

Samoa's national implementation plan for persistent organic pollutants - reaching consensus

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Introduction

Last year's National Environment Forum introduced the current 'dirty dozen' of persistent organic pollutants (POPs), and other Persistent Toxic Substances (PTS) of concern to Samoa and other countries for possible addition to the Stockholm Convention (Malua et al., 2004). This paper is divided into four sections - Policies and actions, Assessments and their outcomes, Consultations and Awareness - followed by a Conclusion.

Policies and actions

These include Samoa's participation in the International Negotiating Committee meetings from the 1990s that led to signing the Stockholm Convention for POPs in May 2001. As a Party to the POPs Convention, an application was made for Global Environment Facility funding of a POPs project through the United National Development Programme. The Government of Samoa (GOS) also later ratified the Rotterdam Convention for Prior Informed Consent for certain hazardous chemicals in international trade; which currently includes 8 of the 12 POPs, other than two unintentional ones and two not known to be in trade.

The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MNRE) advertised the position of the Project Coordinator for the project at the end of 2001 and the position was filled taking effect in January 2002. Later a Project Manager and Project Assistant POPs were appointed and the project was implemented under the Planning and Urban Management Agency (PUMA).

The main output of the POPs project is for a National Implementation Plan (NIP), and a National Coordinating Committee under the Activity was called as the National Task Team for POPs for its initial meeting in February 2002 (Figure 1). To launch the project a new National Awareness Day was added to the Ministry's calendar in March for Chemicals following that at the end of January for Waste (Figure 2).

A Memoranda of Agreement was also signed with the Secretariat for the Pacific Regional Environment Programme with Australian Government assistance for the 'POPs in Pacific Island Countries' (POPs in PICs) project using the regional Waigani Convention for wastes to implement the Stockholm Convention, Article 6, for elimination of POPs stockpiles (Figure 3). Under the POPs in PICs surplus POPs were identified, packed and shipped to Australia for disposal

A Cabinet directive for disposal also included other buried pesticides and contaminated sites yet to be included in the POPs in PICs. Additional contaminated sites identified by the project were proposed for remediation to reduce contamination of livestock and humans nearby (GOS/MNRE, 2003; GOS/MNRE/PUMA, 2004b), pending the hoped inclusion in the POPs in PICs.

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Figure 1. POPs National Task Team Meeting.
Source: GOS/MNRE, 2004.



Figure 2: Third National Chemicals Awareness Day, Savaii 2004. Source: GOS/MNRE, 2004



Figure 3: Two AMC consultants and Project Coordinator POPs draining PCB-contaminated transformer oil from Savaii. Photo: MNRE.



Figure 4. Participants at NIP Criteria Workshop agencies and corporations Source: GOS/MNRE, 2004.

The draft MNRE Bill 2003 is an activity of the draft NIP for enactment as a matter of priority. A draft Atmosphere Policy also includes POPs, especially unintentional emissions of dioxins and furans which would be the main ones once stockpiles are removed and contaminated sites remediated.

Assessments and their outcomes

This paper follows from one presented at last year's National Environmental Forum on POPs and Persistent Toxic Substances (PTS) in Samoa that was based on the initial consultants inventory of them (GOS/MNRE, 2003; Malua et al., *ibid*)

The initial inventory was followed up by an independent expert review of it, and by two other assessments of institutional capacity, and a further including criteria for priorities and objectives setting (Figure 4; GOS/MNRE/PUMA, 2004a,b,c).

The institutional capacity assessment was initiated following tendering to a local consultant and completed with the independent expert review on the original consultant beginning further studies.

The summaries of the three assessments for institutional capacity, inventory, and priorities and objectives were combined into the draft NIP, with an added indicative financial plan, and priority projects (GOS/MNRE/PUMA, 2004d).

The National Task Team approved the NIP following further consultative workshops to review and finalise it (Table 1).

Consultation

Even before consultancies, the National Task Team for POPs met approximately monthly for updates and to also guide the later assessments reported above.

Table 1. Dates stakeholder consultations held with number of participants

Date (all 2004)	Organisations	Number
20 August	Samoa Umbrella of Non-Governmental Organisations	20
6 September	Samoa Chamber of Commerce	15
16 September	Government Ministries, Agencies, and Corporations	17
13 October	Savaii Mayors and Farmers	140
14 October	Savaii Women and Youth	166
20 October	Upolu Mayors and Farmers	130
21 October	Upolu Women and Youth	184
		Total = 672*

*Aside from Task Team and sub-committee members facilitating consultations

Consultants held some direct consultations with stakeholders (GOS/MNRE, 2004d:43). The capacity assessment was completed following a special meeting by the consultants for members of the Task Team.

Due to gaps in the unintentional releases of dioxins and furans, the NTT approved a separate workshop for stakeholders including those of the Samoa Association of Manufacturers and Exporters.

The consultants held a further workshop for stakeholders jointly for priorities and objective setting, and to consider the draft strategies and action plans. A brief presentation of the draft NIP was made by PECL at the 3rd National Chemicals Awareness Day.

Final Consultation Workshops were held with: Samoa Umbrella for Non-Government Organisations; Ministries, Corporations, Boards and Authorities (Table 1; Figure 5); Mayors and Farmer Associations, Women and Youth representatives, separately for Savaii and Upolu. A short presentation followed by questions and answers was made to the Samoa Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Inc.

The consultations were held in Samoan, with the exception of that for Ministries et al. following official opening in Samoan was held in English. Following the usual opening by a Clergyman, the CEO or Assistant CEO gave a keynote address, followed by the project's documentary video. A questionnaire on the video and other awareness media was collected for evaluation. Working groups were provided copy of the draft NIP and recorded and presented recommendations on the eight main strategies and action plans.

A further meeting was held with the Samoa Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Inc. with questions following an initial presentation in English. Their recommendations were incorporated and the NIP finalized including photographs. It was prepared for Cabinet endorsement and preparation for the Stockholm Convention 1st Conference of Parties in 2005 following this National Environment Forum for any final inputs.



Figure 5. Consultation Workshop with government agencies and corporations
Source: GOS/MNRE, 2004



Figure 6. Poster developed to promote the theme of 'Stop burning Waste' for the third National Chemicals Awareness Day, April 2004. Photo: MNRE

Awareness

These studies were also referred to in a press release of the ongoing Samoa's Enabling Activity for POPs. This was drafted also into Samoan and displayed and distributed during a 2002 Awareness Day of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MNRE). The press release was updated earlier in 2003 for presentations of the Assistant Director (now Assistant CEO) of Planning and Urban Management Agency (PUMA), in whose Sustainable Development section the Enabling Activity was sited, for the 2nd National Chemicals Awareness Day.

Initial awareness was for the Task Team and followed almost immediately by the launch of the project with the first annual National Chemicals Awareness Day. Awareness has continued throughout the project by the usual media in Samoan and English.

The second Chemical Awareness Day focused on unnecessary burning and which was continued in the most recent under the theme 'Please stop burning waste/Taofi le susunu o otaota' and launch of a video on that subject followed by later television broadcasts (Figure

6). As well as in Samoa, presentation was made on this at a Sub-regional workshop in New Zealand.

Awareness also includes that for the 'POPs in PICs' shipment for disposal (MNRE, 2004; Figures 7-10) which was done on 14 December 2004 on Forum Samoa II following consents of Tonga and Fiji for transits for disposal north of Brisbane, Australia. Power point presentations on "POPs in Samoa's Environment" were given by the Project Manager and Coordinator firstly at the University of the South Pacific, Alafua Campus in preparation for the Australian consultants disposal work. Later, at the National University of Samoa the presentation was updated to include report of the packaging and containerization of the POPs and intractable pesticides for disposal.



Figure 7. Agriculture Store Corporation's Taele Saifoloi and colleague inspecting intractable pesticides for disposal. Photo: MNRE



Figure 8. Drained Contaminated Transformers on pallets prepared for disposal. Photo: MNRE



Figure 9. Container loaded with UN drums of intractable pesticides and contaminated oil with transformers. Photo: MNRE.



Figure 10. Locked container being inspected by EPC's Sale Faletolu and PUMA's Sunny Seuseu. Photo: MNRE

Conclusion

The development of the NIP for POPs in Samoa has provided another case study or model for possible application in other similar cases.

References

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