Report of the Working Group Meeting of the
MEA Information and Knowledge Management Initiative
Geneva, IEH I, 3-4 February 2010

I Participants

WG Members: Mr. Olivier de Munck (CBD), Mr. Marcos Silva (CITES), Mr. Florian Keil (CMS), Mr. Gilbert Bankobeza (Montreal Protocol), Mr. Osmany Pereira (POPs), Mr. Richard Wood (POPs), Mr. Alonzo Addison (WHC - UNESCO),
UNEP DELC: Mr. Bradnee Chambers (Co-chair), Ms. Eva Duer, Mr. Kelly Kabiru, Ms. Tabitha Ndegwa
Invited participants: Mr. Florencia Verdi (POPs), Mr. John Kamea (UNEP-CSS)

II Summary of the Meeting

DAY I

<u>Morning session</u>

The meeting informally began with a brief presentation by Mr. Gilbert Bankobeza, on how decisions are structured and formatted by the Ozone Secretariat to the Vienna Convention and the Montreal Protocol. The purpose of this presentation was to acquaint participants from other Secretariats with the format of decisions and the level of technical support available at his Secretariat.

Basically, the decisions are structured according to the Articles of the two Agreements and compiled into a handbook: *Handbook for the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer* in PDF (Portable Document Format) format. Below is an example listing the decisions from the seventh Conference of the Parties:

Seventh Conference of the Parties (Dakar, 12–16 December 2005)

Decision	Title	Relevant article(s)	Page
VCVII/1	Status of ratification of the Vienna Convention, the Montreal Protocol and the London, Copenhagen, Montreal and Beijing Amendments to the Montreal Protocol	14	51
VCVII/2	Trust Fund for activities on research and systematic observations relevant to the Vienna Convention	3	31
VCVII/3	Financial matters: Financial reports and budgets	6	42
VCVII/4	Eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Vienna Convention	6	37

Annex	Title	Relevant article(s)	Page
I	Trust Fund for the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer: revised approved 2005 and approved 2006, 2007 and 2008 budgets	*(not included)*	–
II	Trust Fund for the Vienna Convention: Scale of Contributions by the Parties for the years 2006, 2007 and 2008 based on the United Nations scale of assessments	*(not included)*	–

The Handbook is available on the Ozone Secretriat's website at: http://www.unep.ch/ozone/Publications/VC_Handbook/VC-Handbook-2009.pdf

Mr. Bankobeza also spoke on the efforts of the Ozone Secretariat to reduce the use of paper, and described the successful organization of a fully-electronic, paperless Conference of the Parties.

Participants discussed at length the impact of new information technologies, Ipads, Blackberries, netbooks, blogs, etc.) on CoPs and other meetings. Mr. Alonzo Addison also spoke on how to gain sponsorship from large IT companies for the organization of such paperless meetings.

Following the above presentation, Mr. Bradnee Chambers (UNEP/DELC) and Mr. Marcos Silva (CITES) officially opened the meeting.

On behalf of Mr. Bakary Kante, Director, Division of Environmental Law and Conventions (DELC), Mr. Chambers thanked participants for their participation in the meeting. He referred to the recent Meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to UNEP which he attended. During the meeting, representatives often sought examples of " negotiated text" and wording in MEA COP decisions and resolutions. This need, articulated during discussions and negotiations, highlighted the timeliness and usefulness of the proof of concept project to be further developed during this working group meeting.

Mr. Silva also thanked participants for their participation and support and summarized the items in the agenda (Appendix B) and the objectives of the meeting. He stressed that the primary objective of the meeting was to reach agreement on the format/schema for the categories of data to be exchanged among the Secretariats, namely, decisions, resolutions, recommendations and meeting information .

The Co-chairs then invited Ms Eva Duer (DELC) to update the Working Group on the developments to date since the DELC MEA Knowledge Management (KM) Meeting which was held from 22 to 24 September 2009, in Chexbres, Switzerland. In the course of her presentation Ms Duer explained the reasons for the inclusion of the word "information" in the title of the current pilot project: Information and Knowledge Management (IKM). She stated that the singular use of the term Knowledge Management created confusion among potential partners and higher management and that there was difficulty in explaining the links between our focus on data interoperability and the more general concept of KM. Participants agreed to suggest this change of name to the Steering Committee.

Ms Duer then summarized the decisions made at the meeting in Chebrex, most importantly, the development of a pilot project encompassing four categories of information (COP decisions and resolutions, national focal points and contacts, calendars; and background documents). The proposed review of inforMEA was also referred to along with ongoing discussions between IUCN and UNEP to revive the steering mechanism of related tools such as TEMATEA. She revisited the membership of the MEA IKM Steering Committee which was confirmed by heads of MEAs in November 2009, as well as its *Modus Operandi*. The Steering Committee is the primary lead in the project and approves all decisions related to development and future work (after consultation with their respective Secretariats) of the pilot project. The IKM Working Group was confirmed in December 2009. Its role is to make recommendations to the Steering Committee on the IKM project and on the proposed long-term Convention-wide knowledge management strategy.

Ms Duer then presented the recap of mandates and the prioritization of categories of information for inclusion in the proof of concept at the informal meeting with Geneva based Steering Committee members in December 2009 and the results from the Working Group Teleconference which was held on 7 January 2009 in preparation of this Working Group Meeting. She concluded by outlining the expected outcomes of this Working Group Meeting in view of the next MEA IKM Steering Committee meeting, tentatively scheduled for late June or early July 2010. These outcomes include an agreement on the schema/formats for the prioritized categories of information to be proposed to the

Steering Committee and the assignment of roles and responsibilities as well as a workplan to implement the proof of concept in order to present it to the Steering Committee by Late June 2009:

Workplan

	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug
Schemas for categories	▨	▨					
Preparation at web-based MEAs		▨					
Preparation at others			▨	▨			
Interface design	▨	▨					
Database development		▨	▨	▨	▨		

The Co-chairs invited participants to present updates related to work on Information and Knowledge Management.

Participants gave brief updates on work accomplished to date and on new developments related to KM in their respective Secretariats. Mr Addison presented sections on the WHC website that offered ideas for the development of the portal and for the organization of the decision search tool. Mr. de Munck mentioned that two experts on KM joined the CBD Secretariat as interns and that an expert on controlled vocabularies was available to assist in the development of such a resource. Mr. Pereira described the work related to synergies among the chemical conventions and the lessons learned from this initiative. Mr. Silva very briefly described the project to create a virtual university and suggested that such a project could be of interest to other Secretariats.

Afternoon session

The afternoon session began with a discussion on possible decision formats/schemas. After discussion and presentation of decision formats used by different conventions, the Working Group agreed on a schema to structure decision-related data (see Annex I). The same process was used to develop a schema for data related to meetings (see Annex II). Both schemas will be coded in XML by DELC and presented to the Working Group for approval.

Mr. Silva was then invited to discuss development of a controlled vocabulary to facilitate querying of the aggregated decisions. He explained that, as agreed during the WG telephone conference of 7 January 2010, terms would be culled from CoP agendas. These terms would be then mapped to create a concise vocabulary spanning all of the conventions. In addition, terms unique to each convention would also be made available for searching.

Participants agreed with this approach but cautioned that very general terms had to be developed to encompass all the conventions. These "basket" terms should be few in number, and general enough to span similar activities (i.e., budget, CoP, capacity building, etc.). There was also agreement that, similar to the analytical index being developed by DELC, attention should be paid to the text of the conventions when developing terms and such terms incorporated into the controlled vocabulary. There was also agreement to include a full-text search to the decision tool to facilitate key word searching.

Mr. Silva agreed to have a draft list of terms ready for review by the end of February 2009. He thanked Ms Florencia Verdi for her offer of assistance.

DAY II
Morning session

The morning session began with a presentation by Mr. de Munck on a secretariat-wide calendar based on Google tools, namely its web-based calendar. He presented benefits and drawbacks when using this model and demonstrated a web-based model of how such a system could be implemented. Participants agreed that the Google approach to integrate secretariat data has much potential use. However, participants were also of the opinion that secretariats could gain identical benefits through the use of web services and agreed to schemas for the exchange of calendar information. This does not mean, however, that Secretariats had to choose one model over another. Indeed, the two approaches could be made interoperable should a decision be made to do so.

The morning session concluded with an offer by Mr. Pereira to host the IKM portal for the purpose of the demonstration of a proof of concept. Participants agreed and thanked Mr. Pereira for his offer.

Afternoon session

During this session, the meeting reviewed the UNEP Knowledge Strategy Study Report. Discussions on this topic took into account the presentation made by DCPI during the Chexbres meeting of UNEP's KM initiative. The discussions also referred to the meeting held by some Working Group members with the UNEP consultants responsible for the drafting of the report. Mr. Marcos Silva gave a brief analysis of the report from the perspective of MEAs.

He also mentioned that, according to the EMC annual overview, EMC is "a developer and provider of information infrastructure technologies, services, and solutions that enable people and organizations to transform the way they create value from their information" [1] The company is also the developer of DOCUMENTUM, the content management system platform chosen by the UN Secretariat .

After outlining the strong points in the report: its commitment to KM and to the implementation of a KM strategy; its emphasis on new policies to encourage a culture of and on integrating project management tools and systems in workflow; and its contextualization of the role of information and communication technologies, Mr. Silva outlined the sections where MEAs could contribute to an improved final draft. For example, the report overlooked the possible role and importance of MEAs in a UNEP-wide KM strategy. In addition, the report's description of UNEP's governance structure could

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[1] (*EMC 2008 Annual Overview*, p. 2, http://www.emc.com/about/emc-at-glance/annual-overview/2008/h4182-2008-annual-overview.pdf).

benefit from further review.. Another issue highlighted was that the report lacked reference to current discussions related to MEA governance. He also questioned why the report did not refer to the MEA IKM initiative, in spite of the inclusion of the Chexbres KM meeting report in the bibliography. Other areas for review are the possible contributions by UNEP's library, and the lessons learned from other KM initiatives implemented by other UN organizations. He concluded by stating that the report could offer more specifics of how UNEP will adopt a culture of collaboration and knowledge sharing and that less jargon would greatly improve its readability.

Participants raised the above and additional points at the subsequent Video-link with Mr. John Kamea , who has been tasked by UNEP with implementation of the ITC component of the strategy report. Mr. Kamea offered a presentation on how UNEP plans to implement a corresponding ITC strategy and emphasized repeatedly that UNEP is aware of the need to collaborate with the MEAs. Participants gave some initial feedback on the presentation and indicated the need for additional comments on completion of a more in-depth review of the draft strategy. Participants appreciated the task and responsibilities assigned to Mr. Kamea and agreed to support UNEP in its efforts and to discuss ways to more effectively include MEAs in this process. Finally, they highlighted the need to better integrate initiatives such as the MEA IKM pilot project – in essence an ITC project – into such a strategy.

On conclusion of the discussion with Mr. Kamea, participants made a final review of the schemas for decisions and meetings. It was agreed that the schemas will continue to undergo fine tuning.

Mr. Silva agreed to set up a collaborative workspace on Huddle to facilitate work on the schemas and other tasks.

Participants agreed that it is absolutely essential to demonstrate a fully functioning system based on shared and interoperable data related to decisions. If possible, secretariat calendar information will be added to the proof of concept project. There was also consensus that the secretariats lacking technical support must participate in this proof of concept equitably. Indeed, this is in line with one of the main objectives of the project: technical capacity must be improved at the secretariat level to ensure the sustainability of this and similar IKM projects.

The meeting was closed by Mr. Chambers who thanked participants for their support and collaboration. He emphasized that this project demonstrated a uniquely successful collaborative project among the MEAs and DELC.

III Working Group Recommendations and Conclusions

A General Issues

The Working Group recommends that

- the SC endorses the change of name from *MEA Knowledge Management Initiative* to *MEA Information and Knowledge Management Initiative (MEA IKM)*

- The next Steering Committee Meeting will be held on 28 to 30 June 2010 in the proximity of Geneva;

<u>B The proof of concept project</u>

The Working Group further recommends that the SC endorses

- the schemas for decisions and calendar data, which will be further refined by the Working Group and converted into XML by DELC;

- that the Stockholm and Rotterdam Convention will host the pilot project on their server until a long-term solution is agreed upon;

- that DELC develops the graphical user interface in collaboration with the Working Group for the proof of concept project;

- that CITES will continue to advise on the development of a limited controlled vocabulary based on COP agenda items and/or MEA articles to facilitate use of the decision search tool;

- that the technical architecture of the tool will consist of web services and will harvest data dynamically. The Working Group will continue to discuss and review possible approaches to the technical architecture of the system. Whatever system is approved, it should be flexible and able to accommodate secretariats' needs;

<u>C Participation and timelines for the proof of concept project</u>

- the following conventions agreed to participate in the proof of concept phase: CBD, POPs, PIC, Basel, CMS, CITES, Montreal Protocol

- Secretariats interested in participating in the proof of concept must inform DELC no later than 19 February 2010 and are requested to submit information about their decisions using the appended table A. Participation requires human resources (IT and KM staff) and is complemented by technical support from DELC to those secretariats who currently lack the necessary capacities to convert past decisions into the required formats.

- A functioning system for the proof of concept project should be completed by June 2010