



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

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

Second meeting

Rome, 19–21 March 2024 and Online, 30 September 2024

Item 5 (f) of the agenda

Review of systemic issues of general compliance: information submission

Information submission: Improve timely and complete submission of information pursuant to the provisions of the Convention¹

Note by the Secretariat

I. Introduction

1. Decision RC-10/11 adopted the programme of work of the Compliance Committee of the Rotterdam Convention for the biennium 2022–2023. This included, among other activities under the review of systemic issues of general compliance, monitoring the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework processes with a view to assessing the extent to which Parties with information submission needs are including actions to address them in their Cooperation Framework, identifying best practices and, on the basis of this assessment, developing recommendations for consideration by the Conference of the Parties at its eleventh meeting. This was to be undertaken in cooperation, as appropriate, with the Committee Administering the Mechanism for Promoting Implementation and Compliance of the Basel Convention (the “Basel Convention Committee”).

2. Similarly, the Basel Convention Committee was mandated, by decision BC-14/16 of the Conference of the Parties to that Convention, to monitor the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework processes, in cooperation, as appropriate, with the Rotterdam Convention Committee, with a view to assessing the extent to which Parties to the Basel Convention with national reporting needs are including actions to address them in their Cooperation Framework, identifying best practices and, on the basis of the assessment, develop recommendations for the consideration of Conference of the Parties.

3. Pursuant to its mandate to explore the possibilities for enhancing coordination with the Basel Convention Committee to facilitate compliance, as set out in its programme of work for 2022–2023, the Rotterdam Convention Compliance Committee held its first meeting (16–18 November 2022) back to back with the fifteenth meeting of that Committee (14–17 November 2022) with joint sessions between both Committees on issues of common interest, including the issue of information submission.²

¹ This document has not been formally edited.

² Rotterdam Convention Compliance Committee meeting agenda item 5 (e) Review of systemic issues of general compliance: Information submission; Basel Convention Committee agenda item 5 (a) (iii) National reporting:

4. During that meeting and in joint sessions, the Committee considered the information contained in document UNEP/FAO/RC/CC.1/7, which included a draft questionnaire to collect information from Parties, Resident Coordinators and relevant members of United Nations (UN) country teams with a view to assessing the extent to which Parties with information submission needs are including actions to address them in their cooperation framework, mirroring a questionnaire before the Basel Convention Committee. Following consideration of the subitem, the Rotterdam Committee noted that although the activity was included in its programme of work, this did not require a questionnaire be circulated. Instead, the Committee expressed its interest in monitoring developments and requested the Secretariat to explore the possibility of having an explanatory presentation at its second meeting. For its part, the Basel Convention Committee agreed to proceed with questionnaires to be circulated to Parties, Resident Coordinators and UN country teams with an invitation to provide information with respect to their experience with cooperation framework processes and national reporting under the Basel Convention. That Committee also requested the Secretariat to bring the questionnaire to the attention of other relevant entities of the United Nations system, such as the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

5. Subsequently, by decision RC-11/5, the Conference of the Parties provided a further mandate within the programme of work of the Committee for the biennium 2024–2025 set out in the annex to that decision. This included monitoring developments related to the integration by Parties of their information submission needs in actions to address the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks, in particular interlinkages with and the relation to the Rotterdam Convention.

6. Decision BC-16/14 adopted at the sixteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention also mandated further activities by the Basel Convention Committee. Two activities within the work programme for the biennium 2024–2025 for that committee refer to the Cooperation Framework processes:

(a) To improve national reporting: In cooperation with the Rotterdam Convention Compliance Committee, the Basel Convention Committee is to monitor United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework processes with a view to assessing the extent to which Parties with national reporting needs are including actions to address them in their cooperation frameworks, identifying best practices and, on the basis of the assessment, develop recommendations for consideration of the Conference of the Parties to that Convention; and

(b) To improve overall implementation of the Basel Convention: The Basel Convention Committee has been mandated to provide guidance, including through consultation with the Open-ended Working Group, for consideration by the Conference of the Parties to that Convention at its seventeenth meeting in 2025, on how individual Parties can integrate action to address their needs under the Basel Convention into their United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks.

7. At the face-to-face sessions of its second meeting (Rome, 19–21 March 2024), the Committee adopted decision CC-2/7 on information submission. The Committee agreed to continue monitoring in the intersessional period prior to the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties the activities of the Committee Administering the Mechanism for Promoting Implementation and Compliance of the Basel Convention, the United Nations Environment Programme, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, and other relevant entities of the United Nations system related to the integration by Parties of their information submission needs in actions to address them in the Cooperation Frameworks. The Committee also invited the Basel Convention Committee to share with the Rotterdam Convention Committee the outcomes of the questionnaires circulated to Resident Coordinators and United Nations country teams, and to Parties with respect to their experience with Cooperation Framework processes.

8. Subsequently, at the face-to-face sessions of its sixteenth meeting (Geneva, 23–24 June and 29 June–2 July 2024), the Basel Convention Committee agreed, among other things, to share the outcomes of the abovementioned questionnaires, as well as the outcomes of its meeting related to the integration of actions to address national reporting needs into the Cooperation Framework processes.

Integration in United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks on the agenda of the fifteenth meeting of the Basel Convention Implementation and Compliance Committee.

II. Implementation

A. United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks: Explanatory presentation

9. An explanatory presentation on the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks was provided to the Committee at the face-to-face sessions of its second meeting, as requested at the first meeting.

B. Developments related to the integration by Parties of their information submission needs in actions to address them in the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks

10. UNEP, FAO and, as relevant, multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) are working towards better integration of the climate, nature, and pollution domains across the UN system, including improved recognition of the role of the MEAs in the reformed United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework.

11. The Cooperation Framework is the primary instrument for planning and implementation of the United Nations development system's support to national and regional sustainable development goal priorities, informed by public, UN-led Common Country Analyses (CCA).

12. The Cooperation Framework is a vehicle for supporting economic transformation, offering options to reframe economic policies and practices around sustainability for inclusive, diversified and job-intensive economic transformation that advances the rights and well-being of all citizens, strengthens economies and protects the planet.³

13. The FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31 places the 2030 Agenda at its centre and uses key SDGs and their indicators to promote focus and track progress. FAO's contributions relate to all SDGs, and are guided by the lens of SDG 1, SDG 2, and SDG 10. FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31 embraces the five basic principles that feed into all SDGs – the 'five Ps': people, planet, prosperity, peace, and partnership.

14. Within this context, the FAO is a key player leading various activities related to sustainable food systems. At the country level, FAO is a major contributor to the reinvigorated Resident Coordinator system and delivers integrated actions and robust policy advice to countries in collaboration with UN Country Teams. Leveraging the planning and programming instruments provided by the UN Development System reform, the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework and UN Common Country Analyses, FAO prioritizes and integrates food security and agrifood systems transformation as part of the overall UN support to national governments.

15. As antimicrobial resistance (AMR) hinders progress in many of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), coordinated action across UN organizations and government agencies is needed to effectively tackle AMR across all sectors. FAO, together with WHO and OIE has developed a guidance⁴ for UN country teams, building the case for AMR as a development issue and component of broader issues such as One Health, universal health coverage (UHC) and health security, food systems and planetary health. It aims to establish AMR as a higher priority on the policy and development agenda; stimulate multi-stakeholder interest; and attract funding.

16. Pursuant to reviews undertaken by UNEP, the environment has remained weakly represented in the CCAs, limiting its uptake in solutions, although this has improved from 2022 to 2023 as illustrated in Figure 1.

³ <https://unsdg.un.org/2030-agenda/cooperation-framework>.

⁴ World Health Organization (WHO), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), 2021: Antimicrobial resistance and the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework: guidance for United Nations country teams.

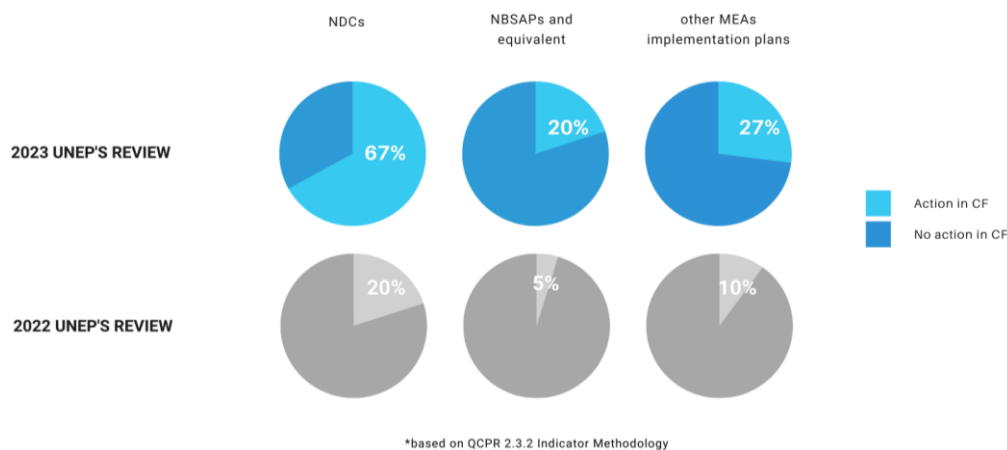


Figure 1: An analysis of environmental representation in Common Country Analyses and Cooperation Frameworks (2022 and 2023 UNEP CCAC-CF review). NDC- Nationally Determined Contribution (under the Paris Agreement); NBSAP – National biodiversity strategy and action plan.

17. UN country teams and UN multi-country teams can play a key role in the delivery of the objectives of MEAs across the multiple development areas that each individual agency deals with at national and transboundary levels. UNEP has also been working together with the MEAs to enhance their visibility in the Cooperation Framework to support their engagement with national focal points of the MEAs and with the MEA secretariats. Collectively, these efforts are intended to strengthen support to Parties for the implementation of the MEAs, including their integration across national development policy and planning.

18. In 2022 and 2023, UNEP reviewed a sample of Cooperation Frameworks developed by countries. In July 2022, UNEP undertook an assessment of how the triple planetary crisis is being tackled through CCAs and Cooperation Frameworks. The overall conclusion was that the integration of environmental concerns in the CCAs remains superficial, thereby limiting their influence on the solutions and measures outlined in the Cooperation Framework. Notably, initiatives targeting biodiversity and pollution exhibit poor adoption rates, whereas those addressing climate change offer better insights on potential strategies.

19. To mainstream the triple planetary crisis, UNEP recommended to:

- (a) Revise the guidance documents for UN country teams planning (e.g., the Cooperation Framework Guidance and related companion pieces) to strengthen the mainstreaming of climate, biodiversity, and pollution in Cooperation Frameworks;
- (b) Increase the uptake of biodiversity and pollution in the Results Framework of the Cooperation Framework, at least to the same level as climate change;
- (c) Mainstream the triple planetary crisis in the economy and society pillars of Cooperation Frameworks;
- (d) Systematically apply a lifecycle approach to the economic sectors the country prioritizes;
- (e) Strengthen the integration of actions to implement MEAs in Cooperation Frameworks;
- (f) Inform all the sections of the CCAs with integrated analysis that mainstreams climate, biodiversity, and pollution in the national socio-economic context and that provides insight on how environmental issues/priorities affect economic development and people’s lives.

20. The latest review undertaken by UNEP in October 2023 examined the frameworks developed in 2022, to assess how the triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity and pollution is addressed in Cooperation Frameworks. Interlinkages with and in relation to the Rotterdam Convention would fall within the pollution cluster. The review found that the uptake of pollution in the outcomes of Cooperation Frameworks developed in 2022 remains low, with the issue of pollution only taken up in 9% of such frameworks, although this was an increase on the results of the previous year’s review. Correspondingly, pollution-related indicators and outputs had also increased in the Cooperation Frameworks compared to the previous year.

21. Of the 32 Cooperation Frameworks reviewed by UNEP in 2023, only 2 contained references to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions. Furthermore, the review found that whilst pollution

in Cooperation Frameworks remains strongly linked to waste management, references to chemicals, air, water and soil quality have decreased from previous years. As such, although the environmental objectives and obligations set out in MEAs should match national priorities, they are not well referenced in Cooperation Frameworks yet there is an improving trend.

22. One of the key messages from the UNEP review in relation to the area of pollution is that integration of pollution remains limited and focused on waste management. The review stated that a more systematic adoption of circularity will ensure that pollution and other environmental impacts are taken into account across the entire value chain. Furthermore, integration of MEAs was found to have improved and this could be a vehicle for better mainstreaming of pollution and biodiversity in Cooperation Frameworks.

23. Since the first meeting of the Committee, the Secretariat has participated in the UNEP UN Country Team Engagement Network, to monitor developments and provide inputs relevant to the Rotterdam, as well as the Basel Convention and the Stockholm on Persistent Organic Pollutants. This includes activities such as participation in a 2 November 2023 country dialogue on “Demystifying MEAs to UNCTs”, in which the Secretariat presented work within the context of the Basel Convention Committee to bring UN country teams closer to MEAs and vice versa. At this dialogue, the Secretariat presented the preliminary findings from the Committee’s questionnaires referred to in paragraphs 4 and 22 to 25 of the present note.

C. Activities of the Basel Convention Committee

24. As requested at the fifteenth meeting of the Basel Convention Committee, and in accordance with the work programme for 2024–2025 for that Committee, the Secretariat circulated a questionnaire to Resident Coordinators and United Nations (UN) country teams, and another questionnaire to Parties with an invitation to provide information with respect to their experience with Cooperation Framework processes and national reporting under the Basel Convention.

25. 39 responses were received from Parties, with balanced geographical representation from all United Nations regions, and 53 responses were received from Resident Coordinators and UN country teams.

26. The preliminary findings indicate that:

(a) For Parties: There is limited awareness about the Cooperation Frameworks and integration of national reporting needs in Cooperation Frameworks appears similarly limited;

(b) For Resident Coordinators and UN country teams: Most respondents were aware of the Convention and its obligations for national reporting, as well as linkages to the Sustainable Development Goal indicator 12.4.1. Limited support had been provided to Parties in integrating reporting under the Basel Convention into the Cooperation Frameworks and only a few countries sought such support.

27. The full report including recommendations⁵ was presented for consideration at the face-to-face sessions of the sixteenth meeting of the Basel Convention Committee and is set out in annex I to document UNEP/FAO/RC/CC.2/INF/7. Annex II to that document contains an extract of the report of the face-to-face sessions related to integration into the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks⁶. The information set out in the annexes to document UNEP/FAO/RC/CC.2/INF/7 is shared in response to decision CC-2/7 of the Rotterdam Convention Committee.

28. Following its consideration of the above-mentioned report, the Basel Convention Committee, among other things, agreed to recommend that the Conference of the Parties consider:

(a) Requesting the Secretariat, subject to the availability of resources, to transmit to the relevant Resident Coordinators and UNCTs the individual Party’s classification of compliance performance with the reporting obligation prepared by the Committee;

(b) Encouraging UNCTs to include Parties’ obligation to transmit national reports in the Common Country Analysis, which informs the preparation of the Cooperation Framework;

(c) Encouraging Parties to ensure that entities responsible for the implementation of the Convention at the national level communicate with the entities responsible for the development of the

⁵ Document UNEP/CHW/CC.16/3/Add.3.

⁶ Paragraphs 71 to 76 of document UNEP/CHW/CC.16/11.

Cooperation Framework in their countries as well as with the Resident Coordinator and UNCT, and to get more involved in the Cooperation Framework processes;

(d) Encouraging also Parties with reporting challenges, as reflected in the classifications of compliance performance with the reporting obligation prepared by the Committee, to include in their Cooperation Framework action to address their needs;

(e) Encouraging further Parties, Resident Coordinators and UNCTs, with the support of the Secretariat as appropriate, to share information on best practices and support country-level efforts regarding the integration of national reporting needs under Basel Convention into Cooperation Frameworks.

29. The Committee also agreed to include in its draft work programme for 2026–2027 that it be mandated in cooperation, as appropriate, with the Compliance Committee of the Rotterdam Convention, to monitor Cooperation Framework processes with a view to assessing the extent to which Parties with national reporting needs are including actions to address them in their Cooperation Framework, identifying best practices and trends and, on the basis of the assessment, developing recommendations for the consideration of the Conference of the Parties.

30. On a related matter, the Basel Convention Committee also considered during the face-to-face sessions of its sixteenth meeting draft guidance on how individual Parties can integrate action to address their needs under the Basel Convention into their United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks⁷. The Committee concluded its discussions by requesting the Secretariat, under the guidance of lead members, to develop revised guidance taking into account the outcome of its deliberations. The Committee also agreed to consider said revisions to the draft guidance during resumed sessions of its sixteenth meeting (online, 14–18 October 2024) and to accordingly finalize the draft guidance for consideration and possible adoption by the Conference of the Parties at its seventeenth meeting.

III. Proposed action

31. The Committee is invited to consider the information contained in the present note and may wish to:

(a) Include in its draft programme of work for the biennium 2026–2027 that it be entrusted to continue to monitor developments, including the development of guidance, related to the integration by Parties of their information submission needs in actions to address them in the Cooperation Frameworks, in particular interlinkages with and the relation with the Rotterdam Convention;

(b) Invite the Basel Convention Committee to continue to share with the Rotterdam Convention Committee the outcomes of its activities related to the integration of Parties' implementation needs into their United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks.

⁷ Document UNEP/CHW/CC.16/9/Add.1.