

1- Background

Article 14 of the Basel Convention provides for the establishment of Regional Centres for training and technology transfer regarding the management of hazardous wastes and other wastes and the minimisation of their generation. The main goal of the Regional Centres is to strengthen the capacity of governments of the regions for the implementation of the Basel Convention, both technically and legally/institutionally.

In 1995, by Decision III/19 of the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties, Egypt was selected as the site of a Sub-Regional Centre "for Arabic-speaking countries in Africa, which will serve the other Arabic-speaking countries".

The fifth Conference of the Parties of the Basel Convention placed the Regional Centers high on the agenda for the Convention's next decade, seeing them as a logical and efficient means for raising awareness about the Convention's obligations and assisting in their implementation.

A Framework Agreement between the Secretariat of the Basel Convention on the Control of transboundary movements of hazardous wastes and their disposal and the Arab Republic of Egypt on the Establishment of a Basel Convention Regional Centre for Training and Technology Transfer for the Arab States.

The SCC is composed of seven members namely Algeria, Jordan, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, The Arab Republic of Egypt, the representative of the Secretariat of the Basel Convention, and the Director of the Centre, ex officio.

The mandate of the Centre Steering Committee is to advise the Centre on the development and implementation of the activities of the Centre relevant to its regional role and to enhance national support to its activities from the Parties served by the Centre, including endorsing its work plan. The SSC is, therefore, one of the primary organs responsible for directing the activities of the Centre, and should oversee the Project being financed by the Government of Finland. A Steering Committee (PSC) was created to oversee the project and report to the SCC. The SSC shall provide the mandate for the PSC to do its work.

The Parties' membership of the PSC was chosen as those of the Steering committee of the Centre (SCC) to enhance consistency and coordination, and to maximize use of limited resources. A call for holding the First Steering Committee of the Centre was issued by Prof. M.M. El Aref, Director of the Centre, to be held in Cairo-Egypt at the 14th of March 2006. Dr. Ashraf El Maghraby and Dr. Essam Morsy, BCRC-Egypt staff, were appointed as repertoires to take minutes and prepare the final report of the meeting.

2-List of Participants

2-1 Members of the Project Steering Committee

| | |
|---|--|
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3- Agenda

"The Basel Convention Regional Centre for Training and Technology Transfer for Arab States in Cairo"

Steering Committee of the Centre (SCC)

Date: March, 14th 2006

Venue: Pyramisa Hotel, 60 Giza st., Cairo, Egypt.

| Time | Activity |
|---------------|---|
| 10:30 – 10:45 | Welcome and opening by the Director of the BCRC_Egypt. |
| 10:45 – 10:55 | Presentation of the agenda items and adopting the meeting agenda. Approving the participation of observers. (BCRC_Egypt Director) |
| 10:55 – 11:05 | Mandate of the Steering Committee and mode of operation- options for Terms of Office for membership and decision on best operative option (SBC representative). |
| 11:05 – 11:15 | Election of the Chairperson and the Vice-Chairperson of the Steering Committee of the Centre |
| 11:15 - 11:30 | Presentation of the Centre activities since 2003 up to end of 2006 and relation to the Basel Convention Strategic Plan and resolutions of the COP (BCRC_Egypt). |
| 11:30 – 11:40 | Resources, Financial Standing, Organizational Structure of the Centre (BCRC_Egypt). |
| 11:40 – 11:55 | Discussion on Article VII (3) of the Framework Agreement, staggered terms of office for members of the Steering Committee (SBC). |
| 11:55 – 12:15 | Coffee break |
| 12:15 – 12:45 | <p>Projects</p> <p>Project 1: The Basel Convention Regional Centre for Training and Technology Transfer for Arab States in Cairo - Capacity Building for the Implementation of the Basel Convention (The Finnish government contribution; and resources allocations).</p> <p>Project 2: (pipeline) Regional integrated information network on chemicals and waste in Arabic Speaking Countries in Africa in the context of the NEPAD environment initiative.</p> |
| 12:45 – 13:00 | Mechanisms to secure financial autonomy for the Centre to carry out additional activities/projects other than those supported from the government of Finland. (Other Centers, contributions of the countries, other). |
| 13:00 – 13:30 | <p>Other issues</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identification of institutes-in addition to the Focal Point to be linked with the Centre as national technical entity. 2. Approve contacting and advertising technology suppliers and services during meetings, workshops or in publications of the Centre as a source of funds. 3. Discussion of seed funds and contributions of member countries. 4. Date and venue of the next SCC meeting |
| 13:30 – 14:30 | Lunch break. |
| 14:30 – 15:00 | Decisions and conclusions |
| 15:00 – 16:30 | Brain Storm session. |

4- Steering Committee Activities

The Centre Steering Committee activities started at 10.30 AM in the 14th of March 2006 at the Pyramisa Hotel in Cairo-Egypt. Reference documents were distributed to the Project Steering Committee members that include the agenda of the meeting, the list of participants, the Centre Framework Agreement, the organizational structure of the centre, the Work-plan of 2006, and the budget breakdown of the year 2006.

4-1 Welcome and opening by the Director of the BCRC-Egypt.

The Centre Steering Committee started by an opening speech by Prof. Mortada El Aref, director of the Centre. He expressed his gratitude to the member of the Steering Committee to accept his invitation to such important event that represents a step forward towards the establishment and future stabilization of the Centre. Dr. El Aref pointed out to the meeting as a gathering to discuss the role of the center and the implementation of its activities and to develop recommended plans and strategies to achieve the goals of the Basel Convention in the region. He also mentioned to the direct role of the Centre in providing the mandate for BCRC-Egypt' Finland funded project and its governing body; namely; the project steering committee (PSC).

Dr. El Aref praised the Basel Convention as one of the most comprehensive and significant international treaty currently in effect. He described in brief the role of the Basel Convention in managing hazardous wastes through integrated work plans that are distributed among the fifteen regional centers belong to the Basel Convention.

Dr. El Aref went through the history of the Framework Agreement and the legal status of the centre. He also recounted the activities done by BCRC-Egypt even before a framework agreement was officially signed. Dr. El Aref concluded by expressing his appreciation to the generous contribution offered to the Centre from the Government of Finland and to the non-stopped effort done by the Secretariat of the Basel Convention to make this centre a reality.

4-2 Presentation of the Agenda items and adopting the Meeting Agenda

Dr. Mortada El Aref, BCRC-Egypt-director, presented the agenda items and asked the Centre Steering Committee members to approve it and approving the participation of the observers. He also asked them to go through the provided reference documents namely the Framework Agreement, the Detailed Work Plan of the year 2006, the time table of the project work plan, and the budget breakdown of the year 2006 work plan, as the main documents to be discussed during the meeting. Members of the SCC approved the agenda items and approved the participation of the observers.

4-3 Mandate of the Steering Committee and mode of operation- options for Terms of Office for membership and decision on best operative option

Mr. Nelson Sabogal was given the floor to present the mandate and the Terms of Reference of the Centre Steering Committee (annex 1). He started by providing a brief account on the history of the Basel Convention, its main pillars, its objectives, and its Strategic Plan.

Mr. Sabogal pointed out to the Strategic Plan and the Ministerial Statement issued by the Basel Convention and the policy directions it acknowledged namely; hazardous waste minimization, life-cycle approach, integrated waste management, and the

regional approach. He also mentioned that the Strategic Plan is focusing on some waste streams that requiring priority attention namely; POPs wastes, e-wastes, household wastes mixed with hazardous wastes, biomedical and healthcare wastes, used lead-acid batteries, and used oils.

Mr. Sabogal went through the commitments of the Steering committee as the primary organ that is responsible for directing the activities of the Centre and overseeing the Project being financed by the Government of Finland. He explained that the Steering Committee of the Centre (SCC-1) is composed of seven members, five of them are parties served by the Centre namely; Algeria, Jordan, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, and The Arab Republic of Egypt as a permanent member. The other two members are the representative of the Secretariat of Basel Convention and the Director of the Centre, ex officio.

Mr. Sabogal then went through the Terms of Reference of the Steering Committee of the Centre as shown in annex 1 of this report. He pointed out that the Committee will meet at least once every two years to review the progress in the implementation of the agreed activities and adjust the budgetary allocations, if necessary.

Mr. Sabogal pointed out that the Secretariat, the Director of the Centre or the representatives of the Governments of Egypt and Finland may call for additional meetings of the Steering Committee of the Centre if some unforeseen urgent problems could not be resolved by correspondence in the intercessional period.

4-4 Election of the Chairperson and the Vice-Chairperson

Dr. Mortada El Aref, BCRC-Egypt-director, brought the members back to the next item of the meeting agenda. He reminded the members of the Steering Committee that for the effective legitimacy of the committee, a Chairperson and a Vice-Chairperson should be elected by consensus from among its members for a four (4) year term.

The Steering Committee has named Mr. Adel El Shafee, the Egyptian focal point to the Basel Convention, to be the Chairperson and Dr. Mohammed El Khashashna, the Jordanian representative as the Vice-Chairperson. Dr. El Aref asked Mr. Adel El Shafee to head the meeting and hit the next item in the agenda.

4-5 Presentation of the Centre activities since 2003 up to end of 2006

Mr. Adel El Shafee, the Chairperson of the Steering Committee asked Dr. El Aref to give an account on the activities of the Centre. Dr. El Aref started by describing the content of the provided reference materials for the members to follow him while presenting the activities.

Dr. El Aref presentation began with a brief description of the role of the Basel Convention in the Environmentally Sound Management of Hazardous Wastes and the role of the Regional Centers in achieving this management. He pointed out to the Basel Convention Regional Centre for Training and Technology Transfer for the Arab States in Cairo (BCRC-Egypt) and the facilities provided by the Egyptian Government as in-kind contribution. He also mentioned that the Centre is now hosted by the Cairo University Centre for Environmental Hazard Mitigation (CEHM) which

is one of the many specially designed units that belong to the structure of Cairo University.

Dr. El Aref pointed out to the general work plan of the Centre projected to the year 2008 including projects for the implementation of the Strategic Plan of the Basel Convention, regional or sub-regional workshops/seminars organized for technical experts, and capacity building workshops.

Dr. El Aref mentioned the Landfill project "Preparation of a set of Tools for the Selection, Design and Operation of Hazardous Waste Landfills in Hyper-Dry Areas" as the first project implemented by the staff of the Centre and the Training Manual produced as a sub activity of this project. Dr. El Aref emphasized on the out come of the project in the form three guidelines with associated glossary for landfill technical terms all have been developed in both Arabic and English Language. Dr. El Aref added that those guidelines are now accredited by the Basel Convention. He then went through the list of training workshops, seminars and meetings organized and co-organized by the staff of the Centre both in Egypt, and in Syria, Jordan, and Bahrian.

Mr. Adel El Shafee, the Chairperson of the Steering Committee, praised the effort done by the director and staff of the centre and the valuable achievements done so far even before a framework agreement was officially signed. He also mentioned that the activities of the Centre match well with the strategic plan of the Basel Convention.

Mr. Sabogal announced that the landfill guidelines are now posted in the Basel Convention Web Site and will be soon a Basel Convention publication.

Dr. El Aref announced that the guidelines will be sent to the focal points within 15 days and will be available both in hard copies and soft copies.

4-6 Resources, Financial Standing, Organizational Structure of the Centre

Dr. El Aref presented, with a flow chart, the Organizational Structure of the Centre and the key organs namely the Director, the Facilitator, and the Coordinators. He mentioned the other organs such as the Financial Controller, the Accountant, the Secretary Staff, and the Web Master. He also noted that the Organizational Structure of the Centre will be headed by the Steering Committee of the Centre. Dr. El Aref concluded by explaining the mechanism of interaction and integrity among the different organs of the work force.

Dr. El Aref presented the financial standing of the Centre for the period 1 Sep. 2003 - 1 March 2006. He clarified that, there are two separate accounts one for the Centre and another for the project. He went through the budget balance for each activity implemented by the Centre during the period 1 Sep. 2003 - 1 March 2006 including the total funds received, the total application of those funds, and the ending balance at 1/3/2006.

Dr. El Aref also explained the budget balance of the, almost done, landfill project. He presented the project components costs which include three expert group meetings held in Cairo- Egypt along the course of the project duration. He also presented the coasts of the training component held in Bahrain and the costs of the documents production and translation.

Dr. El Aref pointed out that the financial mechanism of the centre is based primarily on the basis of expenditure of funded-projects and concluded by raising the issue of the Centre financial sustainability to carry out future additional activities/projects other than those supported from the Government of Finland.

4-7 Staggered terms of office for members of the Steering Committee

Mr. Sabogal was given the floor and presented the view of the Secretariat of the Basel Convention to adopt staggered terms of membership for the Steering Committee in compliance with Article VII (3) of the Framework Agreement. He added that the proposed staggered terms of membership is a normal international practice to facilitate rotation of membership, ensure that institutional knowledge is maintained and effectively transferred among the members, and ensure continued momentum and increase dynamism of the work of the SCC. Mr. Sabogal went through the proposed staggered terms of membership that is summarized as follow:

- For the first SCC, two countries be nominated to serve for two years, and two countries be nominated to serve for four years (noting that Egypt is a permanent member).
- After that, all future nominations would be for four year terms, as per the Agreement.

Mr. Sabogal noted that the Steering Committee should make a decision as to which of the countries should be nominated for the initial two-year terms, in case this proposal is accepted.

Dr. Mohammed El Khashashna mentioned that the issue of participation of some country members for 4 years and others for 2 years is not understood to him as proposed by Mr. Sabogal.

Dr. Yossif El Mehrik, Libya (observer), suggested reviewing the experience of the other Basel Convention Regional Centers in this respect.

Mohammed Elawa, Ministry of Foreign Affairs-Egypt (observer), suggested a mechanism for membership rotation in which the 4 member countries selected for the first SCC continue participation for 4 years. After two years additional 2 countries, one Asian Arab Country and other African Arab Country, will be nominated to have 6 member countries, in addition to Egypt as a permanent member, during the period 2008-2010. Those member countries who are participated for 4 years will be replaced in a periodic basis by others alphabetically.

The Chairperson as well as members of the Steering Committee appreciated the proposal of Mr. Elawa and named him and Dr. Mohammed El Khashashna to formulate this mechanism to be presented to the Egyptian Government to adopt it.

4-8 Projects

Dr. El Aref mentioned the Finish funded project Basel Convention Regional Centre for the Arab States, Capacity Building for the Implementation of the Basel Convention "A Better Environment for Human Health and Well-Being" and the different activities under this project. He announced that the BCRC-Egypt

coordinators of these activities will present the detailed work plans envisaged under this project, within the framework of the Project Steering Committee (PSC) activities. Dr. El Aref then presented the Work plan of the first year (2006) and noted that the work plan will focus on three issues (Inventories, legal implementation and used-oils) in order to set the path for the second and third year activities. He concluded by presenting the time table that was set against the different activities of the project.

Dr. El Aref pointed out to another important project namely "Regional Integrated Information Network on Chemicals and Waste in Africa in the Context of the Nepad Environment Project" also known as the (Pipeline Project). He mentioned that the project will be funded through the Canada Pops Fund with possible co funding through the European Union and Switzerland.

Dr. El Aref added that the project aims to build capacity in and through the Basel Convention Regional Centre (BCRC) in Egypt by contributing to the implementation in a coordinated manner of the chemicals and wastes related MEAs under the patronage of the NEPAD Environment Initiative. He also clarified that the project will build on the cooperation between the NEPAD Environment Secretariat and the relevant MEAs on chemicals and wastes in Africa, including the Basel Convention, the Rotterdam Convention and the Stockholm Convention. Dr. El Aref concluded by explaining that the project will focus on information networking and integrated chemicals and waste policy development.

4-9 Mechanisms to secure financial autonomy for the Centre

The aim of achieving sustainability of the centre operations at the end of the three-year work-programme was discussed, and the need to make the best use of the financial resources available and turn them towards financial sustainability was shared by all members of the Steering Committee. All members appreciated a long-term financial planning and mechanisms for BCRC-Egypt to increase its own fund-raising activities. In this context **Mr. Adel El Shafee**, the Chairperson of the Steering Committee, suggested using the Guidelines for the Minimum Requirement for Hazardous Waste Landfill's Site Selection, Design, Operation, and Monitoring in Hyper Dry Areas, for repeated local and regional training programs that may lead to potential financial benefits. He also added that those guidelines are already used by the concerned departments of the Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency (EEAA) and other Directorates and Municipalities in Egypt.

Mr. Adel El Shafee also suggested that the Centre should seek collaboration with the industrial sector and NGOs not only in Egypt but also in the different Arab countries. He also urged the members of the Steering committee to consult with their respective governments whom are parties or have representatives in the governance of the international funding agencies e.g. WB, GEF, NEPAD, FAO, SAICM, and others to seek fund raising mechanisms for the Centre.

Dr. Mohammed El Khashashna pointed to the importance of advertising for these guidelines and stressed on the point that stakeholders should know of the existence of those guidelines. In this context he suggested implementing national workshops for marketing those guidelines.

Mr. Mohammed Elawa, Ministry of Foreign Affairs-Egypt (observer) expressed his willingness to see a marketable outcome from each activity implemented by the Centre similar to the landfill project guidelines.

Mr. Sabogal urged BCRC-Egypt to undertake a review of local and regional financial institutions that BCRC-Egypt could envisage for long-term support or specific support on a project basis relevance to the implementation of the Basel Convention. In this context, Mr. Sabogal mentioned the Arab Fund for Socio- economic Development (Kuwait), the National Bank of Abu Dahbi for Development, and the Islamic Bank as a possible funding agent.

Mr. Mahboub Hassan, United Arab Emirates, raised the issue of financial commitments of the Arab Countries to the Centre. In this context, he suggested contacting the permanent representatives of the Arab League to raise the issue of the Centre financial support to be included on the agenda of their next official meeting.

Dr. Mohammed El Khashashna suggested reviewing the financial mechanisms of the other Basel Convention Regional Centers and documenting any success stories in this respect.

Other issues were also discussed including identification of institutes - in addition to the Focal Point to be linked with the Centre as national technical entity and approve contacting and advertising technology suppliers and services during meetings, workshops or in publications of the Centre as a source of funds. The seed funds and contributions of member countries were also raised during the brain storming discussions. The Meeting concluded by approving the date and venue of the next SCC meeting.

4-10 Recommendations and conclusions

5-10-1 Staggered terms of office for members of the Steering Committee

The members of the Steering Committee agreed upon the following statements and recommendations:

The Steering Committee:

1- Naming Mr. Mohammed Elawa, Ministry of Foreign Affairs-Egypt and Dr. Mohammed El Khashashna, Jordanian representative to formulate a mechanism for the Staggered terms of office for members of the next Steering Committee to be presented to the Egyptian Government to adopt it as proposed in section 5-7 of this report.

5-10-2 Mechanisms to secure financial autonomy for the Centre

The members of the Steering Committee agreed upon the following statements and recommendations:

The Steering Committee:

2- Requests the member countries serviced by the BCRC-Egypt to verbalizing their financial commitments to the Centre.

3- Requests the BCRC-Egypt to negotiate with the industrial sector and the environmentally friendly technology suppliers in Egypt and the different Arab

countries to advertise for their logos and products during meetings, workshops or in publications of the Centre as a source of funds.

4- Encourages the involvement of community groups and local NGOs in the work plan of the Centre by submitting proposal for them and co organizing their funded projects.

5- Requests the director of the BCRC-Egypt and the Egyptian focal point to the Basel Convention to raise the issue of the financial support of the Centre during the next meeting of the National Team of the Arab Countries for the follow up of the MEAs that belongs to the Arab League.

6- Urges the members of the Steering committee to consult with their respective governments whom are parties or have representatives in the governance of the international funding agencies e.g. WB, GEF, NEPAD, FAO, SAICM, and others to seek fund raising mechanisms for the Centre.

7- Requests the BCRC-Egypt to contact other Arab funding agents such as the Arab Fund for Socio- economic Development (Kuwait), the National Bank of Abu Dahbi for Development, and the Islamic Bank to support the Centre activities.

8- Encourages BCRC-Egypt to implement paid training programmes and short course for interested stockholders using the guidelines of the landfill project and set an overhead to the Centre for those activities.

9- Highlighting the contribution of funding agents in all the products of the Centre as well as in news letters and multimedia to encourage others to contribute.

5-10-3 General recommendations

The members of the Steering Committee agreed upon the following statements and recommendations:

The Steering Committee:

10- Recognizes the priority issues and the needs of the countries serviced by BCRC-Egypt in any future activities of the Centre.

11- Posting on the Web Site of BCRC-Egypt the success stories on the environmentally sound management of hazardous wastes in the Arab Region.

12- Requests the BCRC-Egypt to prepare a half annual progress reports to follow up the implementation of the different activities of the Centre and funds allocations and expenditure.

13- Recognizes the role of community groups and local NGOs in the implementations of the Basel Convention.

Annex 1

Terms of References (ToRs) for Steering Committee of the Centre

1. A Steering Committee shall be established to advise the Centre on the development and implementation of the activities of the Centre relevant to its regional role and to enhance national support to its activities from the Parties served by the Centre.
2. The Steering Committee shall develop and endorse the Business Plan for the Centre and oversee its implementation.
3. The Steering Committee shall be composed of five members nominated by the Parties served by the Centre through a process of consultations, for a period of four (4) years. The representative of the Arab Republic of Egypt shall be one of the five (5) members.
4. The members of the Steering Committee shall be experts of recognized standing and with experience in the environmentally sound management of hazardous wastes and other wastes.
5. The representative of the Secretariat and the Director of the Centre referred to in Article XII of the present Agreement shall participate in the meetings of the Steering Committee *ex officio*.
6. Donors and other stakeholders, including relevant non-governmental organisations, entities, private sector organisations, academic institutions or other organisations may be invited to attend the meetings of the Steering Committee as observers.
7. The first meeting of the Steering Committee shall be convened by the Director of the Centre in consultation with the Secretariat within ninety (90) days from the date of signature of the present Agreement.
8. The members of the Steering Committee shall elect by consensus the Chairperson and the Vice-Chairperson of the Committee from among its members for a four (4) year term.
9. The Chairperson, in consultation with the Secretariat and the Director of the Centre, shall convene the ordinary meetings of the Steering Committee at least once every two (2) years. Extraordinary meetings may be convened by the Chairperson in consultation with the Secretariat.
10. The Party, whose expert is a member of the Steering Committee, shall defray the expenses of that member while performing the Committee's duties.
11. The Egyptian Ministry of State for Environment Affairs, in consultation with the Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs shall designate a competent national authority/committee to mobilize and coordinate the national inputs into the Centre.