**Meeting of the Small Intersessional Working Group on the plastic wastes technical guidelines (teleconference)**

Dates: 30 March and 6 April 2020  
Time: 30 March - 14:00 h – 16:00 h (Geneva time) and 6 April – 14h – 14:50h (Geneva time)

For the list of attendees, please see Annex I of this document.

**Agenda:** Discuss selected points identified by the consultant from the comments received on the draft technical guidelines of December 2019, for which input of the SIWG is required.

**Opening remarks**

The representative of the Secretariat explained that the revised draft of the technical guidelines is being prepared as an information (INF) document for the Open Ended Working Group 12th meeting (OEWG-12). However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it is unclear when the OEWG-12 meeting will take place.

She also recalled the main objective of the online consultation, i.e. an opportunity for the exchange of views, in order to assist the consultant on a number of selected points, which were identified from the comments received (by 31 January 2020) on the draft of the guidelines from December 2019.

She welcomed the chair of the online consultation, Mr. Patrick McKell, from the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and thanked all participants for their engagement in this work.

**1) Plastic wastes covered by the TGs**

The views expressed on this item indicate that there is general support for the inclusion of information on plastic wastes which are derived from other waste streams (for e.g. e-waste, synthetic textile waste), when the the plastic parts/components are sorted/separated from the other parts of the waste. However it was also acknowledged that the way that these issues should be represented, in terms of the right terminology and which BC annexes’ entries to relate to, require further discussion.

**2. Product design**

The consultant supporting the Secretariat explained the difficulty about this item, since “design” is mentioned in various parts of the document. The group exchanged views on the topic, but no agreement was reached on having language on product design in the chapter of the technical guidelines dealing with waste prevention and minimization. Several participants mentioned the importance of keeping the focus of the document on waste. While some participants expressed the view that product design can, in many cases, be related to waste, and therefore this is not an argument for excluding product design from the TG, since product design can improve recyclability. It can also lead to waste reduction. Further discussion on this topic is required.

Some participants suggested to discuss product design within the plastic waste partnership, since they thought that product design goes beyond ESM of plastic wastes. It was also mentioned that other technical guidelines already developed under the convention may serve as a reference on how product design was mentioned before, in guidelines for different waste streams.

**3. EPR and plastic bans**

The exchange of views showed that there is general support for some mentioning of EPR schemes and plastic bans, but that these are not the focus of the guidelines. There was no agreement on where in the document information on these two items, and to which extent/depth, should be included. Further discussion is required.

**4. Energy recovery of plastic wastes**

**30 March discussion**

The exchange of views showed that there is general support to avoid duplication with other technical guidelines, and that only references to those documents should be included. This applies, for example, to the technical guidelines on incineration on land (D10), which is being revised and should also address incineration as covered by operation R1, to the technical guidelines on landfill (D5), as well as to others.

After discussions, it became clear that energy recovery and recycling should not be mentioned together, since this creates confusion. The group could not agree on a way forward for this part of the document. Further discussion is required, as well as further incorporation of elements from other relevant documents (e.g. technical guidelines and legal documents).

It was recalled that one of the criteria used for the selection of waste management technologies in the various technical guidelines under the convention is for the technology to be commercially available.

**6 April discussion**

The representative of the Secretariat explained that there was a question from the consultant after the 30 March online discussions, on how she would be able to refer to the other technical guidelines currently being updated, and use text from them, if needed (e.g. any relevant definition, description). The Secretariat asked for the views of participants.

After a brief discussion, it was confirmed that references should be made to the document as placeholders, and that content (if text is to be reused partially) will need to be assessed in the next revised versions of the plastic wastes technical guidelines. This is because the technical guidelines on landfill and on incineration are being updated in parallel to the ones on plastic waste. Common members of both working groups could also help to indicate what can be referred to/reused, when applicable.

It was mentioned that the POPs wastes technical guidelines, which refer to each other (e.g. specific technical guidelines refer to the general technical guidelines, and vice-versa) for the simple types of cross references, can be looked at as an example of doing links between the different documents.

It was also mentioned that references to the already adopted technical guidelines can and should also be made, when relevant, e.g. to the technical guidelines on cement kilns.

For the topics/sub-topics (e.g. pyrolisis, gasification) related to operation R1 which are not yet covered by the already adopted technical guidelines or technical guidelines under revision, the consultant should indicate what is possible for the moment, if the technologies are commercially available. One participant offered to share information about some of the technologies under discussion based on a study done in the USA.

**5. Recycling of bioplastics**

The consultant explained the difficulty about this item, since most of the information available is academic. One possibility that the group discussed was to have more general information on this section, without separating it in so many different plastic types. Participants were invited to share relevant technical documents, non academic, to support the draft of this part of the document.

**6. Technical Guidelines on the Environmentally Sound Management of Plastic Coated Cables Scrap (UNEP/CHW.6/21, 2002) – discussed on the call of 6 April 2020.**

The chair of the meeting asked those who provided comments on this item to explain their views.

One participant explained that the content of this chapter should be reflected in the other parts of the guidelines, as it is the plan to do for other types of waste which also contain plastic parts, as discussed by the group on 30 March.

One participant also explained the origin of a separate chapter in the first version of the technical guidelines. At the time of adoption of the guidelines in 2002, the Basel Convention did not have entries in its Annexes to cover plastic coated cables scrap and the solution of having a dedicated chapter was because of the relevance of that type of waste stream in that context.Now the convention’s annexes include entry B1115 on plastic coated cables and also other codes to cover different waste streams which contain plastics. Therefore, the discussions under the plastic waste guidelines should refer not only to cables, but also to other types of waste which contain plastic, e.g. ELV, e-wastes, and others. The plastic waste guidelines should address plastic wastes from any relevant waste streams which contain plastic and where a proper separation of the plastics’ parts is possible. It was also suggested to address the separation of plastics from other relevant waste streams in the technical guidelines.

Another participant suggested to consult with a colleague who provided comments and could not attend the call, and she will get back to the group to explain the rationale for the suggestion to keep the chapter.

One participant made reference to the work of updating the BAT/BEP guidance documents under the Stockholm Convention, which contain a sub-chapter on “smouldering of copper”, which might be relevant for the discussions on copper cables under the plastic waste technical guidelines.

**7. Proposal of Norway for new chapters**

It was mentioned that the value of having these topics in a separate part of the document, for e.g. a sub-section, helps make it easy to identify in such a big document. The exchange of views showed that there is general support to have some mentioning of marine plastic litter and microplastic caused by plastic waste, but that these should not necessarily be represented in a separate chapter.

**Extra discussion on 6 April**

One participant asked about the possibility to discuss briefly the idea related to the inclusion of information related to marine plastic litter.

He explained that after further reflection, he thinks that his country could provide some text, for some parts of the guidelines, where relevant information on marine plastic litter could be included.

After a brief discussion, it was agreed that the representative would discuss further with the Secretariat, about a possible timeframe to provide such suggestions. The co-lead and the Secretariat will then assess options to integrate the suggestions.

A participant mentioned also that the guidelines should include information on the plastic amendments to the convention and interpretation.

**8. Reference/sources data**

The consultant explained the difficulty about this item and informed the group that comments provided and suggestions not consistenly had references and sources provided. Therefore, not all of them will be incorporated into the revised version of the technical guidelines.

The group briefly discussed that text used from the 2002 version of the guidelines does not need to have a citation, since the new version of the document will supersede the version of 2002. Text from the previous version of the document could be reused, in the revised one if still applicable.

**9. General content**

The consultant explained the some comments suggested changes in the titles of sections and sub-sections, which had been previously agreed. She explained that only when these are of editorial nature, they will be applied.

**10. Next steps**  
The Secretariat informed the group that there is not yet a final decision on the means of realization of the OEWG-12 meeting and that as soon as this is decided, the group will be informed about it.

For the time being, the Secretariat is working with the possibility that the meeting will take place in June 2020. Therefore, the revised version of the technical guidelines on plastic wastes will be one of the information documents prepared for the OEWG-12 meeting. After that the intersessional work of this group should continue. And if possible, later this year, a face-to-face meeting of this working group could be organized, as originally planned.

**Annex I – List of attendees**

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| **Name** | **Title** | **Representing** | **Country/region** | **30 March** | **6 April** |
| Parties | | | |  |  |
| Sofía Schlezak | Technical Consultant | Ministry of Environment of Argentina | Argentina | X | X |
| Jason Dunn |  |  | Australia | X |  |
| Umans Luk | Policy advisor | OVAM (Public Waste Agency of Flanders-Belgium) | Belgium | X | X |
| Julie Croteau | Head - International section | Environment and Climate Change Canada | Canada | X |  |
| Maxime Dube |  | Environment and Climate Change Canada | Canada | X |  |
| Guo Yan | Project assistant | BCRC | China | X | X |
| Zhang Zhe | Senior Engineer | MEESCC, China | China | X |  |
| Zhao Nana | Assistant Director | BCRC China | China | X | X |
| Zheng Yang | Deputy Director | MEESCC, China | China | X |  |
| Peter Wessman | Legal Officer | European Commission | Europe | X | X |
| Michael Ernst | Deputy Head of Division | Federal Enviroment Ministry | Germany | X | X |
| Daiki Kurata | Public Official | Ministry of Environment | Japan | X |  |
| Toru Terai | Deputy Director | Ministry of Environment | Japan | X |  |
| Bernt Sigmund Ringvold | Senior advisor | Norwegian Environment Agency | Norway | X | X |
| Ingeborg | Senior Adviser | Ministry of Climate and Environment | Norway | X |  |
| Kirsten Jacobsen | Senior Adviser | Ministry for Climate and Environment | Norway | X |  |
| Erik Westin | Senior technical officer | Swedish EPA | Sweden | X | X |
| Patrick Mckell | Head of International Waste Shipments Policy | Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs | United Kingdom | X | X |
| Observers | | | |  |  |
| Anastasia Swearingen | Director, Global Affairs | American Chemistry Council | United States | X |  |
| Stewart Harris | Director, Marine and Environmental Stewardship | American Chemistry Council | United States of America | X | X |
| Lighea Speziale | External Advisor - Environment | CEWEP | Belgium | X | X |
| Emilie Winch | Foreign Affairs Officer | Department of State | United States of America | X |  |
| Larke S Williams | Foreign Affairs Officer | Department of State | United States of America | X |  |
| Osamu Sakamoto | Senior Consultant | EX Research Institute Ltd. (EXRI) | Japan | X | X |
| Kishor | Senior Consultant | EX Research Institute Ltd. (EXRI) | Japan |  | X |
| Steve Wong | CEO | Fukutomi Recycling Limited | China (Hong Kong) | X |  |
| Sirine Rached | Global policy advocate | GAIA | France | X | X |
| Ieva Rucevska | Project Manager | GRID-Arendal | Norway | X |  |
| Maria Tsakona | Senior Waste Management Expert | GRID-Arendal | Norway | X |  |
| Alain Heidelberger |  | Hazardous Waste Europe | Europe | X | X |
| Lee Bell | Mercury and POPs Policy Advisor | IPEN | Australia | X |  |
| Sara Brosché | Science advisor | IPEN | Sweden | X |  |
| Adina Renee Adler | Assistant VP | ISRI | USA | X |  |
| Patrick De Kort | Regulatory Affairs | Plastics Recyclers Europe | Europe | X |  |
| Quanyin Tan | Assistant Professor | Tsinghua University | China | X |  |
| Greg Helms | Environmental Scientist | USEPA | United States of America | X |  |

**BRS Secretariat**

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| Ms. Carla Valle-Klann |
| Ms. Abiola Olanipekun |
| Ms. Melisa Lim |
| Ms. Giorgia Gnech |