

2014 Quarterly report of the Executive Secretary
Cost Savings, Efficiencies and Delivery Improvements Resulting from Synergies in the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Secretariat

1 January – 31 December 2014

Overview

This report provides information on efficiencies and delivery improvements resulting from synergies in the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm secretariat from 1 April to 30 December 2014, with a view to improving services to parties. As noted in previous quarterly reports, the secretariat welcomes comments from parties and other stakeholders on the structure and content of this report, and how to maximize its utility.

As of the end of 2014, no new savings have been achieved for the activities listed below, given that in most cases, maximum efficiencies may have already been achieved. Cost savings achieved for the period 2012-2013 have been reflected in previous reports.

Activities that contribute to efficiencies and delivery improvements resulting from synergies between the three conventions

Activity	Synergies
Cooperation under the UNEP-MEA Task Team on administrative and programmatic matters (ongoing).	BRS participation in the Task Team to facilitate coordination between MEAs and UNEP on a number of administrative and programmatic matters, including follow-up to the UNEA decision on cooperation between UNEP and MEAs.
Cooperation with UNEP Chemicals through the establishment of a UNEP task force on cooperation and coordination on cross-cutting and mutually supportive activities (ongoing).	BRS participation in the Task Force established to improve coordination and coordination between BRS and UNEP Chemicals on mandated activities as well as on other programmatic and operational issues as well as implementation of joint activities.
Cooperation with the Minamata Convention (ongoing).	Support to the organization of the subregional workshops on early ratification of the Minamata Convention. Support to the organization of webinars in preparation for the regional workshops. Provision of support towards INC-6 preparations.
Harmonized approach to secretariat support of subsidiary bodies (ongoing).	More consistent service to parties across the three conventions at multiple policy levels.
Streamlined and harmonized websites for the three conventions as well as for the joint synergies website (main harmonization completed, updates ongoing).	Improved and more coherent delivery of synergies-related information to stakeholders. Improved access for Parties to updated and new information relevant to the work of the three Conventions.
Secretariat co-located on one floor (completed).	Improved communication and integration of work across the secretariat and better physical alignment with new matrix structure.
Sharing of office equipment such as photocopiers, printers, etc. (sharing is ongoing)	Fewer pieces of equipment.
Coordination on staff travel (ongoing).	Reduced need to send multiple staff to the same meeting.

The use of webinars to augment technical assistance support delivered through Regional centers and workshops (ongoing).	Capacity strengthening at the national level, cutting across the work of all three MEAs.
Joint resource mobilization for the three conventions (ongoing).	Improved responsiveness and consistency of approaches to donors; improved tracking, reporting and accountability.
Development of standard operating procedures (SOPs) for all of the critical functions of the secretariat (ongoing).	Improved accountability, clearer and more replicable procedures, strengthened ability to operate in a matrix environment.
Collaboration with CITES secretariat on opportunities for synergies between the secretariats on a range of issues, including IT, translations, videoconferencing, paper smart meetings and other administration and financial services, with a view to sharing services for improved resource efficiency and delivery (ongoing).	Potential future cost savings for parties of all four MEAs, as well as enhanced delivery of services to parties by sharing best practices.
Work of the sustainability task force and steps towards implementation of recommendations (ongoing).	A more environmentally and economically sustainable secretariat. Synergies with UNEP/EMG as well as with the wider UN System. Steps have been taken towards the Secretariat's joining the UNEP Climate Neutral Strategy and offsetting its carbon footprint.
Scheduling of back-to-back meetings/workshops, i.e. OEWG, Technical Expert Group meeting, Implementation Compliance Committee, Global Monitoring Coordination group, POPs Review Committee, Chemical Review Committee, Basel Convention Expert Working Group on ESM and PACE Working Group meeting (ongoing).	Improved and more cost effective approaches for party participation; strengthened ability to share experiences, expertise and lessons learned among subsidiary groups. Increased efficiencies in the logistics for organizing meetings.
Work of the BRS gender task team (ongoing).	Inter-secretariat coordination, cohesion on information sharing and messaging, improved gender balance in MEA secretariats.