

The Global Framework on Chemicals Fund Guidance Document on the Scope



Global Framework
on Chemicals

1. Overview

The Global Framework on Chemicals Fund supports countries in implementing the Global Framework on Chemicals for the safe and sustainable management of chemicals and waste. The Fund aims to support implementation activities in developing countries and countries with economies in transition (CEIT), with particular attention to the needs of least developed countries (LDCs) and small island developing States (SIDS). It does so by financing projects and programmes that promote transformative change to prevent, or where prevention is not feasible, minimize harm from chemicals and waste to protect the environment and human health, including vulnerable groups and workers. All funded activities must demonstrate clear, defined, measurable and sustainable impact.

The Fund was established during the fifth International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM5) in September 2023 and is governed by an Executive Board, which is responsible for operational decisions and oversees the functioning of the Fund. The Fund remains open to receive additional contributions until September 2028, which is five years after its establishment. Funds may be disbursed for a maximum of seven years, which is September 2030.

The Fund provides financial support of USD 300,000 to 800,000 for projects with an implementation period of up to three years. Governments from developing countries, LDCs, SIDS, and CEIT may apply for funding. On an exceptional basis, civil society networks may also apply, provided they have an agreement with the respective government. The Fund encourages regional or multi-country applications. All funded activities must have clearly defined and measurable long-term impacts. When selecting projects for funding, the Executive Board places a strong emphasis on prioritizing those that can demonstrate lasting benefits beyond the project's lifetime.

The Fund seeks to complement existing financial mechanisms, such as the Special Programme on Institutional Strengthening, the Specific International Programme under the Minamata Convention and the Global Environment Facility, and funds that support biodiversity and climate action, amongst others, to build on national projects or activities and generate sustainable project outputs nationally, regionally or globally. The purpose is to achieve substantial and visible impacts that promote the safe and sustainable management of chemicals and waste with measurable results.

2. Strategic priorities for the Fund

Strategically, the Fund will prioritise proposals that:

- **Strengthen institutional capacities** for implementing and mainstreaming the safe and sustainable management of chemicals and waste at the national level - either broadly or in relation to specific issues of concern. Projects that align with national plans and build long-term institutional ownership will be viewed favourably.
- **Target high impact sectors** along the value-chain - such as electronics, textiles, agriculture and construction – by promoting safe and sustainable practices for health,

labour and/or the environment. Ultimately, policies must be implemented to transition these sectors towards being free of pollution. Projects that catalyse sustainable financing or unlock public and private resources are encouraged. Approaches that integrate financial and investment strategies, including from the private sector, are equally favoured for funding. Applicants may also submit proposals aimed at laying the foundations for large-scale initiatives in high impact sectors which could be supported through other funding mechanisms in the future. In such cases, GFC Fund resources may be used to establish the enabling conditions, such as baseline assessments, institutional arrangements, or pilot activities, thereby laying the groundwork for expanded future action.

- **Have a positive impact for people and the environment**, and that are implemented at a regional or global level, or with transboundary impacts. Proposals that create long-term cooperation between governments and other stakeholders, engage multiple sectors – such as health, labour, and industry – and offer high impact relative to investment will be prioritized. The Fund also values proposals that avoid duplication and demonstrate potential for scaling up or replication.

3. Applicant requirements

There are two possible types of applicants under the Fund:

- Governments:** Eligible governments include those listed as developing economies, LDCs, SIDS or CEIT in the annexes to the United Nations World Economic Situation and Prospects Report¹, that have endorsed or given other appropriate formal recognition of and support for the Global Framework on Chemicals. As put forward in the Fund's terms of reference, the approval of projects will consider geographic and sectoral balance and pay particular attention to urgent needs and the requirements of LDCs and SIDS. The official national Global Framework on Chemicals focal point is required to support the application on behalf of the Government through the provision of a letter accompanying the submission of the application. To foster cross-sectoral impact, supporting letters from other authorities and stakeholders relevant for implementing the project or its outcomes should be annexed.
- Civil society networks:** On an exceptional basis, and with regard to the resources and administrative capacity available, representatives of civil society networks may apply to the Global Framework on Chemicals Fund subject to the agreement of the countries hosting the projects or programmes. For the purposes of the Fund, such agreement should be provided by the designated national focal point in the country concerned through an accompanying letter with the application.

¹ See: United Nations (2025). World Economic Situation and Prospects 2025. Available at <https://policy.desa.un.org/publications/world-economic-situation-and-prospects-2025>

It is expected that the applicant will play a key role in implementing the project. Where appropriate, the applicant may consider nominating a delivery organization to implement the project.²

Intergovernmental organisations may not apply for funding directly but are qualified to serve as implementing entities or project partners and can receive funds to cover the implementation costs of activities associated with the project. Each project partner or implementing entity will need to confirm its participation in the project by providing a letter of support. Furthermore, the project application will need to outline the roles and responsibilities of each implementing entity clearly in the project. For further information, please consult the application guidelines.

4. Regional and multi-country projects

Cooperation is essential to meet the challenges of the pollution crisis. The Fund, therefore, encourages applications from more than one country (i.e. regional/multi-country projects) that propose efficient implementation arrangements in a project with visible and substantial impact to implement the Global Framework on Chemicals in the countries/region concerned.

Several governments together with relevant stakeholders may jointly submit a multi-country project application. This may be an optimal approach for implementation issues affecting a wide range of stakeholders, which are best addressed in a coordinated manner. The number of countries applying together is not limited, however, a multi-country project may come with a higher administrative involvement and coordination efforts. In each application, it is a requirement for one government or organization to be specified as the project lead. This institution will submit the application on behalf of the countries involved and will serve as the single point of contact with the secretariat. The application and budget forms used for the submission of regional/multi-country projects are the same as those that are used for the submission of individual country projects.

5. Selection criteria

The Executive Board has identified a set of minimum requirements and prioritization criteria to assess the proposals for funding. These are set out below.

a. Minimum criteria (Mandatory)

The project must meet the following conditions to be considered for funding. Failure to meet these requirements may result in disqualification:

The project:

² In compliance with UN financial rules, profitmaking companies cannot serve as project delivery organizations.

- **Is well-conceptualized, complete and clearly aligned** with the vision, strategic objectives, and targets of the Global Framework on Chemicals and its Fund, particularly the strategic priorities outlined above.
- **Builds the long-term institutional capacity** for the management of chemicals and waste nationally, regionally, or internationally.
- **Demonstrates a plan for ensuring long-term sustainability (exit strategy)**, such as through the implementation of institutional policies, or a sustainable financing mechanism that extends beyond the GFC Fund support.
- **Provides at least 25% co-financing**, which may include financial as well as in-kind contributions (e.g. staff time, accommodation, office space or operational support).
- **Does not duplicate projects or programmes** already funded under other bilateral or multilateral funding mechanisms.
- **Includes a clear approach to gender mainstreaming** and complies with UNEP's environmental and social safeguard standards.

b. Prioritization criteria

Among eligible projects, priority will be given to those applications that:

- **Show strong national ownership** and are clearly rooted in national priorities.
- Provide a clear and well-defined description of the context and explain why the project is not currently financed by the public or private sector.
- **Build or foster cross-sectoral partnerships** involving multiple stakeholders, including governments, civil society and the private sector while engaging key sectors such as health, labour, environment, and industry, to enable systemic change.
- **Mainstream** the safe and sustainable management of chemicals across economic sectors including informal sectors.
- **Are regional or of transboundary relevance**, supporting cooperation across countries and contributing to shared policy goals.
- **Catalyse sustainable financing** by unlocking public or private resources or engaging the finance sector to promote longer-term investment in chemicals and waste management.
- **Build upon or complement previous projects and initiatives**, demonstrating learning, continuity, and innovation.
- **Show potential for scaling up** or replication in other national or regional contexts.
- Demonstrate a co-financing contribution greater than the recommended 25% of the total project cost and/or show how the project will benefit other countries in the region through capacity building, knowledge sharing, or transfer of tools or results.

c. What will not be prioritised

Given the existence of multiple funds addressing chemicals and waste, the GFC Fund aims to support projects that are not adequately covered by other sources of funding. Proposals will **not** be prioritized if they:

- **Fall within the primary mandate of other well-established funding mechanisms**, such as the Special Programme or the Specific International Programme (SIP) under the Minamata Convention. Proposals will also be assessed for complementarity with the Global Environment Facility (GEF) - particularly where the GEF is already financing activities in the same country or on the same proposed area of work (e.g. mercury phase-out, POPs elimination, etc.). The intention is not to exclude such topics altogether, but to ensure that GFC Fund support is additive and not duplicative.
- **Duplicate existing or past initiatives** already funded under other bilateral or multilateral funding mechanisms, including existing tools and guidance documents, without demonstrating clear added value, innovation or lessons learned.
- **Focus primarily on scientific research topics**, baseline studies, or technical assessments without a clear path to implementation or measurable impact.
- **Involve direct investment in commercial activities** or for-profit enterprises, including start-ups, as the Fund does not finance commercial ventures.
- **Are primarily focused on purchasing infrastructure or technical equipment.** In exceptional cases, limited support may be provided, if the equipment is directly linked to institutional strengthening and if a robust long-term sustainability plan is in place, including provisions for maintenance and repair.
- **Lack a clear exit strategy on how you will disengage from the project to ensure that the benefits continue**, including on stakeholder engagement, or alignment with national priorities.
- **Have a very narrow scope and limited impact**, such as projects implemented only at the municipal or subnational level without broader relevance or scalability.

6. Further information on the application cycle

The Global Framework on Chemicals Fund issues periodic calls for applications. A detailed description of the application cycle can be found in the guidelines for applicants and on the Fund's [website](#).

All application forms are available online. Complete application packages should be sent to the Secretariat in English only, electronically in Word and PDF versions (with scanned or electronic signatures), to: unep-gfc.fund@un.org by the deadline specified on the website.

Subject to the capacities available, the Secretariat may assist, upon request from applicants, in the preparation of their application. Applicants are encouraged to reach out to the Secretariat as early as possible and at least four weeks before the application deadline to secure assistance, if required. The Secretariat will not be able to support late requests. Kindly send all requests to unep-gfc.fund@un.org

Based on the Terms of Reference of the Fund, the participating organizations of the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC) may provide technical assistance in the development of project proposals when requested by project proponents.

Annex: Terms of reference of the Global Framework on Chemicals Fund for the Global Framework on Chemicals – For a Planet Free of Harm from Chemicals and Waste

A. Administering organization

1. The Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme is invited to establish and manage a trust fund to support the Global Framework on Chemicals – For a Planet Free of Harm from Chemicals and Waste. The Framework secretariat will provide administrative support to the trust fund. This trust fund to support the Global Framework for Chemicals – For a Planet Free of Harm from Chemicals and Waste shall be separate from the existing trust fund used for the expenses of the Framework secretariat and the intergovernmental process.

B. Objective

2. The trust fund will provide resources to support the objective and strategic priorities of the Global Framework on Chemicals – For a Planet Free of Harm from Chemicals and Waste.

C. Time limit

3. The trust fund will be open to receive voluntary contributions for five years from the date on which it is established by the Executive Director. Funds may be disbursed for a maximum of seven years from that date.

D. Strategic priorities

4. The Global Framework on Chemicals Fund should mobilize resources for national priority activities in keeping with the work areas set out in the strategic objectives and targets of the Global Framework on Chemicals – For a Planet Free of Harm from Chemicals and Waste.

E. Sources of financing

5. Contributions shall be encouraged from Governments, regional economic integration organizations, the private sector, including industry, foundations, other non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders.

F. Eligibility rules

6. Developing countries and countries with economies in transition will be eligible for support. Approval of projects meeting the objectives outlined in the Global Framework on Chemicals – For a Planet Free of Harm from Chemicals and Waste will take into account considerations related to geographic and sectoral balance and will pay particular attention to urgent needs and the requirements of least developed countries and small island developing States.

7. Project proposals may be presented by those Governments participating in the Global Framework on Chemicals – For a Planet Free of Harm from Chemicals and Waste that have endorsed or given other appropriate formal recognition of and support for the Framework, through the relevant Governments. Project proposals must contain full justification for the amount sought.
8. On an exceptional basis and with regard to the resources and administrative capacity available, representatives of civil society networks participating in the Global Framework on Chemicals – For a Planet Free of Harm from Chemicals and Waste shall also be eligible to present project proposals, subject to endorsement by the countries hosting the projects.

G. Project assessment and approval

9. The participating organizations of the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals may provide technical assistance in the development of project proposals when requested to do so by project proponents.
10. Project proposals will be country-driven and will be submitted to the Framework secretariat and screened for completeness and eligibility.
11. Screened projects will be submitted by the secretariat of the Global Framework on Chemicals – For a Planet Free of Harm from Chemicals and Waste to the Executive Board of the Fund for appraisal and approval.
12. Independent monitoring and evaluation and reporting on project implementation to the Global Framework on Chemicals Fund Executive Board will be the responsibility of project proponents.

H. Guidance by the Executive Board

13. The Global Framework on Chemicals Fund Executive Board will review reports on project implementation, as well as from the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme on the financial resources and administration of the trust fund, and provide guidance and take decisions thereon.
14. The Global Framework on Chemicals Fund Executive Board will report to the Conference at its regular sessions on the operations of the Fund.

I. Accounts and audit

15. The accounts and financial management of the Global Framework on Chemicals Fund shall be subject to the internal and external audit process of the United Nations. Accounts for the trust fund shall be presented to the Executive Board as soon as possible after the financial period is closed and shall also be considered by the Conference.