

The Basel Convention Partnerships Programme

Public-private partnerships are voluntary and creative mechanisms that support the work of the Convention by offering forums for dialogue and practical action by all stakeholders. They are comprised of all levels of government, industry and business sectors, non-governmental organizations, academia and other international institutions and bodies, for open and frank dialogue in action.

Distinct from other programmes of the Convention; given their diverse membership, cooperative nature and structure; partnerships are an effective way to address complex and emerging waste streams through the work of a range of experts committed to achieving common and technically viable solutions. They are seen as an important instrument for carrying out work on priority waste streams and focal areas under the Strategic Plan of the Basel Convention.

- Partnership activities can result in agreements or pledges of voluntary action to find innovative solutions and practical actions for managing complex and emerging waste streams.
- Partnerships **strengthen Parties' capacity** to implement the Convention.
- **Industry**, in particular, plays a vital role in partnerships as it possesses the **technical skills, know-how and infrastructure** needed for the environmentally sound management (ESM) of many waste streams, including sound recycling and safe disposal of end-of-life products.
- **Civil society plays an important role by providing their expertise and skills in raising awareness and in presenting academic studies and activities underway.**

Private-Public Partnerships provide an effective and open way for stakeholders to meet together to address common areas of concern and identify a programme of actions to undertake collectively.

*Katharina Kummer Peiry,
Executive Secretary, Basel Convention*

Value of Partnerships

Partnerships are a priority under the Basel Convention and identified by Parties as a way to address important challenges and issues with the environmentally sound management of wastes and their transboundary movement. The **Ministerial Statement on Partnerships** of 2004 highlights actions for Partnerships and emphasises the value of Partnerships for meeting the Global Waste Challenge. In particular the Statement states that:

- More efforts need to be devoted to building sustainable partnerships between Parties and all stakeholders;
- Parties in close cooperation with their existing and new partners need to work together to reduce the quantity of hazardous and other wastes going to landfills;
- Partnerships can energize the momentum for implementing the Basel Declaration on Environmentally Sound Management and the Strategic Plan for the Implementation of the Basel Convention;
- Partnerships would enhance information sharing and strengthen national capacities to segregate hazardous wastes;
- Partnerships promote the development of environmentally sound technologies and their transfer to developing countries to enhance implementation of the Convention;

Ministers also stated that in order to achieve targets set out under the Convention, a partnership approach will be taken into consideration when dealing with priority waste streams and that the partnerships will help to contribute to the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. More recently, it has become clear that Partnerships are a valuable way to act to help meet the millennium development goals (MDGs).

Public-private partnerships are a relevant and vital tool for strengthening commitments, to help achieve the objectives of the Convention and for capacity building and technical transfer.

History of the Partnership Programme

The sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties adopted the **Basel Convention Partnership Programme** under decision VI/32 as part of its **10-year Strategic Plan**, convinced that the active involvement and support of industry and business organizations and non-governmental organizations is necessary to achieve the aims of the Basel Convention.

In the **Nairobi Declaration** relating to electrical and electronic wastes issued in 2006, the Ministers and heads of delegation attending the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties underlined the fact that the Basel Convention provides an effective framework for developing strategic partnerships to continue discussing and exchanging views and experiences.



Success Factors and Lessons Learned

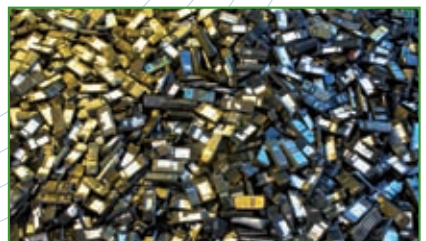
Drawing on the experience to date, particularly with the Mobile Phone Partnership Initiative, partnerships would be guided by these overarching working principles:

- Involve all stakeholders in the initiative from the very start and ensure transparency throughout the partnership;
- Ensure a balanced representation from developed countries, developing countries and countries with economies in transition;
- Establish strong and clear mechanisms for organisation, planning, communication, coordination and consensus-building amongst all stakeholders;
- Establish a clear *modus operandi* and governance structure that includes an accountability system;
- Build trust, respect and confidence amongst stakeholders, who may have different priorities and mandates;
- Identify and engage committed individuals from the public and private sectors who can play a leadership role: one or more champions for a partnership are essential;
- Mobilize and secure sufficient and sustainable human and financial resources from the start;
- Clarify all roles and responsibilities of Partners identifying what each partner can offer, including resources;
- Create a common frame of reference and understanding;
- Set out a realistic work plan based on achieving concrete results;
- Develop a mechanism for regular and sustainable funding of Partnership activities, and
- Take a step-by-step approach, adjusting the work plan as needed to benefit from lessons learned and ensure there is a common vision of the partnership.

Opportunities through Partnerships

Basel Convention Partnerships provide stakeholders with the opportunity to:

- Develop new guidelines, practices, voluntary agreements and pilot projects, with global, regional and local level interests in mind;
- Raise consumer awareness about actions individuals can take;
- Share good practices and experiences, accessing a broad base of knowledge;
- Encourage regional awareness raising approaches, such as high level dialogues and workshops on ESM of used and end-of-life products;
- Achieve better product stewardship – for example through changes at the design stage that facilitate future recycling, and consequently promote waste minimization, the life-cycle approach and integrated or “mixed” waste management;



- Create linkages between capacity-building needs and priorities of existing international financial or bilateral funding mechanisms;
- Strengthen the capacity of Parties to implement the provisions of the Basel Convention;
- Build capacity and expand the knowledge base of the private and public sectors;
- Produce practical solutions to contemporary problems in a multi-stakeholder context;
- Manage risks by taking a proactive stance on critical issues;
- Improve corporate/brand management, employee morale and productivity, and operational efficiencies;
- Help to more effectively implement the Basel Convention.

Added Value of Partnerships

The concerted and active involvement of all stakeholders to address a priority focus area of the Basel Convention helps to:

- Enhance collaboration by bringing together experts and policy makers to develop guidance and guidelines together;
- Tap expertise and knowledge at a broader level;
- Share experiences and address emerging issues;
- Leverage resources at all levels;
- Create a level playing field for environmentally sound management, and identify what Parties can do to promote this activity by working with the partnership;
- Seek creative or innovative solutions of mutual interest collectively;
- Forge new linkages and alliances between capacity-building needs and cooperative actions.



The Basel Convention, through UNEP, is part of a wider network called the Global Compact. The Global Compact is an initiative of the Secretary General of the United Nations which gives businesses worldwide the opportunity to adhere to nine principles for a sustainable and inclusive global economy. Three of these principles focus on environmental issues and fully embrace the aims of the Basel Convention's Partnership Programme. Please click on the link for more information.



Public-Private Partnerships:

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