

Mid-term Evaluation of the IOMC Toolbox for Decision Making in Chemicals Management Phase III

Management Response

Management Response for IOMC Toolbox Phase III Evaluation Recommendations

Programme undertaking	Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC)		
Name of project focal point	Kersten Gutschmidt		
Name of project undertaking	IOMC Toolbox for Decision Making in Chemicals Management – Phase III	AGB #	N/A
Name of evaluation	Mid-term Evaluation		
Date:	15 July 2020		

SECTION I – Comments on Findings, Conclusions

The PMG discussed the draft MTE report at its 5th PMG meeting and provided its comments to the evaluator following that meeting including on the findings and conclusions. A number of comments were addressing the theory of change presented at that time. As recommended by the evaluator, the PMG will continue discussing the revised theory of change and propose revisions of the project log frame, if needed.

SECTION II - RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation		Management Response and Planned Action				Update on status in 2021 (planned, under implementation, implemented)
		Accepted Partially Accepted Rejected	Proposed action	Budget allocated (if necessary)	Status (planned, under implementation, implemented)	
1.	Recommendation 1 on finishing the new Toolbox platform and case study development	Accepted	May 2020, Toolbox transferred to OECD server		Implemented Under Implementation	

Management Response for IOMC Toolbox Phase II Evaluation Recommendations

	<p>The PMG should continue to make finishing the new Toolbox platform its main priority, in addition to prioritizing the development of case studies that include country examples of using Participating Organization's guidance material in tackling chemical management challenges including lessons learned that can be of relevance for other countries.</p>		<p>July to August 2020, corrections of bugs; improvement of back office</p> <p>October 2020, launch finalized Toolbox 3.0</p> <p>June 2020, off-line versions available</p> <p>Follow-up with participants from workshops and webinars and prepare country case studies of how tools have been implemented and, thereby strengthened the management of chemicals in these countries.</p>		<p>Planned</p> <p>Planned</p> <p>Implemented</p>	
		<p>Comments: After problems with the developer and following legal action by OECD, work on the Toolbox has re-commenced and a version of Toolbox is now available from the OECD server. During the next weeks, the Toolbox version3.0 will be finished, including addressing all bugs, improving back office and making available off-line version of the Toolbox. The current version of the Toolbox is available at http://www.iomctoolbox.org/</p>				

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<p>2. Recommendation 2 on the project's theory of change and monitoring</p> <p>The PMG should give the project's theory of change and log frame a thorough review. Using the evaluation team's analysis of the project's theory of change, as an input, the PMG should consider the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review, and if necessary, change, the indicators and targets in the log frame, in the project's choice of impact target. Consider how improving the quality and relevance of the Toolbox and workshops can be included in outcome monitoring. Consider whether it makes sense to attempt to quantify the project's impact, given the project's impact pathway has shown itself to be essentially catalytic and nonlinear. 	Accepted	<p>July 2020, PMG to finalize review of Theory of Change and project log frame, including indicators and targets</p> <p>Revise project documentation and amend agreement with EC, if necessary. *Request changes to the agreement at the same time when requesting no-cost extension of current project phase.</p>		<p>Planned</p> <p>Planned</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider whether there are key causal processes and assumptions missing from the theory of change and include them if there are. Use the theory of change and revised log frame for planning activities for the rest of the project, including for any no-cost extension or fourth phase. 		<p>Comments: Initial review of Theory of Change commenced when reviewing the draft MTE report. Further discussions took place at 5th PMG meeting. Whatever changes are proposed to the log frame and indicators is subject to the approval of the donor.</p>			

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3.	<p>Recommendation 3 on future workshops</p> <p>The PMG should ensure that equal time is provided in the remaining project workshops for peer-to-peer learning on the use of the new online version of the Toolbox. In designing such workshops, the following suggestions should be considered, some of which are already starting to be acted upon, although not consistently:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance the training guidelines so that training workshops are based on identified needs of learners and incorporate learning and application objectives, in accordance with international standards. Ensure that evaluations of specific training workshops are reviewed regularly to inform future workshops, with adjustments made as deemed necessary. • Encourage participants to set up a WhatsApp group or similar interactive format to facilitate participants sharing news on chemical-related issues and events, and asking each other for advice or help; 	Accepted	<p>August 2020, UNITAR to revise the training guidelines</p> <p>Identify, review, and promote the use of social media applications to strengthen communication and networking among Toolbox users, e.g. WhatsApp.</p> <p>For the remaining face-to-face workshops, ensure that follow-up events are planned and implemented</p> <p>Continue building on opportunities for co-financing of workshops and follow-up activities</p>		<p>Under implementation</p> <p>Planned</p> <p>Under implementation</p> <p>Under implementation</p>	
		<p>Comments: So far, the IOMC Toolbox has benefited from quite some co-financing through other but similar projects, including the WHO workshop in Kazakhstan receiving support from Germany</p>				

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold at least one follow-up webinar after each workshop in which participants reconnect and report on if and how they used the connections and learning they gained during the workshop, in particular of the Toolbox. If funds can be found, hold a second face-to-face workshop. • Analyse and report on subsequent use by participants of technical capacity and connections gained from workshops as part of a more structured effort at beneficiary monitoring. • Identify opportunities for co-financing workshops from other initiatives that share a common purpose and can fund follow-up activities. 	<p>and FAO workshops receiving support from GEF-, Rotterdam Convention or FAO ownfunding.</p> <p>Re beneficiary monitoring – This will be looked at in conjunction with the Theory of Change, the log frame and indicators (see above recommendation 1).</p> <p>Follow-up actions to workshops have taken place, e.g. Indonesia. Also, follow up actions are planned to promote the IOMC Toolbox3.0, once available.</p> <p>Webinars are also considered for countries where workshops have already taken place as part of the plan to increase virtual meetings during times of COVID and restricted travel.</p>				
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4.	<p>Recommendation 4 on increasing project reach and impact</p> <p>The PMG should explore ways of increasing project reach and impact, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing reciprocal agreements with other chemical-related portals and platforms to point users to the Toolbox platform; • Proactively encourage each organization participating in the project, and DG Environment, to stipulate that future chemical-management-related projects enrol relevant staff in a Toolbox workshop, or include a component in the Toolbox. 	Partially Accepted	<p>Identify websites where to post the IOMC Toolbox and follow-up with hosts, e.g. through SAICM Knowledge Platform</p> <p>Intergrate Toolbox in chemical-management related projects of IOMC POs and DG Environment. Offer training on the Toolbox on relevant staff involved in the project, e.g. by webinars, online training, or inviting them to training workshops.</p>		<p>Under implementation</p> <p>Under implementation</p>	
		<p>Comments:</p> <p>In the current phase of the project, countries drive the agenda of workshops, i.e. organization attend the workshops that have a role in and can contribute to the technical issues.</p> <p>The SAICM secretariat is currently developing the SAICM Knowledge Platform. Activities are underway to promote each other's platforms, tools and events.</p> <p>Activities are ongoing to promote the Toolbox through other than the Toolbox project. These projects include activities managed by IOMC POs and projects implemented by others organization, e.g. the NGO project to promote a multi-stakeholder model and civil society organization (CSO) participation for the implementation of SAICM.</p>				

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<p>5. Recommendation 5 to implement a strategy to address women's empowerment in the Toolkit</p> <p>The PMG should develop and implement a strategy to address women's empowerment in the Toolkit. The strategy should consider measures suggested by the Women and Gender @ SAICM group in their joint position paper (see Table 4).</p> <p>As part of developing case studies, the PMG should prioritize the development and sharing of case studies on how gender has been maintained into the sound management of chemicals and waste in different countries.</p>	Accepted	<p>Ensure regular agenda item on gender and chemicals at remaining face-to-face and/or follow-up workshops and webinars</p> <p>Conduct webinar(s) specifically addressing gender and chemicals issues</p> <p>Ensure gender balance of participants at workshops</p> <p>Ensure that tools on gender issues are included in Toolbox</p> <p>Consider entry point on chemicals and gender</p>		<p>Planned</p> <p>Planned</p> <p>Implemented</p> <p>Under implementation</p> <p>Planned</p>	
	<p>Comments: Normally, gender balance is taken into consideration when organizing face-to-face meetings as part of the normal procedure by the organization.</p>				

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<p>6. Recommendation 6 on reducing administrative burden on the project and then learning from the intent The PMG should explore ways in which tranche payments can be made in a timelier manner, for example by changing the rule that 70% of the previous tranche budget must be spent before the next payment can be made, and in finding ways in which the preparation of the certified consolidated financial reports can be made less bureaucratic.</p> <p>The PMG should also request that the final project evaluation look explicitly at the range of bureaucratic and administrative issues faced by the project, and the ways that the project has surmounted them, or not, as lessons for other multi-agency projects in the future.</p>	Partially accepted	<p>Approach the EC to discuss 70% rule in the context of COVID-19 and remaining phase 3 of the Toolbox project and possible phase 4</p> <p>PMG to request final evaluator to specifically look at bureaucratic and administrative issues</p>		<p>Under implementation</p> <p>Planned</p>	
		<p>Comments: During COVID lock-down, the EC was approached by the Toolbox project to discuss if the 70% rule could be applied in a flexible way so that all remaining workshops could be held in the remaining time of 2020 after lockdown. While the EC seems to be flexible on the request, the chance to travel internationally and to run face-to-face workshops in 2020 is very unlikely because of the ongoing COVID situation. Instead, the PMG decided to request an extension of the project time and the issue to run all remaining workshops in a short period of time isn't given anymore.</p> <p>While the EC seemed to be flexible on the rule for our project and the given times, it is normally not within the mandate of the project to engage with the EC on administrative and legal issues. That need to be dealt with at higher level in the organizations.</p>			
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7.	<p>Recommendation 7 on project extension</p> <p>The PMG should continue with its conversation with the EC as to requesting a no cost extension of one year and a fourth phase. One requirement for either option is that the project partners agree how the Toolbox website and relevant Toolkits will be maintained after the end of the project. A second requirement is that the any extension and new phase is aligned with the beyond 2020 SAICM vision that is currently being developed as part of the intercessional process.</p>	Accepted	<p>Request no-cost extension for 12 months until 31 December 2021</p> <p>Develop sustainability plan of the IOMC Toolbox.</p> <p>Align extension and new phase with the beyond 2020 SAICM process</p>		<p>Under implementation</p> <p>Under implementation</p> <p>Planned</p>	
		<p>Comments:</p> <p>COVID-19 made it impossible to implement some of the proposed actions in the agreement because of travel restrictions. In addition, Toolbox3.0 has only become available late in the project.</p> <p>ICCM5 has been postponed from 2020 to 2021. The IOMC Toolbox will align to the SAICM beyond 2020 vision as soon as further information is available.</p>				