

Co-chairs' summary of the outcomes from contact group 1 on implementation arrangements

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Meeting: 24 June 2025, 4.23 to 8.10 p.m.

1. Contact group 1 on implementation arrangements was established at the first meeting of the Open-ended Working Group of the Global Framework on Chemicals with the following mandate: to gather views from all stakeholders to inform the further development of proposals for implementation programmes for submission for consideration by the International Conference of the Global Framework on Chemicals. This includes respective mandates, terms of reference, workplans and other mechanisms, in line with paragraphs 8 and 9 of resolution V/8 of the International Conference on Chemicals Management, on implementation arrangements.
2. The following summary attempts to capture all the views expressed by all stakeholders in the room, without prejudice to the extent to which stakeholders agreed or disagreed with the views, with the understanding that discussions on the topics discussed are ongoing and views are subject to change. Stakeholders are welcome to provide additional feedback on the implementation programmes.
3. The group exchanged views on the overall aim of the implementation programmes, the proposed common elements of the terms of reference, and the proposed draft terms of reference for the two proposed implementation programmes, as set out in annexes 1 and 2 to document UNEP/GFC/OEWG.1/INF/11.¹ Views were also gathered on annex 3 to that document, on pilot working areas under a Global Framework on Chemicals implementation programme “Integrating chemicals and waste issues in sustainable development decision-making”.
4. The discussion started with an exchange of views on the overall aims of the implementation programmes (see document UNEP/GFC/OEWG.1/INF/11, sect. 2.2) to receive feedback on whether the aims were sufficient and elicit any suggestions for additional elements. In general, there was support for the overall aims as proposed in the information document. Stakeholders provided various and sometimes diverging views on how to further develop and enrich the overall aims of the implementation programmes. The following list begins with an overall suggestion (a), followed by suggestions (b)–(i) for amendments to existing aims, and ending with suggestions (j)–(m) for “new aims”:
 - (a) Refer to the multisectoral nature of the framework throughout the terms of reference of the programmes.
 - (b) Consider information exchange under awareness-raising and the identification of good practices; recognize that knowledge sharing should be a “two-way street”; consider the multi-stakeholder and multisectoral approach in information exchange.
 - (c) Consider vulnerable populations, including with respect to stakeholder mobilization and information sharing.
 - (d) Utilize regional centres for knowledge sharing.
 - (e) Use needs assessment to guide support and collaboration, ensuring alignment with stakeholder needs.
 - (f) Utilize the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC) toolbox.
 - (g) Include new and existing partnerships.
 - (h) Ensure synergies among the implementation programmes.
 - (i) Avoid duplicating efforts and keep the programmes “lean”.
 - (j) Consider capacity-building, particularly for technical support, technology transfer (accompanied by appropriate qualifiers such as “voluntary” and “on mutually agreed terms”), and finance; address finance/technical support outside of implementation programmes; enhance national

¹ See the draft terms of reference included, respectively, in annex 1, “Strengthening national chemicals legislation and institutional capacities for the sound management of chemicals and waste”, and annex 2, “Strengthening engagement and action of economic and industry sectors for the sound management of chemicals along value chains”.

mechanisms for national funds; take into account national circumstances, including social, economic, and environmental aspects; ensure that implementation programmes contribute to national implementation programmes.

(k) Consider including in the implementation programmes the aim of accelerating progress towards reaching the targets of the Global Framework on Chemicals.

(l) Take into account the logical sequence of the implementation of the aims.

(m) Include the identification of gaps.

5. The contact group then exchanged views on the common elements of the terms of reference. The elements included the following: proposing stakeholder(s), programme rationale, objectives and scope, stakeholder initiatives and actions falling under the programme, programme structure and components, stakeholder engagement in the programme, knowledge-sharing, governance, financial considerations, synergies with other implementation programmes, and monitoring, in addition to sub-elements of those elements.

6. Noting that there was general agreement in the room regarding the existing elements, stakeholders expressed the following views regarding the common elements of the terms of reference of the implementation programmes:

(a) Consider including consideration of safer alternatives under “Objectives and scope”; include “targets” in addition to or instead of “objectives”; consider referring to the voluntary basis of the work.

(b) Consider the element of timelines.

(c) Consider the element of synergies with other implementation programmes, activities, or resolutions under the Global Framework on Chemicals.

(d) Clarify the aspect of cooperation/coordination with other existing initiatives such as multilateral environmental agreements.

(e) Consider clarifying language regarding proposing stakeholders, stakeholder participation in engagement, and identification and mapping of stakeholders.

7. Following the discussion on common elements of the terms of reference of the implementation programmes, the contact group focused its discussion on the annexes to document UNEP/GFC/OEWG.1/INF/11. After a brief introduction by IOMC to annex 1 (“Strengthening national chemicals legislation and institutional capacities for the sound management of chemicals and waste”) and the views collected thereon during the workshop on implementation programme 1 (held on 22 and 23 June 2025 in Punta del Este, Uruguay), the following views were expressed for consideration in the further development of the draft terms of reference:

(f) The development of national-level capacity is important, as are linkages of this work with the capacities of national focal points.

(g) There is a need to use a multi-sectoral approach.

(h) The programme rationale should go beyond the lack of legislation to also include enforcement of legislation and policies.

(i) Specific targets, including targets D5, E1 and E2, could be included in the objectives; countries without existing legislation could be prioritized; the objective could also explore sustainable domestic resource mobilization; point 2 could be aligned with target B/national circumstances.

(j) Stakeholder initiatives could include aspects related to strengthening national capacity to conduct risk assessment, upgrading infrastructure, and strengthening human capacities, as well as aspects related to waste management.

(k) The term “non-toxic circular economy” is confusing and could be replaced by “circular economy where risks are evaluated along value chains”.

(l) The programme structure and components element could include national programmes and a road map. Elements such as “matchmaking” require clarification. Targeted training workshops could be held to ensure appropriate training of policymakers, laboratory workers, researchers and others.

(m) Specific examples such as that of extended producer responsibility under stakeholder engagement may not be appropriate.

(n) Clarity is needed regarding the mechanisms for monitoring; work regarding the measurability of the framework is ongoing, and further indicators may be introduced in the future.

(o) Synergies between the implementation programme and other implementation programmes, elements of the Global Framework on Chemicals, and other bodies should be identified, keeping in mind that implementation programmes 1 and 2 are separate programmes.

8. The group then discussed annex 2 (“Strengthening engagement and action of economic and industry sectors for the sound management of chemicals along value chains”). Following a brief introduction by IOMC to the annex and the views collected thereon during the workshop on implementation programme 2 (held in Paris on 24–26 February 2025), the following views were expressed:

(a) Innovation and collaboration with suppliers and end-users are needed.

(b) Linkages between the implementation programmes and the issues of concern could be made explicit, including references to/use of target C1; clarity is needed regarding the intersection between issues of concern/chemicals of concern; risk assessment could be used to set priorities for the ongoing work on implementation programmes and issues of concern; duplication of work should be avoided; there is an established process for the nomination of new issues of concern.

(c) The objectives and scope could emphasize risk reduction, including the exposure component; some comments on the guidance document for target D6 will be provided; a note could be added saying that chemicals contribute to societal progress by enabling advances in medicine, agriculture, technology, and industry, thus improving quality of life, health, and economic growth; phase-out is possible only when affordable/safer/effective alternatives are available; the product design phase and the benefits of chemicals should be included.

(d) Programme objectives could consider encouraging synergies with work related to climate change and biodiversity (divergent viewpoints were expressed regarding this need); the mining sector could be considered for an implementation programme; risk reduction approaches could be emphasized and could include the exposure component; pilot programmes for the implementation programmes could be developed.

(e) Programme structure and components could consider a provision to ensure linkages with the individual IOMC organizations.

(f) Stakeholder engagement could encourage contributions from local/civil society.

(g) Monitoring of the implementation programme could be done via indicators from the private sector, and additional support to develop this work would be welcome.

9. The group then discussed annex 3, on pilot working areas under a Global Framework on Chemicals implementation programme “Integrating chemicals and waste issues in sustainable development decision-making”.

10. The discussion yielded the following observations:

(h) The work on this implementation programme is comparatively less developed. (Views diverged on whether the work should be prioritized.)

(i) Clarification is needed regarding the meaning of “smart chemicals management strategy”.

(j) The overall United Nations common approach to pollution, and its specific objectives, should be related to high-impact sectors.

(k) Both support for and concern regarding the inclusion of climate/biodiversity linkages were expressed (with the link to target E6/E1 noted); there is a concern that linkages with climate may fall within the mandate of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change; this linkage could be part of a discussion on international cooperation and synergies and could enhance funding and implementation; greenhouse gases are not substances of concern; it is important to highlight synergies, including synergies with climate/biodiversity/health/labour and/or other frameworks, and avoid overlap, while respecting existing mandates; it would be useful to examine previous work under the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal, the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade and the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants on synergies and interlinkages among agendas.

(l) The chemicals and education programme merits support. (There was an offer to co-lead work on the development and coordination of the topic.)

(m) Regional centres could be used in a synergistic manner with the chemicals and education efforts.

11. The group concluded its deliberations with a discussion of the topics of governance and finance. Regarding governance, there was a shared view that it was difficult to discuss the options before the terms of reference had been further developed. Stakeholders did, however, share some initial considerations:

(a) Discussions during the workshop held on 22 and 23 June had led to the identification of an additional option for the governance structure, resulting in three options for governance structures/approaches: (i) one with a multi-stakeholder/multi-sectoral committee for each implementation programme, (ii) one with a single committee for all implementation programmes, and (iii) one with advisory committees with technical knowledge relevant to the implementation programme in question, along with a separate governing body addressing cross-cutting issues and general governance.

(b) Governance-related activities could be undertaken by the secretariat, the Bureau or a subsidiary body of the Bureau. Views were shared on the importance of including specific expertise in the various topics of the implementation programmes; this could be achieved either by having separate advisory bodies that included experts, or by inviting experts to join meetings of advisory bodies as appropriate.

(c) Questions were raised about the interaction between the advisory body or bodies and the leading institutions, the review of the functions of the advisory body or bodies, the influence of the governance structure, potential negative effects of the structure, the need for lean arrangements, and bureaucratic and financial implications.

(d) It was suggested that a governance structure might not be necessary at the launch stage but could be considered in the future.

12. Regarding finance, the following views were expressed:

The current proposals for implementation programmes, and in particular implementation programme 1, describe funding for programme implementation. It could be useful to explore opportunities for collaboration and/or various cost-recovery schemes that ensure financially sustainable chemical management systems.

13. The co-chairs thanked the participants for their valuable contributions to the discussions and noted that the contact group had fulfilled its mandate and that the views expressed during the meeting had been noted and a summary thereof would be annexed to the report of the first meeting of the Open-ended Working Group of the Global Framework on Chemicals.