

Suggestions for a Global Framework on Chemicals (GFC)
Implementation Programme on:
Strengthening National Chemicals Legislation and
Institutional Capacities

A draft discussion document (21 May 2025)

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1 Background and introduction

1.1 About this discussion document

This draft discussion document informs deliberations at the [expert meeting and multistakeholder workshop](#) for “Developing an Implementation Programme for the Global Framework on Chemicals on Strengthening National Chemicals Legislation and Institutional Capacities”, 22-23 June, Punta del Este, Uruguay, in particular for the workshop session on the morning of 23 June 2025. It features initial suggestions for a Global Framework on Chemicals (GFC) Implementation Programme on “Strengthening National Chemicals Legislation and Institutional Capacities”. This document was developed by the IOMC in response to the request set forth in ICCM 5 Resolution V/8 with the goal to stimulate discussion with and among GFC stakeholders.

The proposed Programme focuses on knowledge-sharing and fostering results-oriented initiatives and activities by governments and other stakeholders to implement Strategic Objective A of the GFC. The objective states that “Legal frameworks, institutional mechanisms and capacities are in place to support and achieve the safe and sustainable management of chemicals throughout their life cycle”. Of particular relevance to the Programme is Target A1 which states that “By 2030, Governments have adopted and are implementing and enforcing legal frameworks, and have established appropriate institutional capacity to prevent or, where prevention is not feasible, minimize adverse effects from chemicals and waste as appropriate for their national circumstances”.

The draft document is in principle the same as the one circulated in advance of the IOMC [webinar](#) on the topic held in March 2025. Some adjustments have been made in the Governance Section of the draft TOR to ensure consistency with Information Document UNEP/GFC/OEWG.1/INF/11 submitted by IOMC for the GFC OEWG. Following the webinar, valuable comments were received by some stakeholders (and will be posted on the workshop website) and stakeholders are encouraged to share these comments at the June 2025 workshop. Input from the workshop and OEWG will be taken into account in preparing relevant documentation for the International Conference in 2026.

1.2 Brief overview of the consultative process to develop the Programme

To initiate a dialogue with GFC stakeholders about the Programme, the IOMC began a consultative process in 2024: an introductory webinar in September 2024, a dedicated webinar in March 2025, a face-to-face workshop in June 2025, and discussions at the GFC Open-ended Working Group (OEWG) in June 2025. The OEWG meeting creates an opportunity to obtain feedback on the draft mandate, TOR, and workplan of the Programme, to inform further Programme development and its possible adoption at the first International Conference on the GFC in 2026.

As a contribution to the consultative process, this document provides initial input on the following questions:

- What could be elements of scope, focus, and potential value added of the Implementation Programme?

- How could the Implementation Programme be designed so that relevant stakeholders are fully engaged in and develop ownership for the Programme?
- How can the Implementation Programme help catalyze further national implementation action concerning specific GFC targets?
- How can issues of concern be systematically addressed in the Implementation Programme?
- How can linkages be ensured with the GFC measurability framework?

1.3 A brief recap of the Global Framework on Chemicals (GFC)

At the fifth International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM 5), held in September 2023 in Bonn, Germany, close to one thousand delegates from around the world representing governments, IGOs, industry, and civil society adopted a new “Global Framework on Chemicals: For a Planet Free of Harm from Chemicals and Waste” (GFC).

A core element of the GFC is the 5 Strategic Objectives and 28 Targets that guide stakeholders at all levels to take measurable action to ensure the sound management of chemicals and waste. Other outcomes adopted by ICCM5 include the [Bonn Declaration for a Planet Free of Harm from Chemicals and Waste](#) and [12 Resolutions](#). Through [Resolution V/8](#) on “Implementation Arrangements” the Conference urged “Governments, intergovernmental organizations, and organizations and stakeholders representing civil society and the private sector to comprehensively implement the GFC as a framework for national and international action and cooperation on chemicals and waste”.

1.4 Implementation programmes under the Global Framework on Chemicals

Mechanisms to support implementation of the GFC

The Global Framework on Chemicals specifies in Para 24 that the International Conference on the GFC “may adopt programmes to support the implementation of the Framework in order to achieve its strategic objectives and targets”. It also states that “Such programmes should have their own focus and engage relevant sectors and stakeholders, and could include, in a flexible and dynamic format, the actions that the stakeholders intend to initiate or contribute to at the national, regional, and/or international levels in order to successfully meet the relevant GFC targets”. Furthermore, “programmes should also include any necessary mandates, terms of reference, workplans and/or other mechanisms, including actions to address identified issues of concern where relevant, to contribute to the success of the overall Framework and its strategic objectives”.

The GFC also specifies that participation in each of the programmes should be open to all relevant stakeholders and sectors and that the International Conference may establish ad hoc working groups to provide direction and momentum for the work, as well as to mobilize engagement. In addition to the actors specifically identified in the targets, the International Conference should “invite the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC) and intergovernmental organizations to contribute actively to the implementation programmes to support the Framework and to further strengthen international cooperation and multisectoral engagement in the sound management of chemicals and waste.”

Resolution V/8 on “Implementation arrangements”

Resolution V/8 on “Implementation arrangements” invites the IOMC, governments, stakeholders, as well as other international organizations “to collaborate on, and develop proposals for implementation programmes (...) for further consideration at the next session of the Conference”. The proposals should address “respective mandates, terms of reference, workplans and other mechanisms”.

In its preamble, Resolution V/8 refers to the value and various dimensions of integrated chemicals and waste management, including related preparatory activities undertaken by the IOMC together with diverse stakeholders prior to ICCM 5.

Taking this work into account, the Resolution refers to the following areas of work for possible implementation programmes, among others, to be considered:

1. Developing integrated national chemicals and waste management systems and capacities at the national and regional levels;
2. Integrating sound chemicals and waste management in economic and industrial sectors along value chains;
3. Integrating sound chemicals and waste management in sustainable development decision-making processes, as appropriate; and
4. Addressing issues of concern, as appropriate.

The integrated chemicals and waste management concept (see Figure 1) had been proposed by the IOMC during the intersessional process negotiations for the GFC. It includes three interrelated elements mentioned below, with issues of concern being addressed as a cross-cutting topic.

Figure 1: The three dimensions of integrated chemicals and waste management



Finally, Resolution V/8 also states that the possible adoption of implementation programmes at the next International Conference in 2026 should not delay immediate stakeholder action to implement the strategic objectives and targets of the Global Framework, and “welcomes and encourages the undertaking of further activities concerning all areas of work during the intersessional period until the next session of the Conference”.

Benefits of the implementation programmes

Participating in GFC Implementation Programmes provides stakeholders with access to a collaborative framework which fosters regular interaction, tracking of progress, and promoting achievements. Specific benefits of participation may include, for example to:

- join global/ regional exchanges with peers at the global level and in specific geographical contexts
- gain insights into emerging and innovative approaches
- link up with like-minded stakeholders to work together to advance the objectives of the GFC
- obtain global recognition for commitment to implement the GFC and take action to implement its targets
- engage in discussions to develop harmonized approaches that can save resources.
- learn about opportunities to access financial resources.

Collaboration, coordination, and partnerships

Information and knowledge generated through implementation programmes can serve as a foundation for strengthening collaboration and coordination among all concerned stakeholders. It may, for example, catalyze the development of new partnerships or twinning arrangements or implementation coalitions, and help ensure that capacity development activities of multi- and bilateral actors and those of other stakeholders are well coordinated.

Potential role of the IOMC

Resolution V/8 extends an invitation to the IOMC and other stakeholders to collaborate on and develop proposals for implementation programmes for further consideration at the next Conference. Responding to this, the IOMC has undertaken consultative activities to facilitate the development of three global implementation programmes which correspond to the mandate provided in Resolution V/8. Detailed information can be found on the [IOMC website](#) on GFC Implementation Programmes. In this context, it is important to note that other stakeholders may also initiate the development of other implementation programmes of interest.¹

¹ Resolution V/8 is open concerning the number of GFC implementation programmes. Therefore, other proposals concerning implementation programmes of relevance and corresponding to the criteria found in the GFC documents may be developed by stakeholders for consideration of the International Conference. These current suggestions are not intended to be exclusive, but represent an initial set of proposals from the IOMC.

2 Elements of a Terms of Reference for the Implementation Programme

This section presents for consideration the initial elements / building blocks on which to base the draft TORs for the Programme. It takes into account the general elements of TORs for GFC Implementation Programmes [presented and discussed at an IOMC webinar](#) in September 2024.

(1) Proposing stakeholder(s)

The Programme is proposed by the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals in partnership with [.....].

(2) Programme rationale

A large number of countries, in particular developing countries and countries with economies in transition, do not have essential basic chemicals management legislation in place to ensure the sound management of chemicals. This results in significant negative impacts on human health and the environment.

(3) Programme objectives and scope

GFC Targets relevant for the Programme

The Implementation Programme brings together GFC stakeholders committed to implementing the GFC and advancing towards the achievement of Strategic Objective A which aspires that “Legal frameworks, institutional mechanisms and capacities are in place to support and achieve the safe and sustainable management of chemicals throughout their life cycle.”

Specifically, GFC Target A1 spells out that by “2030, Governments have adopted and are implementing and enforcing legal frameworks, and have established appropriate institutional capacity to prevent or, where prevention is not feasible, minimize adverse effects from chemicals and waste as appropriate for their national circumstances”. Other relevant GFC targets include: A2, A3, A5, A6, A7, B1, B2, B3, B4, B6, D2, D4, D7, E2, E3, E5, and E6.

Programme Objectives

The proposed implementation programme comprises, promotes, and supports, results-oriented initiatives and activities undertaken by stakeholders working towards the implementation of effective chemicals legislation and institutional capacities, as called for by the GFC Strategic Objective A and Target A1. Through this, it aims at filling the prevailing gaps concerning chemicals legislation between developed and developing countries.

(4) Programme components and activities

Global programme component

The global component of the Programme focuses on overall outreach, guidance, general knowledge-sharing. The following supporting activities may be undertaken at the global or regional level, subject to available resources,

- Awareness raising campaign to highlight the importance of chemicals legislation.

- Identifying stakeholder initiatives and stakeholders in need of support and inviting them to engage in the programme.
- Identifying opportunities for coordination and creating synergies.
- Provision of technical support to develop project proposals and access to financing.
- Match-making to link demand for assistance with available support.
- Global and/or regional multi-stakeholder knowledge-sharing workshops.
- Knowledge-sharing of good practices.
- Further development of guidance and training materials.
- Analysis of progress and challenges faced by stakeholders.

Further details will be provided in the Programme's workplan

Stakeholder initiatives and actions contributing to the Programme

While specific activities to implement the GFC and the Programme are identified, owned and executed by GFC stakeholders, the following types of initiatives, activities or projects are proposed to fall within the scope of the Programme:

- Strengthening of legislation or standards to promulgate classification and labelling compatible with the GHS.
- Strengthening of legislation to generate knowledge about hazardous chemicals and regulate chemical risks throughout the life cycle.
- Strengthening of institutional capacity to manage chemicals, including the establishment of a national chemicals' agency, or an inter-ministerial coordinating mechanism.
- Strengthening of legislation for specific industry sectors to advance chemical safety, sustainable chemistry innovation, and a non-toxic circular economy along value chains.
- Strengthening of cost recovery schemes to ensure financial sustainability of national legislation and institutional capacities, such as registration fees or Extended Producer Responsibility schemes.
- Other activities that contribute to developing integrated national chemicals and waste management systems and capacities at the national and regional levels
- Any support initiatives provided by a development organization or other stakeholder group to support any of the above activities.

(5) Stakeholder participation in the Programme

Stakeholders encouraged to engage

The proposed Implementation Programme is open to all stakeholders. Specific stakeholders encouraged to engage include:

- Governments and/or regional inter-governmental organizations planning to take measures to strengthen their chemicals legislation and/or ready to share their experience.
- International organizations, bi-lateral development organizations and other development partners and stakeholder groups offering technical or financial support
- Other GFC stakeholders, such as industry, labour unions, civil society organizations or academic institutions who have significant experience or activities relevant to the Programme and related GFC targets.

Process for stakeholders to engage

Stakeholders interested in engaging in the Programme should be committed to implementing the GFC and its strategic objectives and targets, be ready to share what they have to offer to the Programme or their need for support and be ready to report on progress made in implementing the GFC and identifying challenges encountered.

Stakeholders may join the Programme by notifying the IOMC and GFC Secretariat. The communication shall include a statement confirming the commitment of the stakeholder to implement the GFC and in particular Strategic Objective A, as well as a brief description of relevant initiatives, activities and resources relevant to implementing the Programme. While this creates a network of stakeholders specifically engaged in a particular Programme, all Programme activities are open to and will be announced to all GFC stakeholders.

(6) Knowledge-sharing on stakeholder initiatives and good practices

An integral part of the Programme is to compile relevant initiatives and good practices of stakeholders relevant to achieving the objectives of the Programme. This will include capacity development initiatives and projects implemented by IOMC Participating Organizations, other development partners and national governments. Compiling and sharing this knowledge widely and systematically is expected to foster coordination and collaboration among participating stakeholders.

Furthermore, the identification of and knowledge sharing of good legislative practices will help to ensure that countries committed to strengthening their chemicals legislation will be able to learn about and review the experience gained in other countries.

(7) Governance arrangements

Programme coordination

As one of the proponents of the Programme, the IOMC/one or more of its Participating Organizations (POs) are ready to offer coordinating services for the Programme, working closely with the GFC Secretariat.

Multi-stakeholder advisory group

Please refer to the GFC OEWG Information Document UNEP/GFC/OEWG.1/INF/11.

(8) Opportunities to finance Programme activities

Implementation activities that will be undertaken under the programme (as taken up in the Programme's workplan) could be funded through various means.

These may include financial resources that could be accessed through, for example, multi-donor trust funds such as the GFC Trust Fund, the Special Programme and the Global Environment Facility (GEF), as well as funding made available by governments, international and bilateral development cooperation agencies, industry or philanthropic organizations.

In addition to these funding sources, financial and technical resources may be available through stakeholders participating in the implementation programme, including support to assist stakeholders in developing project proposals.

Some modest funding may be required for supporting activities at the international level (e.g. global and/or regional knowledge-sharing workshops).

(9) Synergies with other Implementation Programmes

The Programme is closely linked to and will support the proposed GFC Implementation Programme on Industry Engagement and Action along Value Chains, for example by covering legislation on developing safe and sustainable products and reducing the chemical footprint along value chains.

(10) Monitoring, analysis, and feedback to the International Conference

Monitoring

To assess the success of the implementation programme, indicators developed under the GFC will be used to monitor progress and assess the impact of activities under the Programme. Further process indicators may be proposed by the Steering Group and programme stakeholders to measure intermediate progress against questions. The ultimate benchmark to assess the success of the implementation programme is if it succeeds in accelerating progress towards achieving relevant GFC targets.

Analysis and feedback to the International Conference

The programme creates an opportunity to understand factors fostering success or impeding progress. The programmes will therefore include a "lessons learned" component to inform future implementation action and/or provide feedback to the International Conference. This will be fostered through the knowledge-sharing component of the Programme.

3 Initial global activities to accompany the Programme development process

While consultations concerning the mandate, TORs, and workplan for the development of the Programme are ongoing, a number of important inter-sessional activities are taking place as called for by the GFC. They are summarized below.

3.1 Identifying existing and planned capacity development initiatives and needs

3.1.1 Country initiatives and interest

In February 2025 the IOMC administered a country survey to identify countries with ongoing and planned initiatives and interested in collaboration and /or need for assistance.

3.1.2 Taking stock of capacity development initiatives and activities

IOMC

IOMC POs are carrying out a number of capacity development projects which are relevant to the Programme. In 2025, the IOMC will compile summary information about these projects as a contribution to the knowledge sharing component of the Programme.

Other development partners and stakeholders

IOMC will contact development partners, including the private sector, to indicate their relevant ongoing and planned activities, using a similar format.

Analysis

The collected information and knowledge aims to help identify opportunities for coordination and collaboration among stakeholders that may not happen without such knowledge-sharing.

3.2 Development of further guidance and technical support

For a number of GFC targets relevant to the programme, guidance materials are already available, for example, through the [IOMC Toolbox](#) and the UNEP Lira Guidance.

In addition, a systematic effort will be made to document available guidance and to help interested stakeholders in navigating and using existing materials. Relevant documentation will be placed on a global knowledge-sharing platform.

The stock-taking and review of existing guidance may also help in identifying gaps, as appropriate.

Furthermore, the IOMC has or will initiate the following activities to provide further guidance and support to developing countries in particular for industrial and consumer product chemicals:

- Development of a concept paper/guideline on strategic options to develop chemicals legislation in developing and transition countries.
- Development of model legislation/modules/building blocks, including on effective chemicals risk management decision-making.
- Development of a regulatory benchmarking tool for countries to self-assess their national chemicals legislation and identify possible gaps.

3.3 Global stakeholder workshop and consultations

[Multi-stakeholder workshop on developing an IP on national chemicals legislation and institutional capacities \(22-23 June 2025\)](#)

The multi-stakeholder workshop to develop a GFC Implementation Programme on “Strengthening National Chemicals Legislation and Institutional Capacities” will discuss the draft mandate, draft TORs and Workplan for the implementation programme. The outcomes of the workshop will feed into and will be presented at the OEWG meeting.

Questions that will be discussed during the workshop to further inform the development of the Programme’s mandate, TOR, and Workplan will likely include:

- What are good practices in developing effective chemicals legislation and risk management decision making?
- How can the sharing of knowledge of good practices be fostered and managed?
- How can effective partnerships be fostered, including through south-south, north-south, and triangular collaboration?
- How can the implementation programme be linked with other relevant support mechanisms and initiatives (including financing), and/or help structure the use of the GFC Funds?
- How can capacity development activities of IOMC POs, bilateral actors, NGOs and industry be effectively coordinated?
- How can progress in countries and programme success be monitored and contribute to measuring progress to implement the GFC and achieving its targets?

The workshop will focus on chemicals legislation for (mainly) industrial and consumer product chemicals, including relevant country needs, options for effective chemicals legislation, and strengthening risk management decision-making. This includes identifying innovative policy models, approaches, and good practices that help ensure that legislative systems in countries with limited resources are effective, efficient and financially sustainable. Based on this, the workshop will explore what further guidance and support may be needed to put in place effective legislation, and an enabling policy environment, including sustainable financing.

3.4. Preparation of an Inf Document for OEWG in June 2025

The IOMC will prepare an Inf document for the OEWG meeting in June 2025 (see UNEP/GFC/OEWG.1/INF/11). The document will feature a draft mandate, TOR, and initial workplan for the programme and summarize relevant activities undertaken to-date and possible next steps between the OEWG and first international conference (late 2026).