



**a toxics-free future**

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## **International SAICM Implementation Project (ISIP)**

In 2010, in an effort to demonstrate SAICM implementation via IPEN Participating Organizations, IPEN launched an International SAICM Implementation Project, also known as ISIP. ISIP aims to mobilize resources for initial enabling activities pertaining to national priorities, in keeping with the work areas set out in the strategic objectives of section IV of the SAICM Overarching Policy Strategy.

In particular, the ISIP supports the Governance objective of SAICM's Overarching Policy Strategy paragraph 26, which calls for enhanced "cooperation on the sound management of chemicals between Governments, the private sector and civil society at the national, regional and global levels."

In addition, ISIP builds on the 2008-2009 Global SAICM Outreach Campaign to raise awareness about SAICM and strengthen collaboration among the public interest, health and labor sectors.

### **ISIP Objectives**

ISIP's four objectives include:

- Promoting the need for sound chemicals management
- Advancing National SAICM Implementation
- Promoting global SAICM implementation by global civil society
- Building capacity among NGOs developing countries and countries with economies in transition

**Title of activity:** National SAICM Forum: Promoting a Civil Society & Government Dialogue on Chemical Safety

**NGO:** Centre for Environmental Justice

**Country:** Sri Lanka

**Date:** August 2011

### **Elements of SAICM Covered:**

Include civil society representatives in Government committees formulating, carrying out and monitoring SAICM implementation plans, or useful inputs into the process where NGOs encounter barriers to their substantive direct participation, broad and meaningful participation of stakeholders, including women, at all levels in devising responses to chemicals management challenges and in regulatory and decision-making processes that relate to chemical safety (164, 206)

### **Description of Stockholm Convention or SAICM implementation-related policy processes that you have participated in or contributed to:**

National SAICM Forum: Promoting a Civil Society & Government Dialogue on Chemical Safety

### **Description of NGO positions, priorities and concerns with the process:**

We have been working on heavy metals for couple of years. There we understood that the concern about chemicals is minimal in all sectors of the country, and the awareness of the public on the issue is negligible. In Sri Lanka only a very few Civil Society Organizations are working on chemical safety issues. The contribution of the relevant authorities is also not sufficient. Also, the results of the studies conducted with IPEN and Toxics Link such as Lead in New Decorative Paints and Mercury reveals that there are loopholes in the process of chemicals management. Therefore, we identified that the promotion and creation of a dialogue among the public with the participation of relevant government authorities is a necessity. CEJ is the first party that has raised the need of SAICM at the national level.

### **Project Outcomes:**

#### **Description of the activity conducted or type of participation that was organized:**

From the very beginning we observed that the contribution and effort from the SAICM Focal Point, which is the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, for the implementation of SAICM is very low. No materials were produced for awareness or to create a dialogue among the public on chemical safety, or with a special reference to SAICM.

CEJ translated the “NGO Guide to SAICM” into local languages and published them. A leaflet on SAICM was published in English and local languages. And a status paper on Asbestos was produced.

A National Workshop was held at Hector Kobbekaduwa Agrarian Research and Training Institute on 24th March 2011. The director of the National SAICM Focal Point, project members of the SAICM – WHO in Sri Lanka, representatives from the Ministry of Environment, Office of the Registrar of Pesticides, Import and Export Control Department, Ministry of Health and other government authorities, university academics, NGOs working on chemicals, civil societies and media were among the participants.

This activity was a new approach to the country as a multi-stakeholder meeting on SAICM had not been organized before. Although the issue has not previously been addressed, there are incidents in the country which have to be considered critically for chemical management.

The meeting generated a platform for policy makers, researchers and civil societies to discuss the present condition of the circulating of chemicals in the country. New findings were fed to the authorities for future actions, for example: heavy metal accumulation around garbage dumps.

An effective network of stakeholders representing several fields was generated, and agreed to work on SAICM by knowledge transfer and sharing.

The printed materials were distributed mainly among the experts, public and private sectors, communities, schools and media.

#### **Impact on target groups:**

All relevant government authorities such as the Sri Lanka Standards Institution, National Water Supply and Drainage Board, Marine Environment Protection Authority, Office of the Registrar of Pesticide, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Health, Department of Import and Export Control etc., university academics, CSOs working on chemical-related issues and other environmental CSOs and NGOs were present at the meeting.

As we mentioned earlier, this was the first ever programme conducted on SAICM. Therefore, the concept behind the SAICM was new to the group.

The National SAICM Focal Point and Industrial Development Board said that CEJ will be invited for the committee meetings on the SAICM. The outcomes of the programme will be feed to the relevant authorities by the representatives.

The following are the outcomes of the meeting:

- Conduct chemical audits when issuing EPLs for industries
- Promote Asbestos phase out programme, this should include the asbestos within the instruments
- Design a long term method for handling asbestos
- Proper monitoring of the cycling of industrial chemicals within the country
- Introduce facilities to analyze fertilizer at importation
- Change the water analyzing procedure and give a higher assurance when samples are collected by the laboratories
- Establishment of good laboratory facilities
- Promote recycling of pesticide bottles and assure they are used again for the same purpose
- Introduce heavy metal analysis facility to the Office of the Pesticide Registrar
- Continuous monitoring of pesticide distribution cycle of the country
- Proper management among relevant authorities such as Customs, Department of Import and Export Control
- Develop mechanisms to check the quality of products and chemicals at the entry into the country
- Revise the items that are listed under the Import and Export Control Department
- Promote adsorption filter in Chronic Renal Failure areas
- Awareness

#### **Impact on target policies:**

The National Environmental Act and Pesticides Act are the acts that are directly related to the subject.

The Central Environmental Authority considers only the effluent when issuing EPLs and the audience proposed to introduce chemical audits prior to issuing EPLs. This would be considered in the future.

Analytical laboratory facility of the Office of the Pesticides Registrar and the Sri Lanka Customs is highly considered.

Revise the items that are listed under the Import and Export Control Department as critical chemicals are not currently listed; for example, mercury.

#### **Outreach to stakeholders:**

University professionals have been working on pollution of water, soil, cow milk, vegetables, etc. from fertilizers, industrial effluents and garbage dumping. One CSO organization has conducted a study on PCBs in transformer oil.

Two activities have been proposed by the Sri Lankan government:

- Technical Support to strengthen National Capacities for Sound Management of Priority Industrial Carcinogens in Sri Lanka, Ministry of Health, 2010-2011 (ongoing)
- Capacity Strengthening and Information Exchange on PCBs Management in selected Asia Counties – Ministry of Environment , 2011 (new)

The Ministry of Health has initiated an asbestos minimization programme.

The SAICM Focal Point is going to start the implementation of SAICM in the near future and CEJ is going to play a major role in that. The National SAICM Focal Point, Ministry of Health and Industrial Development Board decided to invite CEJ for Technical Evaluation Meetings and Steering Committee Meetings.

Also, the participants, especially the academics, requested to organize a symposium on chemical issues in the country which will trigger the relevant authorities to work for chemicals safety.

#### **Deliverables, outputs and/or products:**

Following are the publications:

- “*NGO Guide to SAICM*” was translated into local languages (Sinhala and Tamil) and published.
- A leaflet on SAICM, “*What you should know about the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM)*” was published in English and local languages (Sinhala and Tamil).
- A policy advocacy paper on the “*Status of SAICM in Sri Lanka*” was produced.
- The proceedings of the National Workshop were published.
- Status paper on Asbestos was produced.

#### **Description of communication efforts:**

Following are the links:

[http://www.earthlanka.net/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=544:saicm-seminar&catid=40:features&Itemid=59&lang=en](http://www.earthlanka.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=544:saicm-seminar&catid=40:features&Itemid=59&lang=en)

#### **SAICM National Focal Point:**

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#### **NGO Recommendations to achieve desired NGO participation:**

The Focal Point has no coordination at all. It is recommended that the Ministry should invite all stakeholders, including NGOs, to engage in SAICM implementation. However, very few NGOs in Sri Lanka have the capacity engage in this process. It is more advisable to get the academics into the process.