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**Second meeting of the open-ended ad hoc group on
measurability and indicators**
Online, 14 August 2024, 14:00-16:00 CEST

Open-ended ad hoc group on measurability and indicators

Draft Concept note - Workstream 2

Proposed approach in developing a high-level indicator on the global environmental burden attributable to chemicals and waste

Note by the secretariat

1. At the second segment of the first meeting of the open-ended ad hoc group on measurability and indicators (OEAHGMI) the Co-Chairs proposed to divide the work into 3 workstreams.
2. The group agreed that UNEP will lead the task team on workstream 2 on the development of the high-level indicator on the “global environmental burden attributable to chemicals and waste” with support of the OECD and UNECE together with other interested stakeholders. UNEP was requested to outline a workplan, including working modalities with stakeholders, in a concept note to be introduced at the second meeting of the group.
3. The requested concept note is attached in the Annex to this document.

Annex:**Global Framework on Chemicals - Open-ended ad hoc group on measurability and indicators, Workstream 2****Proposed approach in developing a high-level indicator on the global environmental burden attributable to chemicals and waste***Draft concept note (July 2024)*

I. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT:

To facilitate the reporting and monitoring of progress and impact, the *Global Framework on Chemicals – For a Planet Free of Harm from Chemicals and Waste* includes a measurability structure to be composed of different types of indicators. These include high-level indicators on the “global burden of disease attributable to chemicals and waste” and on the “global environmental burden attributable to chemicals and waste” to measure progress towards the vision of the Framework.

An open-ended ad hoc group on measurability and indicators (OEAHGMI) was established by the International Conference on Chemicals Management at its fifth meeting (resolution V/9) to prepare recommendations for finalizing this measurability structure and a proposal for a set of indicators, to be considered at the next session of the International Conference in December 2026. At its first meeting (segment 2, May 2024), the group agreed to organize its work in 3 workstreams¹, with UNEP taking the lead of a task team in workstream 2 on the development of the high-level indicator on the “global environmental burden attributable to chemicals and waste”, with support of the OECD and UNECE together with other interested stakeholders.

The present note prepared by UNEP aims at laying out a possible approach in developing the high-level indicator on the global environmental burden, highlighting key steps, proposed organization of work as well as timeline.

II. PROPOSED KEY STEPS IN DEVELOPING THE HIGH-LEVEL INDICATOR

It is proposed that the task team considers several aspects in undertaking its work, including the primary objectives and scope of the high-level indicator, the criteria that it should meet, its constituting elements (variables/(sub-)indicators), as well as the methodology to construct it and any specific requirements in terms of operationalization. It may also be useful for the task team to consider testing and validating the

¹ Workstream 1 - Assessment of existing indicators

Workstream 2 - Development of additional indicators

Workstream 3 - Identification and Assessment of thematic and sector-specific work

proposed indicator before its actual implementation, proceed to any further refinement/adjustment, collect data for the baseline and develop a fact sheet presenting its key features.

1. Define the primary objectives and scope of the high-level indicator

The overall aim of the high-level indicator on the environmental burden is, together with the high-level indicator on the health burden developed under the leadership of WHO, to measure progress towards the vision of the Global Framework on Chemicals: “a planet free of harm from chemicals and waste for a safe, healthy and sustainable future”. It will therefore support characterizing this vision, measuring progress towards it in relation to impacts of chemicals and waste on human health and on the environment. Another objective to consider in developing the indicator will also relate to its ability to facilitate communication about the importance of chemical and waste management to the public and policy makers and its implications for human health and the environment, showing global trends in that regard².

It will also be important for the task team to determine the scope of the high-level indicator. The latter may relate to levels of air, water and soil contaminants/pollutants and waste, as well as to impacts such as pollution of water, land and soil, depletion of natural resources, disruption of ecosystem services and food chains, loss of biodiversity, or climate change, but also means to measure progress, e.g., in terms of improvements of environmental state. In doing so it may be useful to define the “environmental burden” as it applies to chemicals and waste in the context of the Framework, as well as how the vision may translate in practice.

2. Review criteria to be met by the high-level indicator

As laid out in Annex III of the Framework, indicators in the measurability structure should meet the following criteria: (a) Relevance and/or meaningfulness to the Framework; (b) Availability of data to create a baseline and to assess progress; (c) Have a designated custodian; (d) Allow for regular updating to help ensure sustainability of the measurement; (e) Allow for easy access to data and enable stakeholder participation in data collection; (f) Data comparability through standardized methodologies. The task team should therefore keep these in mind when conducting its work and assess whether any additional criteria should be applied. Additional aspects of relevance may for instance relate to costs or communication aspects, e.g., how effectively the results may be conveyed.

3. Identify the elements constituting the high-level indicator and select its key features

In defining the elements constituting the high-level indicator on the global environmental burden, it was suggested at the first meeting of the OEAHGMI to first consider the applicability of existing information, data sets and assessments as well as monitoring systems, such as for instance the Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (PRTR), or global monitoring plans under the chemicals and waste multilateral

² SAICM/IP.4/INF/39: Inventory and analysis report: existing indicators on chemicals and waste management

environmental agreements (MEAs)³. It was further suggested to consider Targets B7⁴ and D6⁵ of the Framework as well as where relevant indicators developed under the effectiveness evaluation of other mechanisms (e.g., MEAs). It was further noted that the work on this indicator considers cross cutting issues such as gender and finance, building also on the lessons learned in the context of the climate change and biodiversity MEAs.

The task team may hence start by reviewing these different sources of information, identifying their relevance to the primary objectives and scope of the high-level indicator while screening them against the set criteria. As a second step, it may assess whether there are any gaps in terms of information needed to meet the primary objectives and scope, and if such gaps are noted, identify the sources of data at international level that may be aggregated to the high-level indicator. This step may be usefully informed by the work conducted under Workstream 1 and 3.

4. Determine the possible form and methodology to construct the high-level indicator as well as operationalization aspects

Regarding the possible characteristic of the high-level indicator, as it is likely to be constituted of different types of information, it may take the form of an index or composite indicator. These would combine several individual indicators or variables to communicate the state of progress towards the vision of the Framework. Aspects of methodology to consider may relate to the aggregating method or weights of each variable/indicator constituting the indicator. It will also be necessary to consider the frequency of updates/reporting, any required standardization of data, responsible entity(ies), what should constitute the baseline as well as any specific features to support its operationalization. It may also be useful to consider how the indicator may be further updated or revised in the future. In terms of how the results of the indicator are showcased, this could take different forms such as value(s),, graphs showing evolution over time, dashboard showing several parameters, (maps , textual description, or a combination of several of these forms. The task team may consider testing options as part of the testing and validation process.

5. Conduct testing and validation of the proposed high-level indicator

As part of the indicator's development process, it is suggested to conduct testing and validation, in order to check its robustness from a methodological perspective in terms of overall construct, but also verify its relevance and usefulness in meeting its primary objectives. This may be undertaken amongst others by using past data when available, models, peer reviews consultations? or surveys. Following this exercise, it may be necessary to further refine/adjust the indicator and its methodology.

³ Concept note for the work of the open-ended ad hoc group on measurability and indicators prepared by the co-chairs, Document GFC/OEAHGMI.1/Seg.2/2

⁴ Target B7 – By 2030, stakeholders generate, to the extent possible, and make available comprehensive and accessible monitoring and surveillance data and information on concentrations and potential exposure sources of chemicals in humans (disaggregated by sex, age, region, other demographic factors, and other relevant health determinants as feasible), other biota and environmental media.

⁵ Target D6 – By 2030, sustainable chemical and waste management strategies have been developed and implemented for major economic and industry sectors that identify priority chemicals of concern and standards and measures, such as the chemical footprint approach, to reduce their impact and, where feasible, their input along the value chain

6. Develop a draft “factsheet” presenting the proposed high-level indicator

As called for by the co-chairs, each proposed indicator should be accompanied by a rationale for their selection, along with a series of information to be provided in a standardized manner in a “factsheet”, using as a basis the template to be developed by the Secretariat of the Framework.

III. PROPOSED APPROACH AND TIMELINE

1. Proposed approach in conducting the work

It is proposed that the first outcome of the work of the task team be presented to the Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) for consideration at its next meeting in June 2025 and that work be finalized on this basis ahead of the International Conference in December 2026.

Interested stakeholders are invited to take a pro-active role in this work, and if they have not already done so, are invited to register to participate in the task team through [this platform](#). Additional expertise may be sought as necessary to support the work.

In the lead up to OEWG In June 2025, it is proposed that the task team focuses on the following steps:

- Define the primary objectives and scope of the high-level indicator.
- Review criteria to be met by the high-level indicator.
- Identify the elements constituting the high-level indicator and select its key features.
- Present the outcome of its work to the OEWG for its consideration.

Based on the discussions held in the context of the OEWG, the task team would then undertake the following steps:

- Determine the possible form and methodology to construct the high-level indicator.
- Conduct testing and validation of the proposed high-level indicator.
- Develop a draft “factsheet” presenting the proposed high-level indicator for consideration by the International Conference, along any other supporting information.

2. Workplan in the lead up to the OEWG in June 2025

It is proposed that the task team holds regular meetings in an online setting, supported by consultations with key stakeholders and call for inputs.

- August 2024: Presentation of the proposed approach to OEAHGMI 2 and call for information from relevant organizations and stakeholders on the applicability of existing information eg the Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (PRTR), and global monitoring plans
- **September 2024: First meeting of the task team**
- October 2024: Call for written input on scope, objective and constitute elements
- **November 2024 : Second meeting of the task team**
- November 2024: Reporting on progress to OEAHGMI 3
- **January 2025: Third meeting of the task team**

- February 2025: Reporting on progress to OEAHGMI 4
- **March 2025: Fourth meeting of the task team**
- March 2025: Submission of the task team outcome to the OEWG regarding proposed objectives, scope and constitute elements of the high level indicator
- *June 2025: OEWG*