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**Second meeting of the intersessional process considering the Strategic Approach
and the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020**

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Item 4 of the provisional agenda*

Considerations for Beyond 2020

The role of OECD in the implementation of SAICM and the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020

Note by the secretariat

1. The secretariat has the honour to provide, in the annex to the present note, the document, developed by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) Joint Meeting of the Chemicals Committee and the Working Party on Chemicals, Pesticides and Biotechnology; *The role of OECD in the implementation of SAICM and the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020*.
2. The report is presented as received by the secretariat, without formal editing.

Annex

The role of OECD in the implementation of SAICM and the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020

**Developed by the OECD's Joint Meeting of the Chemicals Committee and the Working
Party on Chemicals, Pesticides and Biotechnology**

**The role of OECD in the
implementation of SAICM and
the sound management of
chemicals and waste beyond
2020**

Joint Meeting of the Chemicals
Committee and the Working Party on
Chemicals, Pesticides and
Biotechnology



This document is prepared by OECD to clarify its role in shaping and implementing the future international cooperation on the sound management of chemicals beyond 2020.

The 57th OECD Joint Meeting of the Chemicals Committee and the Working Party on Chemicals, Pesticides and Biotechnology in February 2018 agreed that the document could be submitted as an Information Document to the second meeting of the intersessional process in March 2018 considering the Strategic Approach and the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020.

OECD and SAICM since 2006

1. Following the adoption of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) at the International Conference on Chemicals Management in February 2006, the OECD adopted a Resolution of the Council on the implementation of SAICM [[C\(2008\)32](#)]. The Council decided that the OECD shall:

- Make implementation of the SAICM objectives, as set out in the Overarching Policy Strategy¹, an integral part of its Chemicals Programme, in particular through work on those elements of the SAICM Global Plan of Action for which OECD is an actor;
- Assist Member countries in their efforts to implement SAICM and work with non-Member Economies in SAICM implementation;
- Continue to co-operate and co-ordinate with other relevant intergovernmental organisations with regard to successful and timely implementation of SAICM;
- Make the outputs of its Chemicals Programme as accessible, relevant and useful as possible to non-Member Economies and other interested stakeholders, distributing them widely and free of charge; and
- Inform each future meeting of the International Conference on Chemicals Management of progress made by OECD in SAICM implementation.

2. These action items were then integrated into the subsequent OECD Environment, Health and Safety Programmes (2009-2012; 2013-2016; 2017-2020) and numerous OECD activities have contributed to SAICM implementation in OECD Members and Partners. The progress made with each of the action items of the Council Resolution is briefly summarised below:

Make implementation of the SAICM objectives, as set out in the Overarching Policy Strategy, an integral part of its Chemicals Programme, in particular through work on those elements of the SAICM Global Plan of Action for which OECD is an actor

3. The implementation of SAICM has become an integral part of the OECD Environment, Health and Safety (EHS) Programme since 2009. Indeed the EHS Programme is structured in line with the objectives of the Overarching Policy Strategy of SAICM, to ensure that all of the work done under the EHS Programme on the sound management of chemicals contributes to the implementation of SAICM [see for example the 2017-2020 EHS Programme outlined in [ENV/JM\(2016\)17/FINAL](#)].

Assist Member countries in their efforts to implement SAICM and work with non-Member Economies in SAICM implementation

4. Since the adoption of SAICM in 2006, the EHS programme has contributed significantly to the implementation of SAICM, mainly through the development of tools and instruments for the cost-efficient assessment of the risks of chemicals to human health and the environment (e.g. Test Guidelines, QSAR Toolbox etc.) or the development of Initial Assessment Reports for hundreds of industrial chemicals, but also by improving access to information on the properties of chemicals through the development of eChemPortal. Furthermore, specialised OECD programmes, such as those on pesticides, biocides, Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers as well as

• ¹ The SAICM objectives, as set out in the Overarching Policy Strategy are grouped into 5 headings: A. Risk Reduction; B. Knowledge and information; C. Governance; D. Capacity-building and technical operation; E. Illegal international traffic

chemical accidents have significantly contributed in helping countries achieve the goals of SAICM.

5. In addition, the work of the OECD is contributing to the implementation of the workplans for a number of [Emerging Policy Issues and Other Issues of Concern](#) that have been adopted by ICCM, especially:

- [Nanotechnology and manufactured nanomaterials](#) (in collaboration with UNITAR); the work of the OECD is focusing on the development of tools to assess the risks of manufactured nanomaterials to human health and the environment. A Council Recommendation adopted in 2013 provides the policy guidance for the safety assessment of manufactured nanomaterials [[C\(2013\)107](#)].
- [Endocrine-disrupting chemicals](#) (in collaboration with WHO and UN Environment); the work of the OECD is focusing on the development of tools to identify endocrine disrupting chemicals.
- [Perfluorinated chemicals and the transition to safer alternatives](#) (in collaboration with UN Environment); the work of the OECD is focusing on sharing information on alternatives to perfluorinated chemicals.
- [Environmentally Persistent Pharmaceutical Pollutants](#) (in collaboration with FAO, WHO and UN Environment); the work on Emerging Pollutants by the Working Party on Biodiversity, Water and Ecosystems [[ENV/JM\(2017\)11](#)] will contribute to the implementation of the workplan for addressing this Emerging Policy Issue.
- Lead in paints; while there has been no recent work on this topic at OECD, the Declaration on Risk Reduction of Lead [[C\(96\)42/FINAL](#)] contributes to the implementation of this EPI.

6. More recently, the OECD has increased its involvement with helping partner countries set up their industrial chemicals management system. So far this has taken the form of webinars (as well as a planned workshop) on specific issues relevant to specific partner countries. It is foreseen to continue and maybe expand this work in the future.

Continue to co-operate and co-ordinate with other relevant intergovernmental organisations with regard to successful and timely implementation of SAICM

7. As a Participating Organisation of the Inter-Organisation Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC), the OECD routinely coordinates its activities with other intergovernmental organisations (IGOs) and cooperates with other IGOs on numerous projects specifically dedicated to the implementation of SAICM. The most recent joint project was the development of the IOMC Toolbox for Decision-Making in Chemicals Management [<http://iomctoolbox.oecd.org>].

Make the outputs of its Chemicals Programme as accessible, relevant and useful as possible to non-Member Economies and other interested stakeholders, distributing them widely and free of charge

8. Following the Resolution of the Council, all outputs of the Chemicals Programme have been made publicly and freely accessible via the OECD website [<http://www.oecd.org/chemicalsafety/>]. OECD outputs are also advertised at SAICM-related events, such as regional meetings as well as meetings of the Open-Ended Working Group and the International Conference on Chemicals Management. Further progress is needed in making OECD outputs more relevant to partner countries.

Inform each future meeting of the International Conference on Chemicals Management of progress made by OECD in SAICM implementation

9. OECD routinely provides information on progress made in SAICM implementation to ICCM through joint reporting via the IOMC [see for example the report made to ICCM4 [here](#)].

Strengths of OECD in the sound management of chemicals and waste

10. The aim of the OECD's Environment, Health and Safety Programme is to protect human health and the environment from adverse effects of chemicals and to assist countries in gaining efficiencies in implementing their chemical safety policies. Over the last 45 years, the Programme has developed a solid body of legal instruments to assist countries in establishing and strengthening national regulatory frameworks for chemicals as well as technical tools to assist countries in their work to assess and manage the risks of chemicals.

11. Through the harmonisation of risk assessment methodologies, countries have shared and continue to share the burden of assessing the thousands of chemicals that have not been assessed yet as well as the many hundreds of new chemicals that are entering the market every year. A [2010 study](#) estimated that the work of the OECD EHS Programme saves industry and governments more than 150 Million Euros every year.

12. The OECD's work on risk assessment and risk management methodologies is applicable to any type of chemical and any stage in its lifecycle, independent of their use and addresses environmental protection (all media) as well as worker and consumer safety (including the safety of children). The work is therefore not only contributing to meeting Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 12 and specifically **Target 12.4**² on the sound management of chemicals and waste but also **Target 3.9**³ on reducing deaths from pollution and **Target 6.3**⁴ on water quality.

13. In addition, a number of specific programmes contribute to other SDG targets:

- The programme on pesticides and sustainable pest control contributes to **Target 2.4**⁵ on sustainable food production.
- The programme on chemical accident prevention, preparedness and response contributes to Targets 12.4, 3.9 and 6.3, but also **Target 11.5**⁶ on reducing the impact of disasters.
- The programme on Pollutant, Release and Transfer Registers, in addition to contributing to pollution reduction, contributes to **Target 12.5**⁷ on the reduction of waste generation.

• ² Target 12.4: By 2020, achieve the environmentally sound management of chemicals and all wastes throughout their life cycle, in accordance with agreed international frameworks, and significantly reduce their release to air, water and soil in order to minimise their adverse impacts on human health and the environment.

• ³ Target 3.9: By 2030, substantially reduce the number of deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals and air, water and soil pollution and contamination.

• ⁴ Target 6.3: By 2030, improve water quality by reducing pollution, eliminating dumping and minimising release of hazardous chemicals and materials, halving the proportion of untreated wastewater and substantially increasing recycling and safe reuse globally.

• ⁵ Target 2.4: By 2030, ensure sustainable food production systems and implement resilient agricultural practices.

• ⁶ Target 11.5: By 2030, significantly reduce the number of deaths and the number of people affected and substantially decrease the direct economic losses relative to global gross domestic product caused by disasters, including water-related disasters, with a focus on protecting the poor and people in vulnerable situations.

14. Many of the legal instruments and cooperative programmes on chemical safety developed at the OECD focus on the management of so-called “industrial chemicals”, i.e. those chemicals that are not covered by specialised regulations such as those for pharmaceuticals or pesticides. Over the years, the OECD has therefore acquired a unique and unparalleled **expertise in implementing regulatory frameworks for managing the risks from “industrial chemicals”**. However, the OECD is also at the forefront for promoting sustainable policies and developing procedures and tools for other types of chemicals, such as pesticides, with for example the development of risk assessment methodologies for bio-pesticides and guidance on fighting against illegal trade of pesticides. The OECD legal instruments⁸ related to chemical safety are **international standards**; while they are legally or politically binding only to OECD Members, any Partner country can seek adherence to these legal instruments and participation in the related work⁹. The OECD is actively working with Partner countries as well as with other Participating Organisations of the IOMC to promote global harmonisation of methods and approaches assisting countries in the development and implementation of their national chemical management systems. The OECD thereby assists countries in implementing the set of 11 basic elements recognized as critical at the national and regional levels to the attainment of sound chemicals and waste management, as outlined in the *Overall orientation and guidance for achieving the 2020 goal of sound management of chemicals*¹⁰.

15. The OECD has a tradition of assisting countries in cooperatively addressing **emerging issues** related to chemical safety and reducing the risks from these emerging issues. This was the case when new types of materials (e.g. manufactured nanomaterials) or new types of hazards (e.g. endocrine disruption) were identified as a collective challenge. For example the cooperative work on manufactured nanomaterials has led to a consensus policy recommendation¹¹ as well as an on-going work programme to adapt risk assessment and risk management tools developed for traditional chemicals to the specificities of nanomaterials. The OECD also adopted Test Guidelines and other tools to support countries’ needs related to identifying endocrine disrupting chemicals. Similarly, through the OECD, countries are investigating the **use of new approaches** to chemicals risk assessment, such as high-throughput test methods, the enrichment of understanding of toxicity pathways for chemicals, and predictive computer models (QSARs), with the aim to improve the science base and speed of the testing and risk assessment process, while reducing costs and the use of laboratory animals.

16. Since the adoption of its Strategy on Development in 2012 [[C/MIN\(2012\)6](#)] and of the Joint Meeting Vision for Contributing to the OECD Development Strategy [[ENV/JM\(2014\)2/FINAL](#)] in 2014, the OECD is seeking to strengthen its contribution to improve sound management of chemicals in developing countries, especially via the further development and “on-the-ground” application of the [IOMC Toolbox for Decision-Making in Chemicals Management](#).

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- ⁷ Target 12.5: By 2030, substantially reduce waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling and reuse.
 - ⁸ Over the years, the OECD has adopted a number of legal instruments dedicated to harmonising and enhancing common practices in countries for implementing chemical safety policies [see <http://www.oecd.org/chemicalsafety/oecdCouncilactsrelatedtochemicals.htm>]
 - ⁹ See Revised resolution of the Council on Partnerships in OECD Bodies [[C\(2012\)100/REV1/FINAL](#)]
 - ¹⁰ See <http://www.saicm.org/Portals/12/Documents/OOG%20document%20English.pdf>
 - ¹¹ Recommendation of the Council on the Safety Testing and Assessment of Manufactured Nanomaterials [[C\(2013\)107](#)]

Role of OECD in the implementation of SAICM and the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020

17. The role of the OECD¹² in the implementation of SAICM and the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020 would be to be a:

- **leader for the development of worldwide applicable scientific methods and approaches for risk assessment and approaches for risk management of chemicals;** these standards and approaches would cover any type of chemicals and any type of use and stage in their life-cycle. The core activities of the OECD in that role would be to:
 - develop harmonised test and non-test methods and assessment methodologies, that are in line with the latest scientific developments - but also focus on gaps not sufficiently addressed by current methodologies (e.g., exposure to chemicals in products, risks from the combined exposure to multiple chemicals, risks to vulnerable populations);
 - increase the accessibility, understanding and sharing of information on the properties of chemicals and their uses as well as tools to assess potential alternatives (e.g. through the further development of [eChemPortal](#), the [Adverse Outcome Pathway Knowledge Base](#), the [Substitution and Alternatives Assessment Toolbox](#) and electronic tools for the exchange of data);
 - promote the development and convergence of the identification of risk management options and of the approaches used in socio-economic analysis to inform risk management;
 - enhance the understanding and promote methods and tools to inform substitution and alternative assessment;
 - facilitate work on the risk management of specific chemicals, such as perfluorinated chemicals, as well as on chemical accident prevention, preparedness and response;
 - foster collaboration on methods for priority setting to gain efficiencies in using limited resources for in-depth risk assessments;
- **forum for collaboration on chemical safety policy;** the core activities of the OECD in that role would be to:
 - assist countries that wish to set up or improve their management systems for “industrial chemicals”;
 - maintain and further develop a robust body of legal instruments for the sound management of chemicals and waste and assist Member and Partner countries with their implementation;
 - promote sustainable chemistry by investigating what elements of sustainable chemistry could complement chemicals and waste management systems and what policies are efficient to increase the impact of those elements;
 - identify opportunities to explore and highlight the benefits of regulatory cooperation;
 - mainstream the sound management of chemicals into other policy areas, such as water quality, waste management/material recovery or corporate governance to address cross-cutting issues such as tracing chemicals throughout global supply chains (e.g. in plastics), or promoting resource efficiency and the transition to the ‘circular economy’;

• ¹² Note that the OECD shares some of the roles and activities described in this document with those of other Participating Organisations of the IOMC and the OECD will pro-actively seek coordination and collaboration with these organisations on overlapping areas of work.

- **go-to organisation for collaboration to address emerging policy issues related to the safety of emerging and converging technologies and chemical safety concerns;** the core activities of the OECD in that role would be to:
 - develop policy responses and technical tools for the sound management of novel materials (e.g. from synthetic biology) and for addressing newly recognised hazards of chemicals;
 - develop policy responses for managing contaminants of emerging concern in surface waters;
 - facilitate the use for regulatory decision-making of the exponentially increasing amount of results from high through-put test methods and predictive computer modelling.

18. The role of the OECD in the implementation of SAICM and the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020 as described above is coherent with its Development Strategy and its vision to become the knowledge sharing organisation on sound chemicals management for all countries.

19. Following the agreements reached by ICCM5 in 2020, the OECD will develop an action plan, similar to the action plan developed for the implementation of SAICM in 2008.

Promoting our role and achieving high-level engagement

20. Following the agreements reached at ICCM5 in 2020 on the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020, the OECD will seek high-level engagement for its role in the implementation of the agreements. This could take the form of another Council Resolution as well as a ministerial meeting.