

Distr.: General
6 June 2024
English only

**Fourth meeting of the Bureau of the Global Framework on Chemicals
– For a Planet Free of Harm from Chemicals and Waste**
Saturday, 15 June 2024, 09:00 – 18:00 (CET, Geneva time) (Hybrid)

Global Framework on Chemicals – For a Planet Free of Harm from Chemicals and Waste

Draft National Focal Points Guidelines

Note by the secretariat

1. ICCM5 adopted a resolution V/7¹ regarding the development of guidelines for national focal points and requested the secretariat to develop draft guidelines for consideration at the first session of the Conference in 2026.
2. Following the discussion held at the third Bureau meeting on 26 February 2024, the secretariat circulated the first draft of guidelines for national focal points among the Bureau members and has incorporated all the edits and general comments received. This draft is attached in the Annex to this document.
3. The Bureau may wish to provide feedback and agree on the proposed way forward.

¹ Resolution V/7: Development of guidelines for national focal points
<https://www.chemicalsframework.org/sites/default/files/documents/Resolution%20V-7.pdf>

Annex: Draft guidelines for national focal points of the Global Framework on Chemicals – For a Planet Free of Harm from Chemicals and Waste. February 2024

I. Background

1. The 5th session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM5), took place from 25 to 29 September 2023 in Bonn, Germany and produced the following outcomes:
 - Global Framework on Chemicals – For a Planet Free of Harm from Chemicals and Waste,
 - Bonn Declaration – for a Planet Free of Harm from Chemicals and Waste,
 - Global Framework on Chemicals Fund, and
 - A set of other Conference resolutions focused on the implementation of the Framework.
2. Paragraph 27 of the Global Framework on Chemicals – For a Planet Free of Harm from Chemicals and Waste states that “Each Government should designate a national focal point to facilitate communication and coordination at the national, regional and international levels with respect to the Framework. The national focal point should, among other duties, disseminate information, develop a network or a mechanism for coordinating national views that includes consultations with all relevant sectors and stakeholders, attend meetings, and be representative of the country’s interministerial and/or inter-institutional arrangements, where such arrangements exist.”
3. The International Conference on Chemicals Management Resolution V/7 on development of guidelines for national focal points requests the Framework secretariat to develop guidelines for national focal points for consideration at the next session of the International Conference including on how to build the capacity of national focal points, as well as on how national focal points can promote multisectoral collaboration and cooperation, coordinate such collaboration, and promote risk communication and awareness-raising.

II. Purpose of the guidelines

4. The guidelines offer general advice on an approach for implementing the Framework but are not intended to be an exhaustive handbook. The guidelines propose possible responsibilities and activities to enhance the role of national focal points and deliver more effective implementation of the Framework by promoting a good understanding of the key issues, barriers, solution finding strategies, resourcing, and aspects for efficient planning.
5. They are meant for personnel with the responsibility to act as the national focal point.
6. Whilst intended for governmental national focal points, other stakeholders of the Framework including NGOs, IGOs, not-for-profit organisations and private companies may, and are encouraged to have their own focal points under the Framework.
7. One of the main purposes of these guidelines is to address the gaps highlighted in the report “Independent Evaluation of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management from 2006 to 2015”². The report noted that several factors constrained national focal points’ ability to fulfil their role. National focal points have a significant role in the successful implementation the Framework, as well as other ICCM5 resolutions.
8. While the Global Framework on Chemicals process will regularly communicate with non-governmental organizations’ focal points and governmental focal points, these guidelines will focus on national focal points.

III. Designation of the national focal points of the Global Framework on Chemicals

9. The national focal point should be nominated officially by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It is recommended that the nomination follows a process of consultation with relevant ministries such as agriculture, environment, health, industry and labour, or with existing focal points of other chemicals conventions such as the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions and the Montreal Protocol. Other stakeholders may be consulted, as appropriate. Countries may wish to copy a written communication of their designation to other entities, including, if present, their Permanent Mission in Geneva, Nairobi or New York.
10. Some countries may choose to designate two focal points at the national level, one political and one technical. The responsibility of being the national focal point is to serve as a hub for common areas of priority requiring

² SAICM/ICCM.5/INF/1.

concerted action through a coordinated and participatory process. Where possible, the individual should be in a stable post within their institution.

11. The location of the national focal point and the institution in which it sits will depend on each national government's institutional arrangements. Operationally, the national focal point for the Framework is best placed in a function/role that allows for regular liaison and collaboration between the key ministries, as mentioned above, and other relevant institutions and stakeholders. The focal point should be supported by members from other ministries/institutions/stakeholder groups or associations.
12. National focal points may be officials working in any of the main disciplines in the social, economic, health, agriculture, labour and environmental sciences, in particular those with experience related to the Framework's areas of influence.
13. The Global Framework on Chemicals secretariat accepts nominations on an ongoing basis. Any changes should be notified to the secretariat. If the secretariat is not informed of changes, the incumbent will remain until a revised official nomination through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is received.
14. The notification should be sent to unep-gfc.secretariat@un.org and should include the full name, position and department/institution of the nominated national focal point as well as their e-mail address. This information will be published on the Framework website, under the list of national focal points.
15. The secretariat has developed a national focal point nomination letter and a Framework national focal point nomination form to facilitate the nomination. These forms are also available and adapted to non-governmental organization focal points and intergovernmental organizations focal points. The forms can be found at: <https://www.chemicalsframework.org/page/gfc-focal-points>

IV. Objectives, roles and activities of the national focal points

IV.1 Objectives of the national focal points

A. Knowing the mission and ultimate objective

16. The national focal point is expected to influence and shape, where relevant, national strategies, leverage national political commitment, and represent the country in matters related to chemicals management.
17. National focal points should promote the integration of the strategic objectives, principles and elements of the Framework and the Bonn Declaration in their development plans, sector strategies, work plans and/or local level implementation programmes, as appropriate. Strong and sustainable institutional coordination is vital for effective national action, and it is recommended to build on what already exists and strengthen local and national coordination, action, and progress.

B. Mainstreaming

18. National focal points should communicate and promote the aims and strategic objectives of the Framework across ministries, with a view to mainstreaming them into national policy planning. The multistakeholder and multisectoral approach should remain an important element to implementing the Framework to achieve sustained effective chemicals management. National focal points are encouraged to work closely with a variety of government departments such as the ministry of environment, health, agriculture, labour, Presidential Office, Cabinet Office, or Ministry of Foreign Affairs, among others.

C. Reaching the unreached

19. The unique role of the national focal point should allow them to reach strategic actors including industry and the private sector to foster innovation, move towards sustainable business models and drive change and other stakeholders, otherwise unreachable. Relevant information should be disclosed to all national stakeholders for effective and informed decision-making.

D. Linking to other Multilateral Environmental Agreements and the Sustainable Development Goals

20. The implementation of the Framework at the national level and enhancing national actions supports the implementation, and complements the achievement, of other existing relevant chemicals and waste related United Nations multilateral agreements, standards, and commitments as well as, treaties on climate change, and biodiversity, among others.

IV.2 Roles and responsibilities

21. Among other duties, national focal points designated by governments should disseminate information, develop a network or a mechanism (e.g., a multisectoral committee comprised of government, NGOs, industry, academia) for coordinating views, actions plans and implementation activities within the country. This could include

facilitating consultations with relevant sectors and stakeholders, attending relevant meetings, and being representative of the country's interministerial and/or inter-institutional arrangements, where such arrangements exist.

22. The national focal point should be able not only to address short-term issues but also to develop long-term activities with the aim of implementing the Framework.
23. To facilitate communication, nationally and internationally, the national focal point should act as an effective conduit for communication on Framework matters.
24. National focal points are encouraged to liaise with and be the contact point of the Bureau regional focal points in the implementation of the Framework.
25. Learning and sharing experiences among other national focal points of the Framework is a key opportunity for the national focal point to achieve the strategic objectives and targets of the Framework.
26. For any projects approved by the Executive Board of the Global Framework on Chemicals Fund in the country, the national focal point is expected to follow-up with the national implementing partner(s). The role of the national focal point may vary from case to case. In some instances, and due to the unique experience of some, the national focal point might be an integral actor in such projects. In other cases, the national focal point may not formally be included in the project. In all cases, the national focal point should be aware of and copied into the preparation and implementation phases of relevant projects to mainstream the outcomes.
27. The national focal point should be the entry point for the establishment of arrangements such as national plans of action for implementation on an interministerial or inter-institutional basis, in consultation with stakeholders, such that the interests of concerned national departments and stakeholders are represented and all relevant substantive areas are addressed.

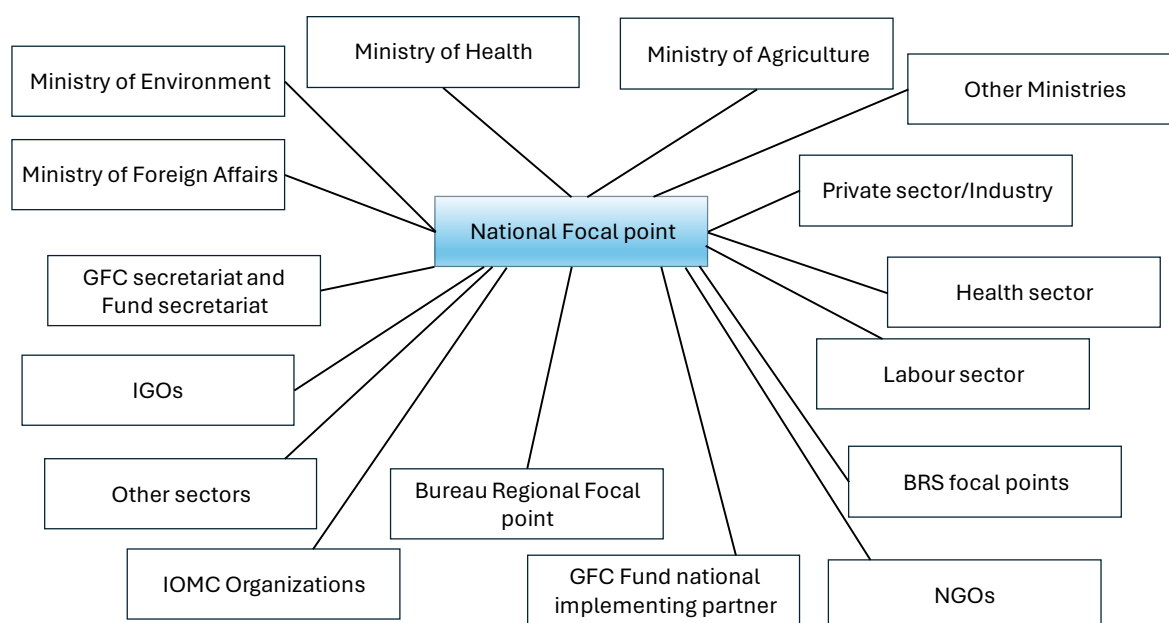


Figure 1: National focal points institutional arrangements

IV.3 Activities of the national focal points

28. Communicate the aims and objectives of the framework across government to support their mainstreaming into national planning.
29. When possible, create awareness of the importance of safe and sustainable chemicals management among relevant ministries, enforcement officials, industry associations and other targeted groups by participating and servicing in national workshops. Provide guidance to the most senior executive and legislative decision makers.
30. Promote synergies, especially with thematic sectors such as climate change and biodiversity as well as other multilateral environmental agreements agencies.
31. Encourage and facilitate the submission of progress reports to the regional focal point and the International

Conference on implementation of the Framework. Consolidate input from relevant stakeholders and sectors where relevant.

32. Identify potential experts to fill identified gaps in expertise in support of implementation of the Framework and reach out to secure their participation.
33. Coordinate with the relevant Foreign Affairs office to select funded delegates that will participate in-person in the relevant Framework meetings. Nominate experts for participation in workshops and other activities, with due regard for gender balance and the multisectoral and multistakeholder nature of the framework.
34. Assist in the organization of national workshops and any other Framework meeting, where appropriate.
35. Be prepared to answer questions regarding queries relating to the Framework from stakeholders at the national level, and, where appropriate, share the nature of requests for information with the secretariat of the Framework, to aid in the development of standard responses.
36. Maintain exchanges and cooperate with multilateral environmental agreement national focal points and those of other organizations and processes that may have useful insights or experiences that might benefit the implementation of the Framework.
37. Develop a good relationship with the Global Framework on Chemicals secretariat for guidance as required.

V. Capacity Building Mechanisms

38. The above-mentioned report of the independent evaluation identified the lack of training and capacity of the national focal point. It also identified insufficient administrative capacity and low numbers of qualified staff compounded by high staff turnover which added to the challenges faced by the national focal points in fulfilling their role. It is recommended, when possible, that national focal points are supported by experienced and qualified staff and that capacity constraints (including lack of administrative capacity and staff turnover) are reduced as much as possible.
39. The Global Framework secretariat will commit to putting in place mechanisms to engage with and train national focal points. For example, setting up a community of practices, regular training on how to negotiate, and updating research and policy information. Training for all focal points, especially from low and middle-income countries (LMICs), is planned to occur on a regular basis and not just before international meetings.
40. Other more specific training could be focused on: technology transfer and capacity-building activities, especially in relation to health and environmental protection; capacity building exercises related to EPI/IoC; capacity building on chemicals safety / for chemicals management through the preparation of guidelines for proper handling of hazardous chemicals; training and capacity building of end-users of chemicals; capacity-building programmes in chemicals management; and GHS implementation.
41. Other actions could be a self-evaluation form to be submitted by the national focal point and online training sessions for national focal points provided by the secretariat.

VI. Tasks of the secretariat vis a vis national focal points

42. The contact point for all national focal points will be the secretariat of the Global Framework on Chemicals. The secretariat will:
 - i. Share information with national focal points at regular intervals regarding the Framework and the progress of the activities and meetings.
 - ii. Share information received directly from some stakeholders of a specific country, with their consent.
 - iii. Share information materials and other tools produced by the secretariat.
 - iv. Engage, virtually, with focal points, at intervals to be determined in consultation with nominated focal points.
 - v. Communicate with the Permanent Missions to the United Nations in Geneva, copying the relevant national focal point.
 - vi. Collect and process information from national focal points and share it with the Bureau and other relevant groups.
 - vii. Provide a centralized source of information on the Framework targeted to the national focal points.
 - viii. Provide national focal points with a list of relevant documents for capacity building.

Appendix: Check list for Global Framework on Chemicals national focal points

Get equipped!

- ✓ Be aware of and in contact with supervisors, officials and government colleagues connected with the job, in the relevant ministries including economy and finance, environment, trade, industry, health, labour and agriculture.
- ✓ Expand networks to include the non-governmental specialists and organizations who work on chemicals and waste management issues.
- ✓ Be familiar with the website of the Global Framework on Chemicals including the Knowledge Management (www.chemicalsframework.org) site and other related ones. In addition, have a full working knowledge of the text of the Framework, the resolution texts, the Bonn Declaration, as well as the Rules of Procedure.
- ✓ Reach out and introduce yourselves to your respective regional representative and members of the Global Framework on Chemicals Bureau.
- ✓ Know and engage with the contact point at the Global Framework on Chemicals secretariat.
- ✓ Actively participate in briefings and meetings and make yourselves available for ad-hoc working groups and experience sharing. Consider engaging and undertaking training and, where appropriate, propose yourself to co-chair working parties and group processes. Become a key negotiator or a regional representative.
- ✓ Check with superiors if any provision of an annual budgetary allocation would support your work and position. Further financial support would also facilitate your training and participation in relevant meetings.
- ✓ Have alternates and, if possible, these alternates should be from other ministries/departments/institutions.

Build your knowledge!

- ✓ Be aware of your country's current situation in terms of chemicals across the lifecycle. Contribute to and help to coordinate your government's current position on issues after appropriate consultation with relevant stakeholders and government officials and liaise with the other focal points from your region to understand any regional positions.
- ✓ Learn how other multilateral environmental agreements and related treaties are active in your country and coordinate with them on issues of mutual interest.
- ✓ Keep up to date on the latest reports and the other documents of the Global Framework on Chemicals, Bureau meetings and other important Framework meetings and events.
- ✓ Prepare for meetings to inform about your national and regional positions and actions.
- ✓ If your country is a member of the Global Framework on Chemicals Bureau or is a regional representative, liaise closely with relevant individuals.
- ✓ Attend relevant training in support of your negotiating skills.
- ✓ During negotiations, check that any statements have been reflected accurately in the reports of the meetings.