

Concept note on the science fair in the margins of the meetings of the conferences of the parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions in May 2015

Note by the Secretariat

I. Introduction

1. During their meetings held respectively on 14–15 May 2014, 22–23 May 2014, and 4–5 June 2014, the bureaux of the conferences of the parties to the Stockholm, Basel and Rotterdam conventions considered the proposal by the Secretariat to organize a science fair in the margins of the meetings of the conferences of the parties in 2015.
2. The three bureaux expressed their general support for this proposal, and the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties to the Rotterdam Convention requested the Secretariat to prepare a concept note on the science fair for the bureaux at their joint meeting in November 2014, taking into account the comments made by the bureaux at their respective meetings.

II. Implementation

3. In response to the request from the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties to the Rotterdam Convention, the Secretariat developed a concept note on the science fair, taking into account the comments made by the three bureaux. The Secretariat also initiated the process of involving partners by presenting the concept note as an information document at the ninth meeting of the Open-ended Working Group of the Basel Convention held from 16 to 19 September 2014, the tenth meeting of the Chemical Review Committee of the Rotterdam Convention scheduled to take place from 22 to 24 October 2014 and the tenth meeting of the Persistent Organic Pollutants Review Committee of the Stockholm Convention scheduled to take place from 27 to 30 October 2014, as well as by sharing it with other potential partners and donors.
4. The concept note on the science fair is contained in the annex to the present note.

III. Proposed action

5. The bureaux may wish to take note of the science fair concept note, as set out in the annex to the present note.

Annex

Science fair in the margins of the meetings of the conferences of the parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions (4–15 May 2015, Geneva)

I. Introduction

1. The Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions are science-based, legally binding global treaties aimed at the protection of human health and the environment from hazardous chemicals and wastes. At the meetings of the conferences of the parties to these conventions, delegates of countries meet to take policy decisions covering, among other things, further measures on management of hazardous chemicals and wastes within their scope. Scientific assessments underpin and inform the decisions made by the Conferences of the Parties (COPs). These assessments are undertaken through rigorous review of scientific data by experts in the technical and scientific bodies of the conventions such as the POPRC, CRC and OEWG.
2. The theme of the next round of meetings of the conferences of the parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions to be held 4–15 May 2015 is ‘From science to action, working for a safer tomorrow’.
3. The theme reflects an intention to highlight the importance of the science-policy interface for the effectiveness of the conventions. To this end, a three day science fair will be organized during the triple COPs in order to:
 - (a) Increase understanding of the scientific basis of the three conventions;
 - (b) Clarify the scientific processes established under the conventions for their effective implementation;
 - (c) Increase awareness and understanding of the in-depth scientific considerations relating to decision-making under the three conventions.

II. Target audience

4. Target audience is delegates and observers to the 2015 triple COPs.

III. Expected outcome

5. The participants have increased awareness and understanding of the underlying scientific processes supporting decision-making under the three conventions.

IV. Approach

6. Delegates are introduced to the scientific topics relevant to the three conventions which are carefully selected in order to achieve targeted awareness-raising and understanding towards supporting decision making.
7. Scientific information is presented in booths in a user-friendly and interactive manner using visual elements. Other events such as an opening ceremony, panel discussions, presentations by experts are organized throughout the three days in order to allow for dissemination of information, exchange of views and ideas. Relevant material such as hand-outs, videos, clearing-house mechanism platforms and tools are developed and presented on particular topics. The involvement of partners is essential in the preparation and implementation of the science fair.

V. Partners

8. A broad array of partners are expected to be involved from the early stage, including Basel and Stockholm conventions ‘regional centers, experts participating in the various scientific processes under the three conventions (members of the subsidiary bodies, experts groups, etc.), FAO, WHO, UNEP Chemicals, UNIDO, UNITAR, WIPO, UNESCO and other relevant UN organizations and agencies, industry and NGOs, as well as interns and student volunteers.

VI. Donors

9. Developed countries and other specific organizations will be approached to fund the science fair.

VII. The topics of the science fair booths

10. The science fair will consist of 13 booths, arranged in a circle, in which 8 topics will be presented. The sequence and grouping of the topics should ‘tell a story’ related to the overall theme, its issues and the roles of actors, while making clear the underlying science.

Topic 1: Accessing science through the clearing house mechanism

Number of booths: 1

Main presenters: BRS Secretariat

Objectives:

1. Explain and clarify the concepts in the three conventions that have a scientific underpinning;
2. Showcase tools that facilitate the dissemination of scientific and technical documents developed under the three conventions.

Key elements:

1. Visual, user-friendly and interactive explanation of basic underlying terms and concepts under the three conventions;

BRS Clearing House Mechanism: demonstration of how the science is made available to Parties and broad public and how to access available materials developed under the three conventions.

Topic 2: Scientific processes under the BRS conventions

Number of booths: 1

Main presenters: BRS Secretariat, representatives of subsidiary bodies

Objective: Enhance understanding of the impact of science on decision-making under the three conventions.

Key elements:

1. Scientific processes under the conventions (POPs Review Committee, Chemical Review Committee, Open-ended Working Group, etc.) and the underlying scientific elements such as risk evaluation, risk assessment, toxicological interactions, etc.;
2. Importance of science in decision-making.

Topic 3: Scientifically sound POPs monitoring

Number of booths: 1

Main presenters: Global Monitoring Plan (GMP) strategic partners, GMP global coordination group

Objectives:

1. Present arrangements for POPs monitoring under the GMP for effectiveness evaluation;
2. Demonstrate relevant ongoing POPs monitoring activities and their results;
3. Highlight scientific issues and concepts to be considered while interpreting monitoring data;
4. Illustrate the roles of the GMP monitoring data in effectiveness evaluation and in a broader context.

Key elements:

1. Arrangements for POPs monitoring under the GMP (Regional Organization Groups, Global Coordination Group, strategic partners and guidance);

2. Demonstration of the GMP data warehouse and its outputs;
3. Providing examples of where the monitoring data can be used, including for effectiveness evaluation;
4. Environmental fate and behavior of POPs, including long-range transport of hazardous substances (e.g. modeling);
5. POPs and Climate Change;
6. Considerations on “safe” POPs concentrations e.g. planetary boundaries.

Topic 4: Science supporting safe and efficient solutions for hazardous industrial chemicals

Number of booths: 1

Main presenters: Parties, industry, NGOs

Objective: Demonstrate how science can increase benefits from industrial chemicals while avoiding and preventing the risks.

Key elements:

1. “What are industrial chemicals?”;
2. Industrial chemicals in today’s world: benefits and risks;
3. Protecting human health and the environment (green economy, alternatives, sustainable production and consumption, etc.);
4. The life cycle approach and its link to sustainable development;
5. Technology transfer, information sharing.

Topic 5: Science supporting risk reduction from hazardous pesticides

Number of booths: 2

Main presenters: FAO, Parties, pesticide producer association, NGOs

Objective: Demonstrating how science can support policy makers and farmers in making informed decisions on hazardous pesticides.

Key elements:

1. “What are pesticides and severely hazardous pesticide formulations under the Convention(s)?”;
2. Pesticides in today’s world: benefits and risks;
3. Protecting human health and the environment (“Save and Grow: sustainable intensification of crop production”, climate-smart agriculture, sustainable agriculture, strategies to reduce risks from pesticide, IPM etc.);
4. The life cycle approach and its link to sustainable development.

Topic 6: Science providing sustainable waste management solutions: turning waste to resource

Number of booths: 2

Main presenters: IGOs, Parties, Industry, NGOs

Objectives:

1. Explain basic terms and concepts related to hazardous waste and the underlying science;
2. Demonstrate examples of science providing sustainable waste management solutions.

Key elements:

1. “What is waste, non-waste and hazardous waste?”;

2. Negative effects of un-sound management of wastes;
3. Protecting human health and the environment and using waste as resource:
Technologies on prevention, recovery, recycling and treatment of hazardous waste;
4. The life cycle approach and its link to sustainable development;
5. Examples of chemicals in wastes (PCBs, BDEs, PFOS, HCBD etc.).

Topic 7: Science empowering public: how are we personally affected and what can we do?**Number of booths:** 1**Main presenters:** BRS Sustainability Task Force, Safe Planet, NGOs**Objective:** Demonstrate how science can empower public to make smart choices towards protecting their families and the environment they live in.**Key elements:**

1. Vulnerable communities, social dimension, body burden;
2. Pathways of exposure to chemicals listed in the conventions, hazardous wastes, e-waste, etc.
and impact on the human health and ecosystem;
3. Responsible buying and consumption: making smart choices by reading and understanding the small-print;
4. Citizen science monitoring;
5. Creating communities of practice.

Topic 8: From science to action: examples of successful actions towards a safer tomorrow**Number of booths:** 4**Main presenters:** Regional centers and any other interested partners**Objective:** Present on-ground examples of science supporting implementation of the three conventions and demonstrate how chemicals and waste can contribute to greening the economy.**Key elements:**

1. Chemicals in today's world: benefits and risks;
 2. Green chemistry, urban mining, waste to energy solutions etc.;
 3. Protecting human health and the environment;
 4. The life cycle approach and its link to sustainable development.
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