalizing and customizing**

37. The strategy involves developing and using the right tool for the right task and for the right target audience. This can be achieved by:

(a) Performing analysis and research to identify the most effective tool for each task (related to information technology or not). Give preference to existing tools over developing new ones, where appropriate;

(b) Using document-based systems for small volumes and heterogeneous information (information which is not standard and not easily integrated);

(c) Using database systems for larger volumes and more standard types of information requiring the performance of repetitive tasks (structure and format must be defined);

(d) Using the internet and other electronic means of data transfer where feasible, thereby minimizing the use of paper-based data transfers;

(e) Using specialized expertise for complex information analysis and using partnerships with universities and non-profit organizations for less complex tasks where use of information technology is not feasible;

(f) Using the internet for information dissemination where feasible, using CD-ROMs, paper and other media where internet use is not feasible and using the right dissemination media for the right target audience.

#### 4. Relationship between strategies and objectives

38. The relationship between strategies and objectives is shown in the table below. To facilitate evaluation, baseline measurements for each objective will be developed during the implementation of the first phase and will be incorporated into the present document.

Strategy	Objective						
	Value added	Use	Quality	Facility	Responsiveness	Integration	Volume
Ensuring compatibility through standardization and interoperability		Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes
Tracking information needs, priorities and best practices	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Prioritizing and promoting expansion	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Providing open, world-wide access to existing information on POPs	Yes	Yes		Yes			Yes
Rationalizing and customizing		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

#### 5. Roles and responsibilities

39. The strategies outlined above would be implemented through workplans carried out by key players of the Convention. As these key players and their roles and responsibilities are not fully defined at the present stage, the Secretariat has conducted a preliminary assessment and has identified the following groups of key players and outlined their possible involvement in the implementation of these strategies:

- (a) Conference of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies (COP and SBs);
- (b) Secretariat and Conference Services (SSC and CS);
- (c) Parties to the Conventions (through official contact points<sup>4</sup> and national focal points<sup>5</sup>);
- (d) States non-Parties (through official contact points);
- (e) Environmental non-governmental organizations (E-NGOs);
- (f) Industry and private sector associations;
- (g) UNEP and multilateral environmental agreements (including information exchange initiatives like CIEN, INFOCAP, pollutant release and transfer registers, etc.);
- (h) United Nations bodies and specialized agencies (UN and SAs);
- (i) Funding agencies and mechanisms and other donors (FAs, donors);
- (j) Researchers, universities and related initiatives;
- (k) Regional centres and other information centres on POPs (RCs).

40. The possible involvement of the above-mentioned groups of actors in the implementation of the strategies is outlined in the table below. A more detailed definition of the roles and responsibilities of these actors is envisaged during the implementation of the first phase of the clearing-house mechanism.

<sup>4</sup> Report of the Conference of the Parties on the work of its second meeting (UNEP/POPS/COP.2/30), annex I, decision SC-2/16.

<sup>5</sup> Stockholm Convention, Article 9, paragraph 3.



Strategy	Key actors and their possible involvement in the implementation of the strategies										
	COP, SBs	SSC, CS	Parties	non-Parties	E-NGOs	Industry	UNEP, MEAs	UN, SAs	FAs, donors	Resear chers	RCs
Ensuring compatibility through standardization and interoperability	Yes	Yes	Yes				Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes
Tracking information needs, priorities and best practices		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes				Yes
Prioritizing and promoting expansion	Yes	Yes					Yes		Yes		
Providing open, world-wide access to existing information on POPs		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Rationalizing and customizing	Yes	Yes	Yes				Yes		Yes		Yes

**B. Second goal: Establishment of the clearing-house mechanism global network of information providers, users and institutions, having the common needs of sharing information and expertise on POPs**

**6. Focus**

41. The focus of this goal is to identify the components of the network for information exchange, including the information providers, users, Secretariat and Conference of the Parties. The purpose is to develop a framework for efficient interaction among those involved in POPs information exchange, to promote the clearing-house mechanism and its use, and to foster international cooperation for information exchange on POPs. The driving forces include Convention obligations, POPs-related pollution and health problems, the promotion of alternatives and alternative approaches, opportunities for research and development, synergies, funding and other common needs and interests.

42. This goal involves, among other things: identifying and enrolling network members; defining member groups, establishing their profiles, roles and responsibilities; identifying partner institutions and developing necessary agreements; conducting clearing-house mechanism awareness raising and capacity-building activities.

43. Set out below are measurable objectives for guiding and evaluating progress towards this goal; strategies for achieving those objectives; and corresponding roles and responsibilities.

**7. Objectives**

44. The objectives set out below reflect desired growth in four necessary and complementary areas of action towards the establishment of the clearing-house mechanism global network:

**(a) Network membership and enrolment**

45. The objective is to involve a critical mass of members in the network and to expand progressively the network membership across countries, regions, and institutions, including intergovernmental and non- governmental organizations and cross-sectoral thematic focal points. The focus is on populating a comprehensive, global, selective but non-discriminatory, multi-sectoral network and the outputs include terms of reference for providers and users, lists of user groups, providers and experts, indicating their expertise, user profiles and provider profiles.

46. Possible performance indicators include the number of Parties having designated national focal points, the number of network members by region, the number and percentage of network members by categories and the number and percentage of network members by social and economic sectors.

**(b) Member responsiveness**

47. The objective is to increase and steadily improve the capacity of network members to articulate information needs and agree on priorities, share experiences and expertise leading to a comprehensive global dialogue for information exchange on POPs. The focus is on the commitment of network members and their active participation and outputs include member contributions.

48. Possible performance indicators include the total number of individual contributions by network members, such as **information on POPs, information needs, priorities, experiences, expertise and feedback**, the total number of collective contributions by network members, comparative geographical coverage of contributions received and comparative social and economic coverage of contributions received.

**(c) Awareness and use of the clearing-house mechanism**

49. The objective is to increase steadily awareness of the capabilities and benefits of the clearing-house mechanism and progressive expansion in the use made of the information and services available under the clearing-house mechanism. The focus is on marketing the clearing-house mechanism and its use and outputs include promotional events and materials.

50. Possible performance indicators include the number of individuals and groups receiving information on clearing-house mechanism products and services, the number of promotional materials and events, the number of requests received for information or information products and the amount of website traffic per month or season.

**(d) Collaboration**

51. The objective is to develop and steadily improve collaboration with multilateral environmental agreements, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and funding agencies in support of information exchange initiatives. The focus is on the development of synergies and partnerships and outputs include partnerships and agreements.

52. Possible performance indicators include the number of partner organizations, the number of partnerships and collaboration agreements and the number of joint projects.

**8. Strategies**

53. The above objectives will be achieved through six strategies, as described below.

**(a) Concentrating on key actors**

54. To ensure an effective and efficient use of resources, the strategy involves maximizing on results while economizing on resources by identifying leverage points on which to focus efforts, in other words, it is important to concentrate initially on key actors with potential to have a major impact on the implementation of the Convention. This can be achieved by:

(a) Identifying and involving members and partners capable of producing a domino effect for POPs knowledge, action and funding;

(b) Establishing official contact points and national focal points for the exchange of information on POPs, pursuant to paragraph 3 of Article 9 of the Convention;

(c) Identifying key actors whose decisions may have greater impact on the objectives of the Convention and developing target marketing for them;

(d) Addressing marketing efforts on target actors and highlighting specific benefits for a specific target sector;

(e) Identifying champions of information exchange;

(f) Creating partnerships with existing networks to expand the POPs network;

(g) Creating partnerships with existing information exchange related initiatives (CIEN, INFOCAP, pollutant release and transfer registers, etc.);

(h) Using the strengths of partners and members to promote the clearing-house mechanism networks;

(i) Promoting the clearing-house mechanism at conferences, workshops and other events.

**(b) Grouping actors according to their affinities and promoting their interlinkages**

55. The strategy involves considering multi-disciplinary and multi-sectoral approaches in addition to thematic or like-minded groups to avoid compartmentalization and to stimulate creativity and innovation. This can be achieved by:

(a) Identifying as comprehensively as possible the member categories, including providers, user groups and domain experts;

(b) Developing a framework for efficient interaction with network members and developing and communicating the roles and responsibilities of each group;

(c) Establishing membership and user categories, such as national focal points, intergovernmental organization focal points, non-governmental organization focal points, thematic focal points and groups such as information providers, users, experts, information owners and managers;

(d) Fostering teamwork capabilities and establishing a solid base to develop a network that works collaboratively to achieve the clearing-house mechanism goals, for example tools for virtual meetings, video conferences, discussion forums, web logs, etc., could be developed to strengthen links between network members at low costs.

**(c) Fostering joint endeavours to develop synergies and avoid duplication of efforts**

56. The strategy involves mentoring and learning between network members to profit from the network knowledge base to strengthen its capacity. This can be achieved, for example, by developing e-learning tools and databases of experts.

**(d) Relying on partnerships and focusing on facilitation**

57. The strategy involves relying on partnerships and focusing on facilitation, by:

(a) Concentrating on facilitating, encouraging and promoting;

(b) Engaging a wide range of POPs stakeholders to pool resources and share work, including promotion of the clearing-house mechanism;

(c) Contributing to partners' POPs-related activities through joint endeavours.

**(e) Nurturing membership and partnership**

58. The strategy involves nurturing membership and partnership, by:

(a) Clarifying and communicating roles and responsibilities;

(b) Ensuring satisfaction;

(c) Rewarding valuable contributions and initiatives;

(d) Developing good communication at all levels, organizing and improving communication resources between the Secretariat and network members and among network members and developing communication mechanisms to ensure global participation, including areas with poor or no internet connection.

**(f) Promoting use of the clearing-house mechanism**

59. The strategy involves promoting awareness, understanding, use and expansion of the clearing-house mechanism through communication and education activities.

**9. Relationship between strategies and objectives**

60. The relationship between strategies and objectives is shown in the table below. To facilitate evaluation, baseline measurements for each objective will be developed during the implementation of the first phase and will be incorporated into the present document.

Strategy	Objective			
	Membership and enrolment	Member responsiveness	Awareness and use	Collaboration
Concentrating on key actors	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Grouping actors according to their affinities and promoting interlinkages	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Fostering joint endeavours to develop synergies and avoid duplications		Yes		Yes
Relying on partnerships and focusing on facilitation		Yes	Yes	Yes
Nurturing membership and partnership	Yes	Yes		Yes
Promoting use of the clearing-house mechanism	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

**10. Roles and responsibilities**

61. As this goal consists of the development of the network per se, the Secretariat plays a key role in the implementation of the above strategies. However, other actors may also play important roles as proposed in the table below.

Strategy	Key actors and their possible involvement in the implementation of the strategies										
	COPs, SBs	SSC, CS	Parties	non-Parties	E-NGOs	Industry	UNEP, MEAs	UN, SAs	FAs, donors	Resear chers	RCs
Concentrating on key actors	O	L	C, P	C	C		C	C			C
Grouping actors according to their affinities and promoting interlinkages	O	L	C				P		F		P
Fostering joint endeavours to develop synergies and avoid duplications	O	L	L	C	C	C	L	C	C, F	C	L
Relying on partnerships and focusing on facilitation	C	L	C								C
Nurturing membership and partnership	C	L	C	C	C	C	C, P	C	C, F	C	C, P
Promoting use of the clearing-house mechanism	O, C	L	C	C	C	C	C	C	F	C	C, P

L: Leading, O: Overseeing, F: Funding, P: Promoting, C: Contributing

## V. Clearing-house mechanism: concept, implementation and management approach

### A. Definitions

62. For the purposes of the present document, the following definitions apply:

(a) **Cycle:** One cycle is understood to mean one full rotation throughout the stages set out in figure 1 below. One clearing-house mechanism cycle covers two calendar years, coinciding with the Convention budget cycle;

(b) **Phase:** One phase of clearing-house mechanism implementation and operation covers two clearing-house mechanism cycles;

(c) **Pilot phase:** The pilot phase is a special start-up phase that will cover only one clearing-house mechanism cycle and will serve as a test bed for the concept illustrated in figure 1;

(d) **Network members:** The term “network members” is understood to mean the people and institutions formally exchanging information under the POPs clearing-house mechanism.

### B. Concept

63. The POPs clearing-house mechanism is a multi-stakeholder global mechanism set up and operated by the Stockholm Convention Secretariat under the guidance and oversight of Parties, to facilitate the exchange of information on POPs. Its three major components are:

(a) **Information capital:** The content of information exchanged by the clearing-house mechanism network members. It consists primarily of information on POPs, but may include some additional information as decided by Parties.

(b) **Human capital:** The global network of information providers, users and institutions working to implement the Stockholm Convention and formally contributing to and using the clearing-house mechanism.

(c) **Operational capital:** a set of information tools, products and services, and the necessary processes and resources to design, implement, operate and further enhance them.

64. The proposed clearing-house mechanism concept, implementation and management approach is illustrated in figure 1 below. The implementation and management process will follow a phased approach, with each phase consisting of two cycles. Each cycle consists of three stages:

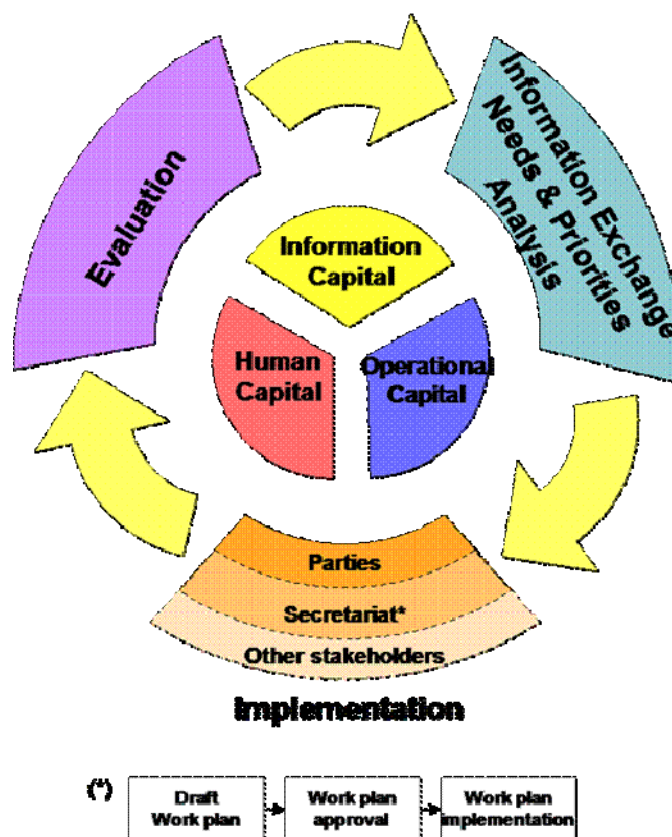
(a) Information exchange needs and priority analysis;

(b) Implementation;

(c) Evaluation.

65. Each cycle aims to increase the usefulness of the clearing-house mechanism for the implementation of the Convention through a steady improvement of its performance.

**Figure 1: clearing-house mechanism concept, implementation and management approach**



## C. Analysis, implementation and evaluation cycle

### 1. Information exchange needs and priority analysis

66. Every four years, at the initiation of a phase, the Secretariat, in consultation with Parties, will analyse the information exchange needs and priorities. This analysis will be presented for consideration at the next meeting of the Conference of the Parties. Parties will have the opportunity to adjust those needs and priorities after two years, at the end of the first cycle.

### 2. Implementation

67. On the basis of the above-mentioned analysis, the Secretariat will develop a draft workplan and budget for the first cycle and an indicative workplan and budget for the second cycle, and present it to the Conference of the Parties for consideration and approval. The indicative workplan and budget will be adjusted at the end of the first cycle on the basis of the results of the mid-term evaluation and any new priorities that the Parties may have identified.

### 3. Evaluation

68. The evaluation will be conducted through two main mechanisms: a survey-based mid-term evaluation, performed during the first cycle, and a major evaluation, performed during the second cycle. The results of those evaluations will be presented to the Conference of the Parties for its consideration.

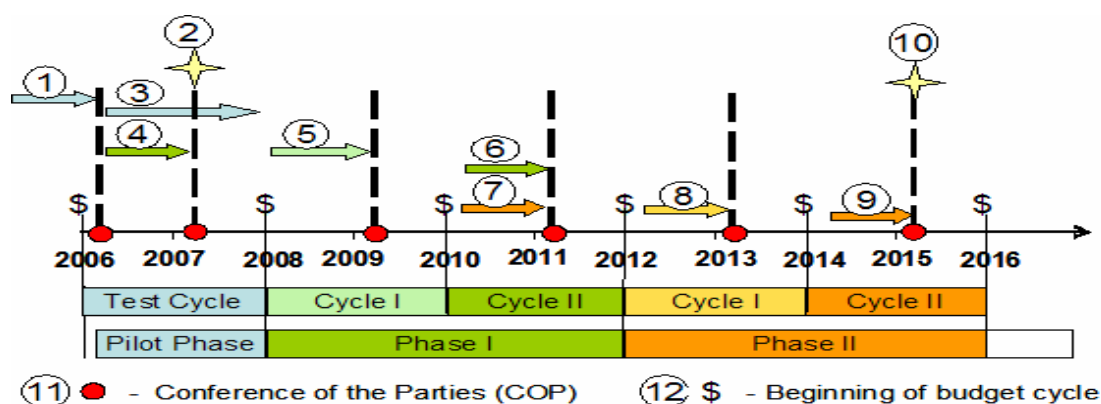
69. The mid-term evaluation is performed with the purpose of reporting progress to the Conference of the Parties and to determine any adjustments that might be required to the workplans and budget for the second cycle.

70. Major evaluations of the clearing-house mechanism may be conducted by an external entity and are aimed at taking stock of progress and assessing the need to enhance the clearing-house mechanism further.

#### 4. Timeframe

71. Figure 2 below describes the proposed schedule for the clearing-house mechanism phases, cycles and evaluations.

**Figure 2: Proposed schedule for the clearing-house mechanism**



1. **Pilot phase:** Workplan and budget.
2. Endorsement of the clearing-house mechanism strategic plan by the Conference of the Parties at its third meeting.
3. Baseline evaluation.
4. **Phase I:** Needs and priorities analysis, workplan and budget for first cycle, indicative workplan and budget for second cycle.
5. **Phase I:** Clearing-house mechanism mid-term evaluation, adjustments to the priorities, workplan and budget for second cycle.
6. **Phase I:** Clearing-house mechanism major evaluation.
7. **Phase II:** Needs and priorities analysis, workplan and budget for first cycle, indicative workplan and budget for second cycle.
8. **Phase II:** Clearing-house mechanism mid-term evaluation, adjustments to the priorities, workplan and budget for second cycle.
9. **Phase II:** Clearing-house mechanism major evaluation.
10. Decision on the need for a new clearing-house mechanism strategic plan.

## VI. Performance indicators

72. To conduct the evaluations, the Secretariat has developed a series of performance indicators aimed at measuring the performance for each of the established objectives outlined in chapter IV above. Examples of these performance indicators are presented in document UNEP/POPS/COP.3/INF/10.

73. Performance indicators are revised at the beginning of each phase and during the evaluation. The final evaluation for each objective is based on an analysis of indicators and on an expert judgement of the success of each of the objectives outlined in chapter IV above.

## VII. Funding issues

74. It is proposed that funding be organized on a project-by-project basis. The workplans developed by the Secretariat at the beginning of each phase would cover only the Secretariat side of the clearing-house mechanism. Any national or regional information exchange projects would require separate funding.