Developing Effective National PCBs Strategies

Practical Insights and case studies

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PCBs EXPERT

CONTENT

01. Structure of the strategy document

02. Case studies

03. Conclusions and recommendations

SIWG, regional workshops, document consultation among Parties and Observers

UNITED NATIONS

UNEP

UNEP/POPS/COP.12/INF/11

Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants

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Conference of the Parties to the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants
Twelfth meeting
Geneva, 28 April–9 May 2025
Item 5 (a) (iii) of the provisional agenda*

Matters related to the implementation of the Convention: measures to reduce or eliminate releases from intentional production and use: polychlorinated biphenyls

Revised strategy for Parties to meet the 2025 and 2028 goals on polychlorinated biphenyls of the Stockholm Convention

Note by the Secretariat

As is mentioned in the note by the Secretariat on polychlorinated biphenyls (UNEP/POPS/COP.12/6), the annex to the present note sets out a revised strategy for Parties to meet the 2025 and 2028 goals on polychlorinated biphenyls of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants prepared by the Secretariat in collaboration with the small intersessional working group on polychlorinated biphenyls re-established in paragraph 6 of decision SC-9/3. The present note, including its annex, has not been formally edited.

* UNEP/POPS/COP.12/1.

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Annex

Revised strategy for Parties to meet the 2025 and 2028 goals on polychlorinated biphenyls of the Stockholm Convention*

December 2024

* The studies and other information referred to in the strategy do not necessarily reflect the views of the Secretariat, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) or the United Nations. The designations employed and the presentation of the material in such studies and references do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Secretariat, UNEP or the United Nations concerning geopolitical situations or the legal status of any country, territory, area or city or its authorities.

https://www.pops.int/TheConvention/ConferenceoftheParties/Meetings/COP12/tabid/9744/ctl/Download/mid/28019/Default.aspx?id=14&ObjID=34752

Structure of the strategy document

UNEP/POPS/COP.12/INF/11

Table of contents

Actions to meet the 2025 and 2028 goals

Cross-cutting elements

Model for national strategies

Structure of the strategy document

Actions required to meet the goals (2025 – 2028)

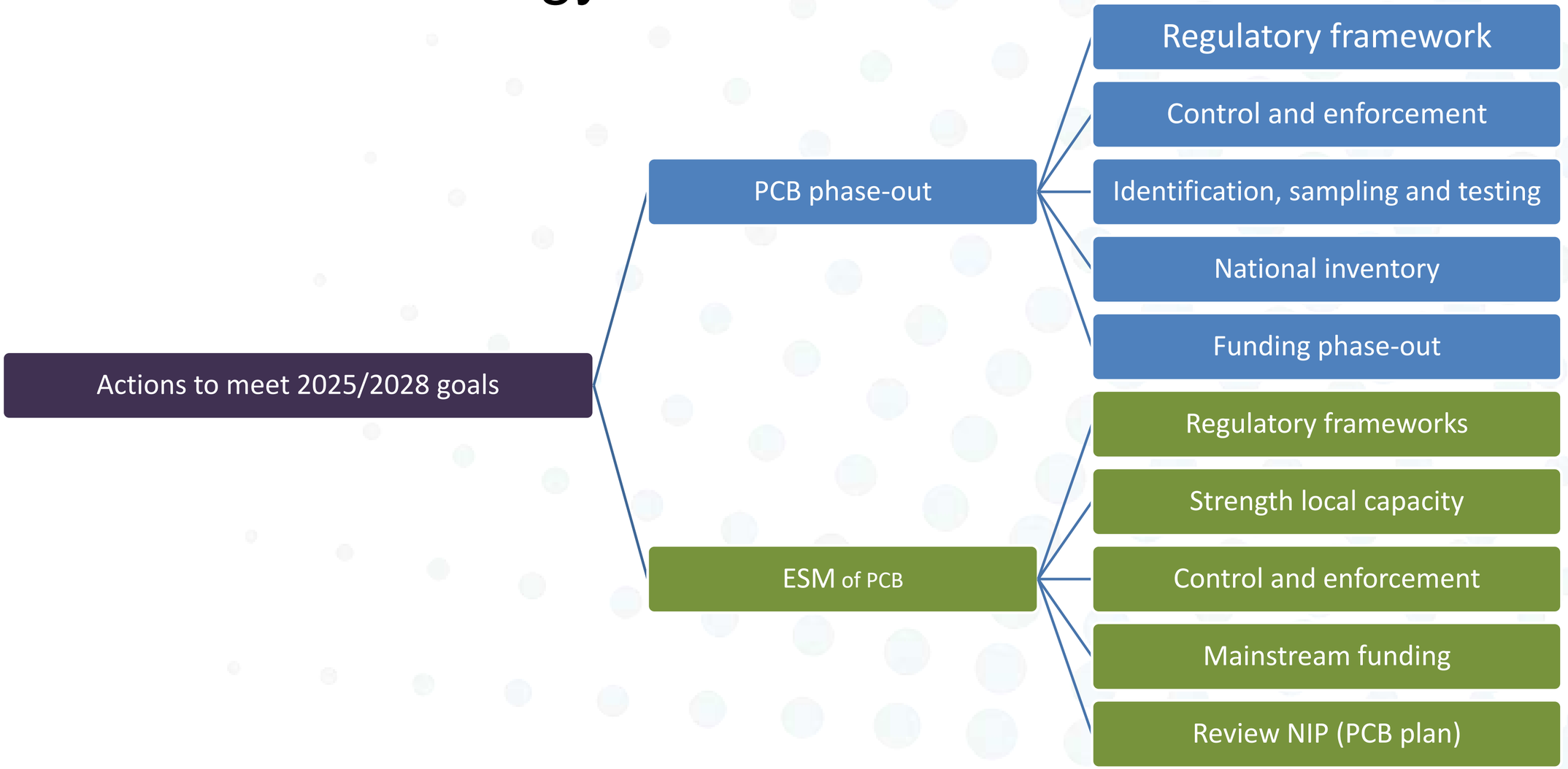
A. Phase-out of PCB equipment

Parties should make determined efforts to identify, label and remove from use equipment (e.g. transformers, capacitors or other receptacles containing liquid stocks) by 2025, prioritizing the ESM of highly concentrated PCBs.

B. Environmentally sound management of PCB waste

Parties should make determined efforts to manage PCB waste in an environmentally sound manner no later than 2028 by ensuring the proper elimination and disposal of this waste.

Structure of the strategy document



Considerations in the regulatory framework for phase-out of PCB equipment

Align the national regulatory framework with the legal obligations and objectives derived from the Stockholm Convention

Include mandatory testing, periodical reporting of inventories and development of phase-out plans as an obligation under national regulatory frameworks to owners and holders.

Periodically review and update regulations, promoting open consultations while issuing and updating environmental regulations

Involve the authorities of the energy and utilities sectors to develop viable alternatives to be implemented by útilities in these sectors when suspending services during sampling, treatment, and elimination of electrical equipment.

Set proper spaces with stakeholders to gather and analyse their interests, needs and circumstances, progress made, and gaps to be closed.

Annex to the strategy: Model for national PCBs phase out and disposal strategy

Phase-out the use of PCB equipment	
Develop and enforce regulations to prohibit production, import, recovery and use of PCBs in equipment as well as export of PCBs for purposes other than environmentally sound waste management, and the regulatory framework to establish the obligations and requirements at the national and local levels for identifying, labelling, and removing PCB-contaminated equipment and oil from use.	
Stakeholders involved:	Ministry of environment; Ministry of energy;
Time frame:	3 years
Main activities:	Review current regulations to close identified gaps Conduct a Regulatory Impact Assessment Issue a new regulation for public energy service companies Hold workshops and meetings with companies that will be covered by the new regulations
Financing aspects:	National budget

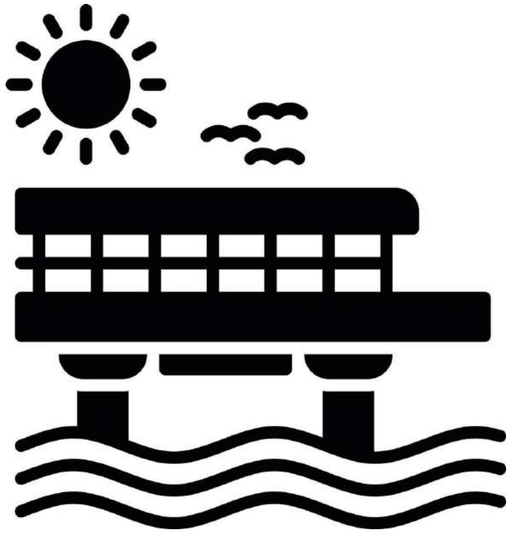
Case studies

ahaslides.com/
OFGEA

Case studies:

Atlantis

Paradise Island



They are officials from their countries' environment ministries, attend the COP, and have worked closely on projects about PCBs...

Regulatory Framework and Regulations: The Foundation

Both countries have developed regulatory frameworks and specific regulations for PCBs

Examples of developments in complementary regulatory frameworks...

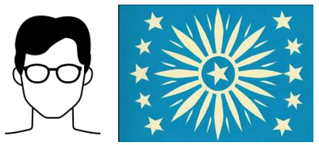
They included the obligation of analysis for the owners:

This has allowed for progress in the national inventory in the electricity sector and large industries.

They must seek mechanisms to find small owners..

They promoted articulation with other sectors and inclusion of their interests and barriers.

They included in the public services regulation how to avoid penalties for service suspension in order to take oil samples for PCBs.



- Regulatory framework ✓
- Control and enforcement
- Identification, sampling and testing
- National inventory
- Funding phase-out
- Regulatory frameworks
- Strength local capacity
- Control and enforcement
- Mainstream funding
- Review NIP (PCB plan)

Environmental Control Schemes: Implementation and Compliance

Both countries have subnational authorities responsible for oversight and control with high staff turnover.

Examples of different approaches to the same challenge…

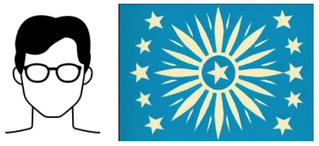
They focus on holding workshops by their national regions.

They have content tailored to the inspectors of each zone in the country.

They make joint technical visits to maintenance workshops.

They focus on the development of virtual courses, which include:

- Prioritized inspection
- Strategic communication manual
- Economic incentives
- Content for the maintenance sector



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National Capacities: Identification, Sampling, and testing…

In both cases, they have a limited supply of analysis laboratories

Both wonder how to optimize equipment classification schemes… one particular example here:

They individually classified the equipment in the inventory

They classified large batches of equipment, transformers, measurement and capacitor banks.

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National Inventories: The Key to Everything

Complete Inventory

Equipment owners are the ones who perform the analyses and report the results.

They have information on 80% of the electrical equipment.

They continue to work to achieve the remaining 20%.

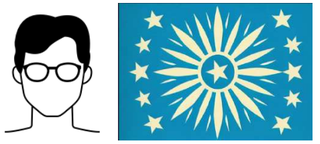
They support small owners and state entities with the analysis.

Partial inventory

The PCB project is the one that performs and pays for the oil analyses and maintains an updated registry.

They extrapolate the results to estimate the total inventory.

They strive to actively search for owners and suspicious equipment..



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Set provisions for phasing out and temporary or interim storage

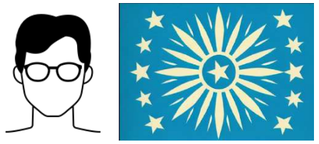
They monitor and control the submission of information by owners.

They promote the regional (subnational) articulation of actors.

They actively search for equipment in partnership with public utility companies.

They promote the results of cost-benefit analyses for equipment replacement at their events.

Both have opportunities for promoting incentives and financing for phasing out contaminated equipment



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Elimination of PCBs: Policies and Cross-Cutting Vision

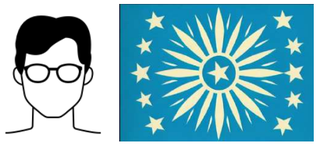
They hold workshops with Customs to apply the control mechanisms of the Basel Convention.

Since the export of waste is becoming more difficult for them and they have a ban on thermal treatment, they are in the process of installing processes based on advanced chemical treatments

They conduct active searches for PCBs in priority zones.

They have already exported the high-concentration PCBs and have stored the oils and waste with low concentrations of PCBs.

Their regulatory framework allows for the licensing of mobile treatment units, in this case, dechlorination with sodium.



Is an advanced chemical treatment economically viable? How to manage the risk of operating these industrial plants?

What are the limitations of sodium dechlorination technology compared to the types of waste contaminated with PCBs?

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Local Capacities for Elimination: Operational Risk Management

Shared learned lessons

"Any facility that handles PCBs, even if it is for temporary storage, requires chemical risk management tools."

"PCB projects can support some facilities in the implementation of risk management methodologies—from temporary storage and land transport to fixed or mobile facilities."

"If we want to offer competitive prices and make the investment recovery viable for companies that implement advanced chemical treatments, we must design them to treat not only PCBs but also the other POPs and other complex wastes."

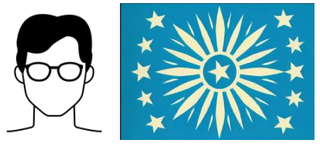
Establish and review national and local policies

Both are working to strengthen inspection, oversight, and control

They are preparing standard manuals and inspection forms for the new treatment technologies.

They are going to use the guide on contaminated sites published by the secretariat.

The country has already regulated the management of contaminated sites and environmental liabilities.



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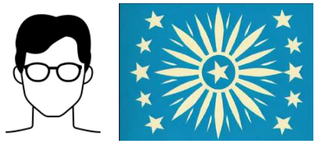
Develop and periodically review the national PCB management plans

Both countries sent their fifth national report, but... it didn't reflect anything they were telling me about!

They are preparing an update to the NIP regarding PCBs and also to include the new POPs.

Both countries are gathering the information for the sixth report to the secretariat, to be presented in 2026



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Actions to meet 2025/2028 goals

PCB phase-out

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ESM of PCB

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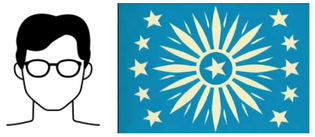

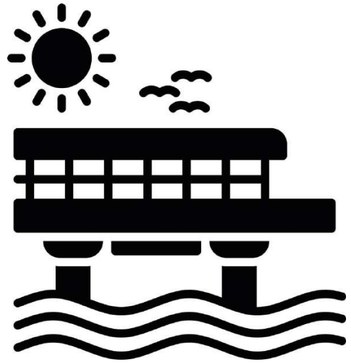

Conclusions and Recommendations

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unitar
United Nations Institute for Training and Research

¡Muchas Gracias!

Edwin Camelo-Martínez
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