

Dear colleagues supporting the IPCP initiative,

we are contacting you today because we want to provide you with an overview of the next steps that we are planning in the development of the International Panel on Chemical Pollution, IPCP.

We are very glad that the IPCP initiative has received so much positive response. This response is very motivating and we are now working to develop the IPCP from a mere idea into a real organization. This needs some work and enthusiasm – and more: your support is essential for the IPCP to come into existence.

There are several points for which we would like to ask you for your opinion and concrete input or feedback.

1. Information about IPCP. You find the current documents about the IPCP initiative and also the IPCP declaration and list of signatures at www.sust-chem.ethz.ch/news/IPCP.html.

2. Contact to Governments. The IPCP is intended to be a global network of scientists. In our discussions with government representatives, we learned that it would be ideal if the IPCP can establish itself as an independent organization but that it should inform governments about its development and ongoing work on a regular basis.

Therefore, we would like to ask you to provide us with the contact information of some governmental representatives in your countries who might be interested in the work of the IPCP.

These representatives may come from the chemical management authorities, environmental protection agency or your SAICM focal point. We are planning to send a newsletter to these individuals on a regular basis.

3. Collaboration with SAICM. The secretariat of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM, see www.chem.unep.ch/saicm) has suggested that a link between SAICM and IPCP be established.

SAICM was adopted by the International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM) in Dubai in February 2006 following a three-year, multi-stakeholder and multi-sector development process. One of the risk reduction objectives set out in the SAICM Overarching Policy Strategy is to ensure that, by 2020, chemicals or chemical uses that pose an unreasonable and otherwise unmanageable risk to human health and the environment are no longer produced, based on a science-based risk assessment. The Strategy identifies groups of chemicals for possible prioritisation for assessment and related studies.

The objective of the contact between SAICM and IPCP would be that the IPCP provides some scientific input for the further prioritization and assessment of chemicals identified in the SAICM Overarching Policy Strategy. In this context, IPCP could be viewed as a distinct SAICM stakeholder group, representing a cross-section of the scientific community, and entitled to contribute to the work of the ICCM as a non-governmental participant. In particular, IPCP could provide a valuable, though

not exclusive, scientific perspective for the ICCM's discussion of emerging issues. As such, IPCP also could apply for funding of activities.

To this end, IPCP could include in its work plan a short review of the state of scientific knowledge on the groups of chemicals noted in the SAICM Overarching Policy Strategy for possible prioritisation for assessment and related studies. The output would be a report that would serve as a contribution to the ICCM's discussion of emerging policy issues at its second session in Geneva in May 2009.

We think that this is a very good opportunity to initiate the concrete work of the IPCP and suggest that the IPCP enters this exchange with SAICM. The IPCP can submit proposals to the Quick Start Programme (QSP) of SAICM and so receive funds to implement its work. However, in order to do so, we need a core group of scientists who are willing to contribute with time and expertise so that we can draft a concept note to be submitted to the QSP and in general to make a formal commitment towards SAICM.

Please let us know if you are interested in working on the prioritization and assessment of chemicals of concern in contact with SAICM and, if possible, pass this request to colleagues who may also be interested.

4. IPCP Priority Topics and Working Groups. To identify work areas of the IPCP, we suggest that topics or issues be collected that should be addressed by the IPCP in the near future. For each topic, a working group can be established that compiles relevant information, evaluates the information, and prepares a document that can be published as an IPCP report. Working groups that can be organized in a flexible manner seem to be the best way to initiate a work process without creating a large organizational structure. As soon as a certain group of scientists agree that they would like to form such a working group, they can start their work.

In combination with the priority topics, we also should identify the audience that needs scientific information about these topics. Below you find a first list of possible topics that is meant to serve as a starting point and a basis for discussion. To work effectively and receive attention, we have to identify urgent and relatively well defined questions along with the audiences that need answers to these questions.

The list given below contains only a couple of examples based on some topics from our own work areas. We are aware that it will take some time and discussion to develop a consolidated list of relevant and well-defined topics that can serve as a basis for the work of the IPCP. Therefore, we see it as a first result of the IPCP to present its list of priority topics. It should be noted that the activities should address issues of global concern, be normative and trend-setting, and not interfere with already ongoing projects in other gremia. Of course, the list will remain open for changes and amendments.

Please provide us with your suggestions for the list of priority topics that should be addressed by the IPCP. Please specify if you are willing to work in a working group on a topic of your interest and suggest, if possible, also other individuals who may be interested as well.

Topic	Audience
<i>Assessment schemes and methodologies; priority setting and screening</i>	
Priorization of chemicals of concern (with respect to damage for human health and the environment)	SAICM
<i>Monitoring of environmental status</i>	
Suitability of passive air samplers for POPs monitoring, evaluation of active samplers vs. passive samplers	Governments, bodies of international conventions/protocols, ...
<i>Region-specific issues of concern</i>	
Implications of DDT usage in malaria control (environmental exposure, human exposure)	Governments of countries who want to use DDT, bodies of international conventions/protocols, ...
<i>Identification of potential and/or emerging issues</i>	
Sources, pathways of exposure, and effects of perfluorinated substances	Governments, bodies of international conventions/protocols, ...
Reviewing polybrominated aromatic compounds used: emissions, physicochemical characteristics, stability, and effects; replacements?	Governments, bodies of international conventions/protocols, ...
<i>Etc.</i>	

**These are only first examples – the table is to be expanded.
In the case of SAICM, a first contact has been established.
For other audiences, this still needs to be done; this is why they are only given
in general terms in the table.**

5. IPCP Session at Dioxin 2007 Conference. We are planning to organize a session about the IPCP at the 2007 Dioxin Conference in Tokyo. In this session, we want to demonstrate why the IPCP is needed and discuss topics that it will address. We would like to invite you to participate in this session and

- either illustrate current problems with chemical pollution in your country/region and how the IPCP can work on these problems
- or discuss pollution issues of international relevance and point out which role the IPCP can take in the work on such issues.

If you are interested in contributing to the planned session in Tokyo, please let us know what topic you would like to choose.

6. Funding. In the long term, the IPCP needs a budget to run a secretariat and cover expenses for some traveling, etc. If you are in contact with government representatives in your country, would it be possible that you present the IPCP initiative to them and try to find out if your government would be willing to provide financial support for the IPCP? And/or could you provide us with the contact information of additional organizations who may be possible sources of funding for the IPCP?

7. Structure of the IPCP. To establish a more formal structure, we are planning to register the IPCP as a non-profit society in Switzerland. To assign some responsibilities within the IPCP, we suggest that the IPCP has a Steering Committee and a Chair. The six authors of this letter are willing to work in the Steering Committee for a certain period of time and agreed that Martin Scheringer should be the Chair of the IPCP, also for a certain period of time. We are planning to develop a more formal procedure describing how individual scientists can become members of the IPCP and how the steering committee and the chair of the IPCP are elected.

Please send us your feedback to the points raised above. On the basis of your input, we will prepare a response and inform you about the next steps in the development of the IPCP. Of course, you are most welcome to pass this letter on to other interested colleagues. This letter is also available from www.sust-chem.ethz.ch/news/IPCP.html.

We are looking forward to a fruitful collaboration with all of you.

Martin Scheringer	scheringer@chem.ethz.ch
Åke Bergman	ake.bergman@mk.su.se
Heidelore Fiedler	HFiedler@unep.ch
Ivan Holoubek	holoubek@recetox.muni.cz
Noriyuki Suzuki	nsuzuki@nies.go.jp
Cornelius Zetzsch	Cornelius.Zetzsch@uni-bayreuth.de

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