



## **International POPs Elimination Project**

*Fostering Active and Efficient Civil Society Participation in  
Preparation for Implementation of the Stockholm Convention*

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# **Raising Public Awareness of the Stockholm Convention on POPs in Ukraine**

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## **About the International POPs Elimination Project**

On May 1, 2004, the International POPs Elimination Network (IPEN <http://www.ipen.org>) began a global NGO project called the International POPs Elimination Project (IPEP) in partnership with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP). The Global Environment Facility (GEF) provided core funding for the project.

IPEP has three principal objectives:

- Encourage and enable NGOs in 40 developing and transitional countries to engage in activities that provide concrete and immediate contributions to country efforts in preparing for the implementation of the Stockholm Convention;
- Enhance the skills and knowledge of NGOs to help build their capacity as effective stakeholders in the Convention implementation process;
- Help establish regional and national NGO coordination and capacity in all regions of the world in support of longer term efforts to achieve chemical safety.

IPEP will support preparation of reports on country situation, hotspots, policy briefs, and regional activities. Three principal types of activities will be supported by IPEP: participation in the National Implementation Plan, training and awareness workshops, and public information and awareness campaigns.

For more information, please see <http://www.ipen.org>

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# Raising Public Awareness of the Stockholm Convention on POPs in Ukraine

## Introduction

To fulfil its international commitments under the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs), after ratification of the Convention by the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine (the national parliament), Ukraine should make its initial step - the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine should develop and approve the National Plan of Implementation of the Stockholm Convention on POPs. National implementation plans are mandatory instruments for all Parties of the Convention (Article 7).

Ukraine signed the Stockholm Convention on POPs on May 23, 2001 and plans to ratify it.

Since September 2003, a GEF/UNEP project - "Support of Activities for Development of the National Plan of Implementation of the Stockholm Convention on POPs in Ukraine" has been under way in Ukraine.

The project seeks to develop a NIP that should incorporate specific action plans for elimination and reduction of POPs releases and provide preconditions for approval and implementation of the NIP. In turn, development of the NIP would initiate the process of ratification of the Stockholm Convention by Ukraine.

In addition, the project stipulates providing broad public information on POPs-related problems and promotion of a real public participation in development and implementation of the NIP.

In order to ensure the public information process, the NIP stipulates development of **the Information Strategy on POPs**.

Our project - "**Raising Public Awareness of the Stockholm Convention on POPs in Ukraine**" focuses on development of proposals for development of mechanisms to raise public awareness of POPs and the Stockholm Convention.

Our project is a component of the International POPs Elimination Project that is being implemented by the International POPs Elimination Network (IPEN).

Development and implementation of the project allowed us to develop models to ensure higher public awareness on the problem of POPs and the Stockholm Convention; to launch their implementation, using international experience and capacity of international co-operation in the sphere of addressing the problem of POPs.

## Assessment of public awareness of the problem of POPs and the Stockholm Convention in Ukraine

All-Ukraine environmental NGO MAMA-86 considers "Chemical Security and Hazardous Waste" as one of key spheres of its activities.

Since 1999, activities of representatives of MAMA-86 in this sphere are dedicated to addressing of the problem of POPs at international, national and regional levels.

We believe, that the general public has a major role to play in the process of elimination of POPs-related risks, that it is necessary to make EVERY person aware of all hazards, associated with existence and environmental releases of toxic chemicals.

We can assess **awareness levels, available information and education** on POPs-related problems and the Stockholm Convention on POPs based on results of relevant projects and campaigns, implemented in Ukraine:

1. Studies of MAMA-86, dedicated to results of activities of the Working Group on Sustainable Agriculture, USAID Project of Environmental Policy and Technologies and the Program for Promotion of Sustainable Development of Ukraine that were implemented in 1996 - 1998 and dealt with options to address the problem of management of obsolete pesticides.

2. Results of Ukraine-Denmark project "Elimination of Risks of Accumulated Stockpiles of Banned and Obsolete Pesticides in Ukraine" (DANCEE, DEPA), implemented in 1999 - 2003.

In 2000, MAMA-86 participated in implementation of the above project and drafted the section on public participation for the Action Plan.

Results of previous programs of management of obsolete pesticides in Ukraine were studied; information materials were developed for the first version of the draft Action Plan (the background documents, proposals of NGOs on potential activities in the period of implementation of short-term (2000 - 2002) and medium-term (2002 - 2005) activities for the draft chapter on public participation for the Action Plan); independent experts of NGOs and research facilities were involved into analysis of the draft Action Plan, collection of comments and proposals; a comprehensive analysis of later versions of the draft Action Plan was conducted; field visits were made to study storage conditions in storage sites for obsolete pesticides; a seminar was held on public information, awareness raising, education, communications and public participation in development of the Action Plan for mitigation of risks associated with stockpiles of obsolete pesticides, accumulated in Ukraine, with participation of NGOs, experts, representatives of governmental authorities, international organisations and mass media outlets.

The Action Plan for mitigation of risks of accumulated stockpiles of obsolete pesticides in Ukraine was developed, accounting for public consultations at the initial stage of its development.

In this project, accounting for analysis of public awareness of the problem of obsolete pesticides, MAMA-86 proposed to establish information access points for local residents to disseminate information on the project of mitigation of risks of obsolete pesticides, and to establish an information centre on pesticides.

The Stockholm Convention on POPs (Article 10), approved in 2001, recommends Parties of the Convention to establish information centres on POPs.

3. Information campaign of MAMA-86 on the problem of POPs and the Stockholm Convention (2000 - 2006). MAMA-86 has participated in the International POPs Elimination Project (**IPEP**).

In the framework of **IPEP**, in 2004 - 2005, MAMA-86 implemented the following projects:

- "Partnerships of NGOs and Research Facilities for Capacity Building to Reduce Adverse Health and Environmental Impacts of POPs".
- "Persistent Organic Pollutants: the Survey of Situation in Ukraine".
- "Organisation of the Global Day of Actions against POPs in Ukraine".

In the course of implementation of these projects, we got evidence of the need to implement a broad information campaign on adverse health and environmental impacts of POPs.

Proposals and recommendations on organisation of the information campaign on POPs were submitted to GEF/UNEP project "Support of Activities for Development of the National Plan of Implementation of the Stockholm Convention in Ukraine".

4. Results of the WETI NGO campaign (the Western Ukraine Charity Centre of Environmental and Tourism Information, Lvov), dedicated to addressing of the problem of obsolete pesticides in the Carpathian region (2000 - 2006).

5. Results of the project of the Program of Local Environmental Action Plants that was implemented in Ukraine in 2001 - 2003, with USAID support (the project incorporated activities in the sphere of management of obsolete pesticides).

6. Results of PCBs inventory project in Ukraine (2002 - 2004) that was implemented with support of UNEP Chemicals.

7. Results of the international partnership project of USTC - US EPA "Management of Residual Agrochemicals and Neutralisation of Obsolete Pesticides in Cherkassy and Lvov Oblasts" (2004 - 2005).

8. Results of the project of the Ukrainian Geographic Society - the Planet without POPs (2005) that was implemented in the framework of the Global Day of Actions against POPs, with support of IPEN.

9. Results of sociological surveys on public awareness of real/potential adverse health and environmental impacts of POPs, conducted by "INMARK - Information and Marketing" Co. in the framework of GEF/UNEP project "Support of Activities for Development of the National Plan of Implementation of the Stockholm Convention in Ukraine" (2004).

These surveys covered 6 regions of Ukraine (Kiev, Donetsk, Dnepropetrovsk, Vinnitsa, Ivano-Frankovsk oblasts and the Autonomous Republic of Crimea). It is worth to note that such sociological studies were conducted in Ukraine for the first time.

Results of these surveys demonstrated that, notwithstanding a short supply of information on POPs, almost a fifth of respondents (19.2%) demonstrated some awareness of specific POPs. Most often, respondents specified DDT and dioxins, however, after review of the list of POPs, the majority of respondents admitted that they knew other chemicals of the group but simply did not know that they were incorporated into the list of POPs.

The survey results suggest that rural residents are generally better informed on POPs and pollution sources, comparatively to urban residents.

The majority of respondents said that they are aware of negative health effects of POPs, moreover, 46% of them specified their adverse effects, including suppression of the immune system and associated health problems, as well as cancer. Besides that, respondents specified endocrine disorders, respiratory diseases, intoxication and decreasing life expectancy.

It is worth to note that rural residents were found to be much less informed on adverse health impacts of POPs, comparatively to urban residents.

By the time of the survey, 20% of respondents were aware of the fact that Ukraine signed the Stockholm Convention on POPs, while 65% of respondents said that they know almost nothing on the fact and 15% of respondents failed to answer the relevant question.

Only 4% of respondents demonstrated some awareness of main provisions of the Stockholm Convention on POPs.

The study respondents considered newspapers, radio and TV channels as key sources of information on the Stockholm Convention on POPs, however, only 14.5% of respondents answered the question on sources of information.

According to the study respondents, the range of the most preferred sources of information on the problem of POPs might include local printed media outlets, TV and radio channels. These sources were particularly preferred by rural residents who know and use traditional sources of information. In their turn, urban residents prefer to read leaflets, booklets and posters. In addition, urban resident would prefer to communicate with specialists in the course of lectures and roundtable discussions.

Therefore, results of **assessment of public awareness of the problem of POPs and the Stockholm Convention on POPs in Ukraine** demonstrated:

- insufficient public awareness of the problem of POPs and the Stockholm Convention in the country
- lack of activities at the national level for development and implementation of an information strategy on POPs-related issues and raising public awareness of POPs and the Stockholm Convention
- inadequacies of the system of education and refresher training of teachers/lecturers of ecology or other education courses in terms of information on the problem of POPs and options to address the problem
- lack of specialised teaching manuals and popular publications on POPs-related issues
- lack of curricular courses on POPs in the sphere of environmental education; POPs-related issues are studied in a limited circle of education facilities
- lack of programs for training (refresher training) of governmental officials, dealing with the problem of POPs

## **Options to raise public awareness of POPs and the Stockholm Convention**

State authorities play a leading role in the sphere of public information. They develop policies and a legislative base, pertaining to public information, education and awareness-raising. NGOs play secondary roles in these processes, while businesses provide access to information by means of information technologies.

In addition to general improvement of citizens' social positions, their awareness of environmental problems allows them to protect their own health and health of their children. In order to take efficient precautions, it is particularly important to know about risks of chemical pollution in general and adverse health effects of POPs in particular. Unfortunately, the majority of the country's residents are poorly aware of the problem of POPs. Such a situation is associated with lack of information on these problems, specially developed and adjusted for a broad audience; and with lack of well trained specialists, who could disseminate such information among members of different age groups (schoolchildren, students, adults).

The problem of adequate public information on POPs-related problems becomes even more important if we account for the growing crisis in the sphere of health and environment in Ukraine.

Therefore, now, a broad information campaign on POPs-related problems should rely on large-scale coverage of mass media outlets that may play a decisive role in public information.

NGOs and **information points** (in schools, higher education facilities and libraries) may play equally important roles in the process of public information. It is worth to note that information points seem particularly important as their activities may be tailored to local specifics.

Public information processes presume public participation, for example, if an information strategy is duly designed, local residents may assist in implementation of plans to reduce pollution risks (e.g. risks of obsolete pesticides, residual POPs, etc.).

In the course of implementation of our project, we developed proposals for improvement of state environmental policies at national and regional levels, for consolidation of efforts of governmental bodies, businesses, members of the general public in order to address POPs-related problems in Ukraine.

1. To attract attention of governmental bodies, education facilities and NGOs to the problem of public information on POPs in the course of implementation of the Concept of Environmental Education of Ukraine, approved by the Board of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine on December 20, 2001.
2. To develop preconditions for strengthening partnerships of authorities, the general public, the academic community and education facilities for addressing issues of environmental education, accounting for the need to inform citizens on POPs-related problems, in order to develop options for mitigation of adverse health and environmental impacts of POPs.
3. To organise participation of educators and NGOs in international co-operation programs in the sphere of environmental education (including separate programs on POPs-related matters).
4. To recommend study and dissemination of national and international experience of organisation of environmental education on POPs-related matters, accounting for modern education forms, methodologies and technologies.
5. To ensure support of stakeholders for dissemination of modern national and international good practices in the sphere of coverage of POPs-related problems.
6. To recommend development of separate specialised curricular courses for study of POPs-related problems and the Stockholm Convention on POPs.
7. To recommend incorporation of specialised courses on POPs into curricular courses of secondary and higher education facilities.
8. To organise a series of seminars, dedicated to problems of POPs and the Stockholm Convention on POPs for teachers/lecturers of secondary schools and higher education facilities, with involvement of leading experts in the sphere of ecology.
9. To incorporate issues of POPs-related problems and options to address these problems into interactive methods of communication with young audiences.
10. To promote participation of young people in inter-regional, national and international environmental events, conferences, etc, particularly in the ones that deal with POPs-related issues.
11. To support publication of schoolbooks, manuals and popular books on environmental issues in general and POPs-related problems in particular.
12. To expand supply of POPs-related information via topical projects and public relations activities (mailing lists, newsletters, TV and radio programs, web-sites, etc.).
13. To improve the system of training and refresher training of teachers/lecturers of natural sciences and ecology.
14. To develop training programs for training and refresher training of governmental officials, whose service duties incorporate POPs management issues.
15. To promote co-operation of secondary schools, higher education facilities and environmental NGOs on environmental issues, including POPs-related problems.
16. To continue and disseminate practices of joint meetings of representatives of NGOs and education facilities for exchange of experience and co-ordination of joint environmental activities, including activities in the sphere of POPs-related problems.
17. To involve representatives of higher education facilities, teachers, interested members of the general public into development of **the national public information strategy** on POPs-related matters.

**The information strategy on POPs** should play the key role in raising public awareness of POPs and the Stockholm Convention (the strategy is a component of the National Implementation Plan).

The draft version of the instrument was developed in the framework of GEF/UNEP project "Support of Activities for Development of the National Plan of Implementation of the Stockholm Convention in Ukraine", accounting for our comments and recommendations.

**Public information, education and awareness-raising of members of the general public and stakeholders** seek to provide information on POPs to different population groups, tailored to their needs and knowledge levels.

**The information strategy will rely on the following principles:**

- orientation to target audiences
- accessibility and topically structured information
- long-term effects of the public information process
- a broad involvement of local governmental and non-governmental organisations

Awareness raising and education activities will be developed for different audiences.

**Target audiences:**

- workers with occupational exposure to POPs
- farmers and agricultural workers
- rural residents
- national and regional officials who influence decision-making on POPs matters
- members of the general public (particularly women and the youth)
- students and lecturers of higher education facilities (inc. a separate category of students and lecturers of natural sciences departments and future journalists)
- pupils of secondary education facilities
- public health specialists
- environmental NGOs
- scientists

**Mainstream methods:**

- public information
- education

**Main vehicles** - a national information network, that accounts for:

- experience of similar campaigns
- socio-demographic profiles of the active population of Ukraine
- capacity of partner organisations in the framework of the National Plan of Implementation of the Stockholm Convention in Ukraine
- resources needs and capacity;
- establishment of the National Information Centre "Ukraine without POPs"
- establishment of local information centres in schools, libraries and other education facilities
- establishment of the national network of information centres

**Options for exchange and dissemination of information on POPs:**

- Development of the national register of information resources on POPs, POPs-containing products and waste that will incorporate comprehensive information on POPs in Ukraine, storage facilities for obsolete pesticides, etc. Besides that, the register will be updated by information on all POPs management operations completed. The register will be intended for use of interested population groups (scientists, researchers, representatives of governmental and non-governmental organisations and other representatives of target groups).
- Organisation of conferences, symposia, discussions.
- The Internet portal.
- A weekly newsletter on POPs-related problems that will be distributed in electronic form and as hard



- copies
- Information about news releases in newsletters on closely associated issues (e.g. "International Security" newsletter)
- Articles in electronic and printed mass media outlets.
- Publication of brochures and booklets.
- Information leaflets (may be disseminated with participation of environmental NGOs)
- Video films
- Video clips (8-12 clips, 1 - 2 min. each)
- Posters that may be displayed in hospitals, polyclinics, nearby storage facilities for obsolete pesticides, in offices of environmental NGOs.
- Dissemination of social adverts
- Information dissemination and awareness raising activities of NGOs and other initiative groups

#### **Awareness raising activities in the framework of the information strategy:**

- Involvement of students into activities, associated with POPs problems (e.g. relevant seminars, conferences)
- Development of manuals or a series of brochures on the problems of POPs in Ukraine and their dissemination in higher education facilities, industrial facilities, in governmental and non-governmental organisations
- Promotion of development of environmental journalism in higher education facilities
- Brief trainings on POPs-related problems for different population groups, particularly for employees of facilities with direct occupational exposure to POPs, public health specialists, representatives of governmental and non-governmental organisations, that might influence decision-making on POPs-related matters
- Development of a curricular course on POPs for students of higher education facilities
- Introduction of POPs-related issues into curricular courses of secondary education facilities
- Supply of relevant textbooks to support curricular courses and education programs on POPs
- Organisation of TV and radio programs on the problem of POPs for the general public

Besides that, we support development of a specialised program on obsolete pesticides, as they represent the most urgent POPs-related problem in Ukraine.

#### **Promotion of environmental concerns and raising public awareness by activities in education facilities**

Environmental education is a major demand of modern times. Relying on general environmental culture we may expect to succeed in addressing different environmental problems, including the problem of POPs.

Secondary and higher education facilities of Ukraine may promote environmental culture and provide general and specialised environmental education to young generation of Ukrainian citizens. In addition, they may substantially assist in implementation of an active information campaign on POPs-related problems for the country's population.

In the framework of the project, with involvement of experts, we analysed chemical education programs and textbooks for secondary schools, in order to identify references to POPs and associated problems.

All examined education programs note the need of information on roles of chemicals in natural processes and in human life, on adverse environmental and health impacts of some chemicals. These programs emphasise importance of promotion of environmental concerns in the course of study of natural sciences.

Analysis of textbooks and manuals on organic chemistry for secondary schools suggest that school pupils get information on plant protection chemicals (pesticides and their classification), pesticide contamination of air, water and food, on rules of safe handling of pesticides in order to ensure their relative safety for the environment, animals, and people.

School textbooks are silent about POPs and the Stockholm Convention.

Major objectives of modern education incorporate update of contents of natural sciences education programs of secondary schools and higher education facilities by information on toxic chemicals, particularly on POPs. It is also necessary to provide information on options of addressing these problems, on the Stockholm Convention on POPs.

In order to fill the information gap on the problem of POPs and the Stockholm Convention, it is necessary to develop an education manual that might be used in the course of study of associated natural sciences.

In addition to education, development of environmental concerns of school pupils and students is substantially promoted by awareness raising activities and diverse extracurricular activities.

In the course of the project implementation we used different methodologies of extracurricular work with children to raise their awareness of the problem of POPs and the Stockholm Convention.

The project implementation resulted in development of the awareness raising publication that contains information on adverse health and environmental impacts of POPs and on the Stockholm Convention.

The publication is based in information materials, provided by lecturers of M.P.Dragomanov National Pedagogic University (Kiev) and by teachers from Kiev and Kharkov, who participated in the project implementation.