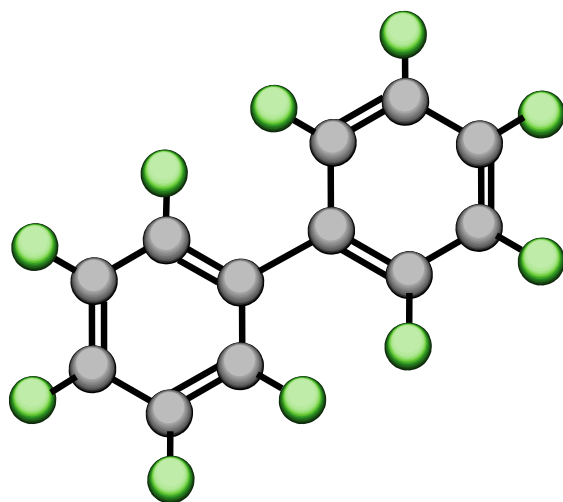


# Regional Workshop for South East Asia on PCBs and their Environmental Sound Management

## Summary Report



Siam City Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand  
8 – 11 April, 2003



## Introduction

Polychlorinated Biphenyls - PCBs - are chemical substances which are persistent, bio accumulating and pose a high risk of causing adverse effects to human health and the environment. It is widely accepted that the use of such persistent and toxic substances cannot be considered a sustainable practise. With the evidence of long-range transport of these substances to regions where they have never been used or produced and the consequent threats they pose to the environment of the whole globe, the international community has called for urgent global action to reduce and eliminate release of these chemicals.

The implementation of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) and the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movement of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal includes the development of environmentally sound management schemes for PCBs.

The objective of the workshop was to enhance the capacity of the region to consolidate a partnership with all stakeholders in view of a coordinated implementation of the activities related to an environmental sound management of PCB-stocks in the individual countries respectively in the region and bring together interested partners from the public and private sector in the region and overseas.

The Focal points of the Secretariat of the Basel Convention and the National Focal Points for the Stockholm Convention on POPs were invited from each country of the South East Asian Region (List of participants see Annex 1).

The aim of this workshop was also to evaluate different views and compare various technical approaches for the inventories of the PCB stocks, the transportation of the stocks and how to dispose the PCBs on an environmental sound manner.

The schedule included short presentations of all stakeholders in this field – the relevant government agencies, the producers and distributors of electricity, experts from different specialist areas, the industry and regional public interest NGOs. At the end of the workshop the legal and organisational matters in the region and technical aspects were

discussed in small working groups (Workshop Agenda – see Annex 2). The conclusions and the recommendations of this workshop are summarized in this workshop report (Details of the Workshop Sessions and Working Groups are attached in Annex 3).

Under Session 2, the PCB problem in Asian countries, current situation presented in individual country reports were discussed. Each of the invited countries had the opportunity to give a short statement about the actual situation in their country - with the highlight on the quantities and individual problems.

In session 6 of the workshop the Siam City Cement Plant in Saraburi has been visited. This cement plant owns facilities for the substitution of fossil fuels by using secondary fuel materials, including used mineral oils. The cement plant has the capacity to dispose of also PCBs and PCB-contaminated mineral oils.

## **Conclusions**

There is a strong need for capacity building and training, which can be addressed under four main items: assessment of training requirements, inventory, assessment and action plans.

- Training requirements must focus among others on awareness raising, availability and exchange of training manuals, training of policymakers, custom officers and field teams for inventory, being implemented as training of the trainers and optimising co-operation of local and foreign experts, in a regional and cross border context.
- Effective inventories will require good and cost effective methodology, active engagement of all stakeholders.
- The assessment has to be performed on the basis of decision making tools, maintenance programs for transformers, keep in use and phase out programs, recycling and storage facilities.

- The development of national PCB action plans should include examination of disposal options, potential regional solutions, management of PCB-containing equipment that is to remain in service temporarily, and procedures for monitoring imports of second-hand equipment.

There is a need for a legal framework for national action on PCBs, based on government policy and inter-departmental coordination and the necessary financial support in order to secure implementation.

- Within a legal framework the polluter pays principle needs to be applied, which will be the basis for the future financing mechanisms.
- The possibility of GEF projects to assist with management and disposal will need to be explored further, taking into account inventory information and co-financing arrangements.
- There will be a need to develop creative financial partnerships apart from the GEF involving industry and other sources.
- Engagement and coordination of all governmental stakeholders of the Ministries of Environment, Health, Industry, etc., has to be established in form of Steering committees, trained and assisted in order to assure future continuity.
- Public interest NGOs are one of the important stakeholder groups to be involved in efforts to implement the Stockholm Convention, including its PCB provisions.
- Regional cooperation on issues such as transboundary movements and information exchange is desirable.

The disposal method which is used depends on the

- type of waste,
- waste produced by the disposal operation and which have to be disposed of, taking into account also waste from the off-gas cleaning,
- technical possibilities including storage, pre-treatment and transports,
- economical conditions and
- experience and the knowledge of the administration and the public.

Incineration of PCBs in cement factories is one possible option for disposal with the advantage to be available nearly ubiquitously and not to produce secondary waste, provided that necessary technical parameters are fulfilled. But viability from both environmental and social perspectives needs to be carefully considered. The Siam City Cement Plant in Saraburi visited during the workshop is in the current configuration not suited to burn up PCB-containing wastes.

Above mentioned issues can be optimized by set-up and continuation of a sustainable regional network in order to make use of and share among others databases, training manuals, fact sheets, set up of on the job training in other countries, the search for regional disposal facilities as well as to avoid duplication of work and to save financial resources. This network can organize additional regional exchange and lessons learnt workshops.

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