

Trinidad Hosts ESM Planning Workshop

The [Basel Convention](#) has put in place an international legal framework for the environmentally sound management (ESM) of hazardous wastes, their minimization and transport. The Basel Convention Regime for the control of transboundary movements of hazardous wastes can have a significant impact upon the trade patterns existing at the regional and international level in hazardous wastes destined for either recycling or disposal.

The Ministerial Declaration on the ESM of Hazardous Wastes, adopted by the [5th Conference of the Parties \(COP\)](#) in December 1999, called for an enhanced partnership between the public and private sectors in achieving sound management of hazardous wastes, including recycling and resource recovery. In this context the Convention's Technical Working Group (TWG) had prioritized a list of [technical assistance projects](#) to begin the implementation of the Ministerial Declaration.



Listening to the Trinidad and Tobago Government's Minister for the Environment, the Honorable Dr. Adesh Nanan, as he opened the planning workshop, were delegates and speakers from 12 participating countries

The terms for the Transboundary Movement of Hazardous Wastes defined under the Convention aims to reduce the risk of illegal trafficking in hazardous wastes and encouraging industry to minimize the production of toxic wastes. However, the stringent control measures also increase the costs of exporting and importing certain recoverable materials that are considered hazardous wastes under the Basel Convention, such as used lead acid batteries (ULAB). These measures could, in certain circumstances, impact on the development of national and regional ESM strategies and possibly affect the transfer of recycling technologies for those recoverable materials classified as hazardous waste, such as ULAB.

A key proposal on this list was for a sub-regional capacity building project for the ESM of ULAB in the Central American and Caribbean region. The aim of this project is to bridge the information gap that the national authorities and the private sector are experiencing in relation to making informed ESM policy decisions. Accordingly, the project will focus on the use of economic instruments as incentives to improve ULAB collection rates, the macro and micro economic requirements for the development of national and regional strategies for waste minimization, and the use or adoption of appropriate environmentally sound technologies that reduce the risk of environmental and population lead exposure.

Planning Workshop for the ESM of ULAB

The purpose of the Workshop in Trinidad was to:

- confirm the terms of reference for the project;
- determine the relevant information that would need to be collected in the country assessment phase;
- decide where to find the best information sources;
- establish the extent of the field survey;
- set out an agreed timetable for data collection.

In addition there was a need to plan for the second phase of the project that would involve the collation and interpretation of the information collected in the first phase and a second workshop to discuss the results of the study and decide on the most appropriate national and regional strategies for the establishment of an ESM for ULAB.



Mr. Liaquat Ali Shah, CEO - CARIRI

Mr. Liaquat Ali Shah, the Chief Executive Officer of the [Caribbean Industrial Research Institute](#) (CARIRI) welcomed the participants to the project planning workshop for the "Environmentally Sound Management of Lead Acid Batteries for Central America and the Caribbean". He expressed his delight that CARIRI were to be involved in this very important study and saw this project as a further development of work already undertaken in Trinidad to reduce lead exposure.

On behalf of the Secretariat of the Basel Convention (SBC), Mr. Vincent Jugault, Project Manager, explained the background to the study and the purpose of the planning workshop.

The Trinidad and Tobago Government's Minister for the Environment, the Honorable Dr. Adesh Nanan, stated that he welcomed the forthcoming project and emphasized how important environmental matters are to the Government. He was especially pleased that the workshop would be addressing issues concerning the sound management of ULAB because Trinidad had already experienced serious lead exposure problems within a local community.



Vincent Jugault, Project Manager, Basel Convention Secretariat

Mrs Sharon Laurent, Project Leader for the Basel Convention's Caribbean Regional Center, explained how the study would be organized jointly by the Basel Convention's Sub-regional Centers for Training and Technology Transfer (RBTC) in the Caribbean and El Salvador; that is, CARIRI as the RBTC for the Caribbean, and the [RBTC in San Salvador](#). In turn they would be assisted by the [National Cleaner Production Center in San Salvador](#) and [Mexico City](#). Both RBTC's would work under the direction of the SBC and in close collaboration with the [United Nations Conference on Trade and Development](#) (UNCTAD).



The Trinidad and Tobago Government's Minister for the Environment, the Honorable Dr. Adesh Nanan

For some years UNCTAD and ILMC have been working together on a similar ULAB project in the Philippine Republic and the SBC invited the two organizations to

Planning Workshop for the ESM of ULAB



Senora Lorena Brey, Venezuela; Ing. Enrique Botino, Venezuela; Senorita Andrea Lopez Ailas, Columbia; and Senor Alfonso Cedeno Osorio, Panama

provide expert advice throughout the project. Reinforcing his support for the project Dr. Ulrich Hoffmann, UNCTAD Economics Officer, stated he was also representing the [Joint UNEP-UNCTAD Task Force on Trade, Environment and Development](#) (CBTF), whose target activities included the facilitation of national and regional policy and stakeholder dialogue for sustainable material/resource management.

Program Manager, Brian Wilson, explained to the delegates the background for the formation and development of the [ILMC](#) and its particular interest in Lead Risk Reduction activities that explored solutions and strategies that achieve coordinated national government and industrial sector based risk reduction programs. ILMC's support for the project was consistent with its aim to promote the recycling of as much battery scrap as possible. Brian went on to outline some of the many [recycling options](#) for ULAB and gave the delegates examples of [cost effective strategies](#) to promote secondary lead recovery.

One of the underlying reasons for choosing Central America and the Caribbean for the ESM project was because many of the countries had already experienced either lead exposure problems or had encountered legal or logistical difficulties in implementing their obligations under the Basel Convention for the control and disposal of ULAB.

From Trinidad and Tobago, Glen Goddard, of the Environment Management Authority, Jay Manohar, from the Ministry of Health, and Professor Chang-Yen, of the University of West Indies, made presentations of their respective experiences with childhood lead poisoning, occupational lead exposure and local and regional population exposures. All agreed that the lack of regulated ULAB recycling protocols and associated environmental controls, together with unregulated battery reconditioning and backyard recycling activities, were the main sources of lead contamination and population exposure.

Mr. Roberto Rivas, Director General of Environmental Affairs for the [Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources in El Salvador](#) stressed the need to consider the political dimension of lead exposure problems because of the impacts on the environment and human



Senor Roberto A Rivas, Director General of Environmental Affairs, Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources, El Salvador

health. He also pointed out that the successful implementation of the project would require collaboration between the private and the public sectors, including those involved in unregulated activities. He welcomed the participation of the ILMC and UNCTAD and asked if more educational material that explained how to reduce the risk of occupational lead exposure in industry and childhood lead poisoning in the home could be made available to generate and promote an awareness program for workers and the general population of the risks of lead exposure.

Planning Workshop for the ESM of ULAB



Mr. Jay Manohar, Trinidad and Tobago Ministry of Health, recounts his experiences with problems associated with childhood lead poisoning and occupational lead exposure to the delegates

Mrs Geraldine Lendor representing the [Solid Waste Management Authority in St Lucia](#) informed the delegates that in view of the small amount of ULAB in St. Lucia their ideal solution would be to encourage the development of a regional ESM policy for disposal and/or recovery that would permit the export of the leaded scrap for recycling at an approved facility.

However, Mr. Alfonso Cedeno, representing the Ministry of Health in Panama, made reference to persistent problems associated with the illegal imports of ULAB in 1999. There were also presentations from Mr. Enrique Botino, Director of the Department for Air Quality in the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, and Mrs Lorena Brey, Director for the Department of Waste Management, both from Venezuela; Mr. Orlando, Director of the Ministry of Environment, Costa Rica; Mrs Andrea Lopez from the Ministry of Environment in Colombia.

At the beginning of the second day Ulrich Hoffmann and Brian Wilson presented the delegates with two draft questionnaires for their consideration. Ulrich suggested that answers to the questions posed in his submission would provide most of the legislative, macro and micro economic information for the first part of the study. Brian's tabulated [series of questions](#) were designed to obtain qualitative information from the field survey. It included questions covering the type of ULAB recycling processes in the formal and informal sectors, the environmental impact of the operations, occupational exposure assessment and ULAB collection schemes.

After discussion of the many exposure issues facing the participating countries, all delegates agreed that the study should proceed on the following basis:

1. A three months assessment effort would begin on July 15. The aim will be to tabulate relevant legal requirements, automotive battery consumption statistics, estimate annual leaded scrap generation, determine the export and import of lead containing scrap, ULAB collection schemes and a list of the recycling facilities. The field survey will assess environmental and occupational performance levels at recyclers identified in the first part of the study.
2. At the end of the assessment phase the information collected and the data tabulated would be collated and distributed to all participating countries and organizations for consideration.
3. A second regional battery recycling workshop targeting the countries in Central America and the Caribbean would then be convened to discuss the findings of the assessment phase; examine the various lead exposure issues; review options for the design and implementation of appropriate national ESM's for battery collection and recycling; and consider possibilities for regional cooperation.

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