

STRENGTHENING INTEGRATED CHEMICALS AND WASTE MANAGEMENT

An IOMC contribution to the intersessional process on the “Strategic Approach and sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020

THE NEED TO ACCELERATE THE SOUND MANAGEMENT OF CHEMICALS AND WASTE

About 30,000 chemical substances are currently on the global market. Many of these chemicals are hazardous to human health and the environment, but significant data gaps remain concerning their hazard properties.

In key industries and value chains, significant efforts still need to be made to manage chemicals, but lack of political support undermines the implementation of these programs.

With several recent national industrial chemicals management initiatives promoting comprehensive approaches, we see opportunities for integrated chemicals and waste management. In addition to promoting the protection of the safety of workers, citizens, consumers and the environment, they ensure that chemicals are assessed and managed to promote a range of protection objectives.

These integrated approaches to waste management and chemicals can be implemented by considering three dimensions:



1. DEVELOPING SYSTEMS AND CAPACITIES FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF BASIC CHEMICALS

in all countries that engage and address key sectors.

2. SUPPORTING INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT IN KEY INDUSTRY SECTORS

that cover the life cycle of chemicals and products and promote a circular economy.

3. INTEGRATING CHEMICALS MANAGEMENT WITH BROADER SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

(e.g., decent work, health and well-being, innovation, climate change) and promote sustainable procurement as well as green and sustainable chemistry innovation and solutions.



The 3 dimensions support action on both legacy issues to control chemicals of concern, emerging issues of concern, as well as opportunities to advance green and sustainable chemistry solutions.



1 DEVELOPING BASIC NATIONAL CHEMICAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS AND CAPACITIES IN ALL COUNTRIES

Integrating chemicals and waste management requires the development of basic chemicals management systems. As a result, basic legal, institutional, and human resource capacities must be developed.

A national chemicals management system should therefore consider the following elements:

- Ensuring classification and labelling through implementation of the GHS

- Generating knowledge about hazardous chemicals in the country
- Integrated assessment and management of chemical risks
- Integrated chemicals and waste management to enable a circular economy.

In parallel, the development of enabling institutional, legal, technical and human resource capacities is a necessary condition for advancing an integrated chemicals and waste management and should consider these elements:

- Effective national institutions, coordination and stakeholder engagement
- Legislation and enforcement covering the life cycle of chemicals, products and waste

- Creating linkages with other relevant initiatives at the national level
- Sustainable financing
- Sustainable human resource capacities

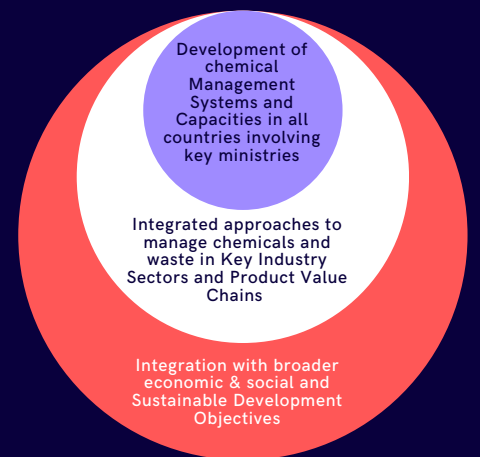


Figure 1: Key dimensions of an integrated chemicals and waste management

2 INTEGRATING CHEMICALS MANAGEMENT IN KEY INDUSTRY SECTORS AND PRODUCT VALUE CHAINS

Due to the unknown magnitude and nature of chemical releases associated with key industries and product value chains, prioritisation of sectors in both international and national contexts is challenging. The focus should therefore be on identifying chemical-intensive industries and product value chains

Integrated and sustainable strategies for the chemical sector should be developed, presented, and discussed with other stakeholders to advance action in key industry sectors and product value chains. Industry and governments can take steps to advance integrated strategies:

What can industry front-runners do?



In implementing feasible and realistic measures for the industry, leading industrial players can share their experience in promoting sectoral strategies or roadmaps.



What can pioneer governments do?

Increasing public awareness of toxic chemical-related issues, including health problems, climate change, and environmental degradation, is one of the most important aspects of government action. Changing consumption behavior and choosing greener, safer chemicals could be encouraged by public policy.

3 INTEGRATING CHEMICALS MANAGEMENT WITH SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ISSUES AND INITIATIVES

As part of integrated management, chemicals and waste management issues need to be integrated with sustainable development initiatives.

In order to achieve sustainable development policy outcomes, chemical and waste considerations must be incorporated into other decision-making processes. Additionally, relevant considerations about chemicals and wastes should be included in national strategies, plans, and activities that implement the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

POSSIBLE OBJECTIVES AND TARGETS TO SUPPORT INTEGRATED CHEMICALS AND WASTE MANAGEMENT



POSSIBLE OBJECTIVES

Possible objectives can help to identify targets and indicators to measure progress, as well as implementation measures. Possible objectives and outcomes may include:

- Establishing legal, institutional and technical capacity to manage hazardous chemicals
- Filling global data gaps concerning hazard properties of chemicals through global collaboration
- Sharing of national chemical risk assessment and risk management approaches for consideration of countries with limited resources



SUGGESTIONS FOR TARGETS

The following indicators may be useful for improving integrated chemical and waste management:

- Development of basic national chemical management systems
- Integrating chemicals and waste management in key industry sectors
- Integrating chemicals and waste management into sustainable development action



SUPPORTING AND ENABLING MEASURES

Further supporting measures are needed at all levels to help achieve the above targets/indicators. They may include:

- Development of a global knowledge-platform and outreach initiative
- Development of a global initiative to fill current data gaps on chemical hazards
- Scaling-up coordinated support for capacity development