



Gender and Chemicals Road Map

Brief guidance for a gender-responsive
national chemicals policy

October 2021

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The present publication was produced as part of the project “GenChemRoadMap – Implementation of a Gender Road Map in National Chemicals Management”. We are grateful for the generous support by the German Federal Ministry for Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU) and the German Environment Agency (UBA). Illustrations were developed by Miriam Barton at miratruck (2021).

The publisher is responsible for all contents of this publication.



Other Publications:

Hemmati, M. & Bach, A. (2017): Gender and Chemicals. Questions, Issues and Possible Entry Points.

Hemmati, M. & Holthaus, A. (2018): Gender and Chemicals Beyond2020. Policy Suggestions. How to integrate gender in SAICM Beyond 2020.

MSP Institute (2019): Gender & Chemicals Beyond 2020 – How to create a gender-just healthy planet.

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Introduction

Why a Road Map?

Since the WHO published its “WHO Chemicals Road Map” in 2017, road maps have been discussed as tools to strengthen voluntary, multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder global governance for the sound management of chemicals: “a roadmap approach can be beneficial in guiding stakeholders on where and how to start, and who to engage. It encourages stakeholders to take initiative and ownership and helps develop a network of committed stakeholders.”¹

What is a Road Map?

A road map itself is a publication serving as a guidance tool and a communication medium. It provides an overview of how a project develops visually over a period of time. It is characterised by its preparatory character and the rough planning of the steps to be taken over a longer period of time, usually more than one year. The roadmap is used to structure the long-term project of mainstreaming gender into individual, more manageable steps, considering uncertainties and possible scenarios for goal achievement. It recommends first steps and actions areas without overloading or over-complicating.

How to use the Road Map?

The following provides guidance on how to fully integrate gender in national chemicals management. These steps are meant to give support and direction to actors engaged in national chemicals management. Not all steps will be relevant for all. It is useful to have tools and guidance for creating gender-responsive and thus better structures, policies and processes at hand. Introducing them step by step and demonstrating the potential of integrating gender can prevent feelings of overburdening and resistance and will help generate interest.

Let's try it!

¹ UNITAR (2019): Summary outcome document: Stakeholder workshop on strengthening governance for the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020. From national to global: Learning from experience, exploring options.

STEP 1: Understanding why gender matters

The interconnections between gender² and chemicals and waste are complex and multi-dimensional. In summary, the following three points justify serious consideration of gender within chemicals management:

- Women's and men's bodies are affected differently by certain chemicals – exposure, risk, and impacts can be different between the sexes. This is because, on the one hand, men and women have different body compositions and hormone levels and, on the other hand, women live through specific phases in life, such as pregnancy, breastfeeding and menopause, during which their bodies become more susceptible to health damages from chemicals (UNDP 2011; IPEN 2020).
- Chemical exposure is also influenced by various social gender aspects: Due to the division of labour, men and women are affected by different chemicals. For example, men are more likely to work in construction and thus come into contact with chemicals from building materials, while women are more likely to work in the care sector, being exposed to cleaning or care products (ILO 2021).
- Fortunately, there is a powerful tool called gender analysis: Gender analysis enables us to understand and unpack root causes of unsustainable behaviour, and helps us to find new solutions for sustainable chemicals policies by thinking outside the “masculine” box with a gender perspective. We need to tap into this potential in order to bring about sustainable development, justice and peace.

Even though gender inequalities regarding the management of chemicals and waste can have negative impacts on human health and the environment, specific and widespread knowledge on gendered ways of exposure and differentiated and long-term effects of chemicals on women and men as well as comprehensive gender analysis of chemicals and waste management is still lacking. Consequently, national chemicals and waste policies are often gender blind.

² Please note: We use the term “gender” as an umbrella term which includes the entire field of gender and gender relations. The terms “gender” and “biological sex” are not interchangeable; gender identity may or may not correspond with the biological sex assigned. Gender identity exists on a spectrum and is not necessarily conned to an identity that is completely male or completely female (WHO 2016, see also our glossary of terms in the workbook).

STEP 2: How to initiate the process: first steps for the National Focal Point

Establish a working group

Questions: Who is needed to be able to work on cross-cutting integration?

Activities:

- Conduct a stakeholder analysis with potential stakeholders from various sectors like public institutions, science, industry, health system, labour unions, farmers and civil society
- Include gender experts/researchers and women's organisations
- Involve other so-called vulnerable groups (like youth and indigenous peoples)
- Pay attention to gender balance when inviting stakeholders
- Include female leaders and managers in the core working group
- Keep in mind possible needs in terms of capacity building and financing to enable meaningful participation

Create space for gender-sensitive collaboration and work processes together

Question: How can we work together in a gender-sensitive manner?

Activities:

- Support trust building and open communication
- Ensure equitable distribution of speaking time and contributions
- Pay attention to the number of women, men and other gender identities in different roles
- Pay attention to limited capacity of team members due to care obligations

Develop an understanding of the problem situation from a gender perspective

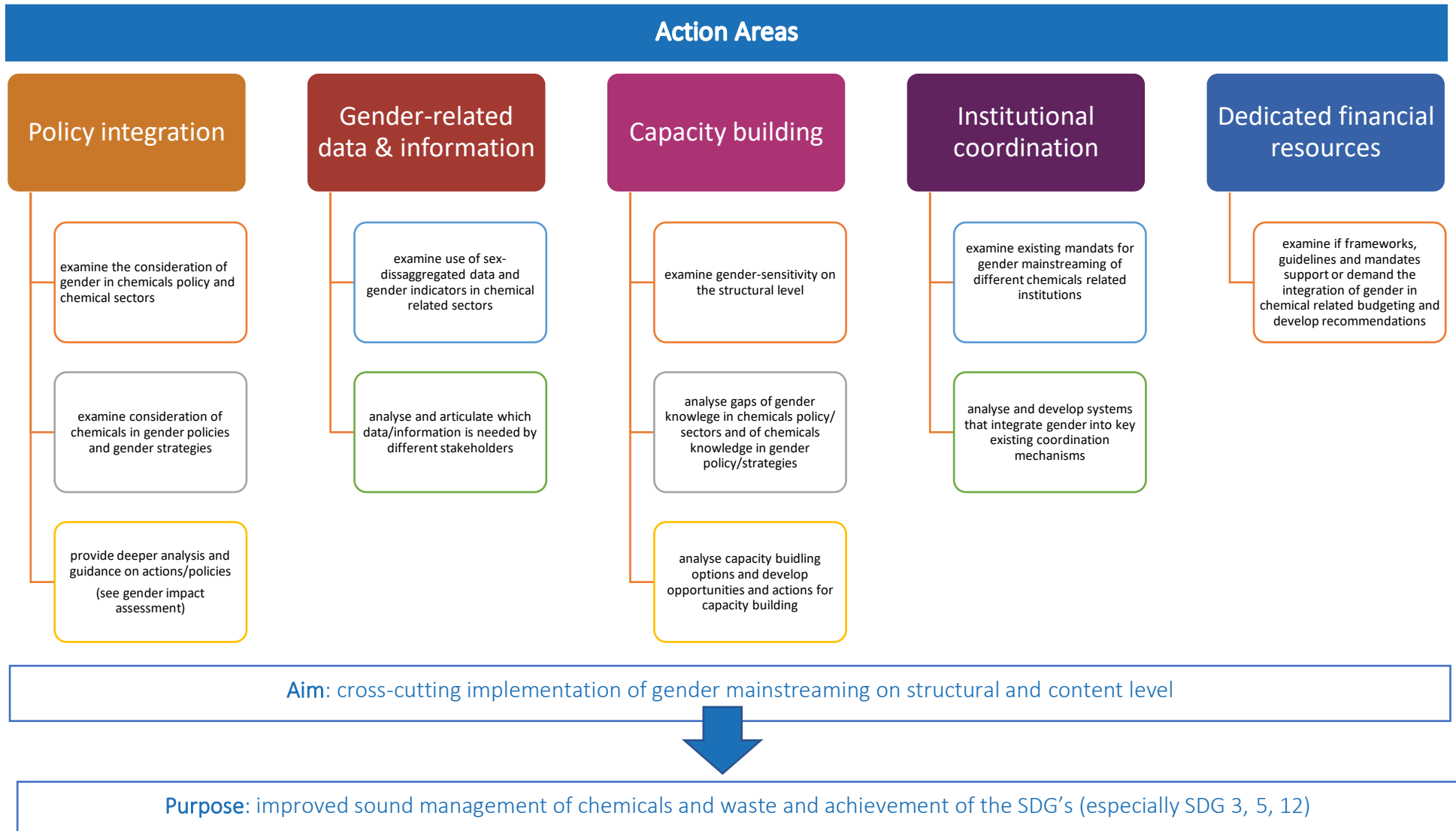
Question: Why is gender relevant for our work?

Activities:

- Search for literature and data on gender in relation to your main challenges in regard to chemicals policy like e.g. pesticides, e-waste, cosmetics or pharmacy
- Identify relevant international and organisational goals and agreements on gender equality
- Collect practical experiences of gender aspects in the working areas of your team



STEP 3: How to develop a comprehensive overview: gender analysis of chemicals policy



Questions for your analysis

Policy integration



Is gender mentioned in the principal documents on chemicals policy?

Are chemicals mentioned in the principal documents on gender equality and women's health?

Does the development of chemicals-related policies and actions incorporate socio-economic aspects, e.g. through the use of impact assessments?

Have potential social co-benefits/ discriminations of chemical policies been identified for all genders?

Are initiatives that address which chemicals are relevant routinely reviewed for potential impacts on all genders and on gender relations?

Are specific measures in place to address gender inequalities related to chemicals, or to address the specific vulnerabilities, needs and capacities that may exist regarding different genders?

Is the communication to the broader public gender-sensitive?

Gender-related data and information



Are changes in health and wellbeing tracked across all social groups and all gender groups?

Are sex- and/or gender-disaggregated data related to chemicals collected through the statistics system and additional data collection (e.g. research bodies, academic institutions, chemicals companies)?

Are socio-economic and demographic data related to sex/gender, region and age available and used for chemicals policy-making?

Are the indicators used in the design of chemicals policies gender-responsive?

Capacity Building



Are there provisions to achieve gender balance and to ensure that especially women's voices are heard in decision-making?

Is meaningful participation of women and women organizations ensured throughout research and planning, implementation and evaluation of chemicals policy?

Are key actors aware of the gender aspects of chemicals?

Are gender experts and women's organizations regularly involved in chemicals policy-making?

Are chemicals experts involved in policy-making on gender and health?

Institutional coordination



Are institutions and policy-makers responsible for gender equality and gender mainstreaming part of the policy process?

Is there regular interaction between relevant ministries and agencies at all policy levels (e.g. ministries for health, women, family, the elderly, youth, work, agriculture & food)?

Do overarching institutional processes and interactions address gender aspects?

Dedicated financial resources



Is incorporating gender a criterion for the allocation of public research and project funding?

Does the government undertake gender-responsive budgeting?

Is funding available to cover the costs for further gender analysis and gender impact assessments, e.g. to involve gender experts?

Is funding available for specific actions addressing gender inequalities related to chemicals, or the specific vulnerabilities, needs and capacities that may exist regarding different genders?



STEP 4: How to analyse policies and measures: gender impact assessment

1. Definition of the policy purpose

- Define the purpose of the planned policy, law, or project
- Focus on how it relates to gender equality
- Questions: *What (social) issue is being addressed by this intervention? Why is this intervention being considered for this particular situation? Is the intervention intended to contribute to gender equality? If yes, how? What are the existing gender equality objectives in this field?*

2. Checking gender relevance

- Check whether the implementation of a GIA is relevant to the examined policy measure or not:
- Estimate the effects of the implementation of the policy on gender equality and gender relations
- Questions: *What might be unintended impacts on gender relations? Does the intervention affect women and men regarding their access to and/or control of resources (grants, jobs, land, health etc.)?*

3. Analyzing gender impact

- Analyze the situation of women and men in the field by collecting sex/gender-disaggregated data and information
- Conduct interviews to get primary data and a deeper understanding through experiences from women and men on the ground
- Analyse which factors of the policy measure are influencing women and men, as well as gender relations
- Questions:
Is the planned intervention addressing the needs of both women and men, taking into account their different interest, roles and positions?
Will gender-based health risks be reduced? If yes, how?
Will the unequal distribution of income between women and men change? If yes, what will be the changes?
Will the unequal use of time between women and men change? If yes, what will be the changes?
Will women's perception of security be improved? If yes, what will be the changes?
Will women's employment rate be increased? If yes, what will be the changes?
Will gender segregation of the labour market be reduced? If yes, what will be the changes?
Are there gender-specific consumption patterns that need to be considered?
Does the intervention take into account different education levels of target groups?
Does the intervention assist affected persons to be aware of and exercise their rights?
Is the planned intervention addressing the needs of both women and men, taking into account their different interest, roles and positions?

4. Weighting gender impact

- Assess the identified effects
- Questions: *Are the impacts of the initiative on gender equality neutral, positive or negative?*

5. Findings and recommendations for improvement - Implementation

- Formulate conclusions in terms of the impact on women and men
- Develop recommendations and follow these instructions during the implementation
- Question: *How can gender equality be strengthened with this particular measure?*

6. Evaluation

- The analyzed gender impacts are evaluated
- Questions: *Are gender aspects sufficiently taken into account within the newly identified recommendations?
Is gender equality better addressed by the intervention than before the measure? In what way?
What is still lacking? Which further aspects should and/or could be improved in the future?
What would you like to share with other SAICM National Focal Points?*

References

- [UNDP \(2011\): Gender and Chemicals.](#)
- [IPEN \(2020\): Women, Chemicals and the SDGs.](#)
- [ILO \(2021\): Exposure to hazardous chemicals at work and resulting health impacts: A global review.](#)
- [WHO \(2016\): FAQ on Health and Sexual Diversity - An Introduction to Key Concepts.](#)
- Illustrations by miratrack (2021).

You want to get started? [Check the workbook!](#)

The workbook offers a structured way to assist SAICM Focal Points to work through this road map, to choose priorities and plan activities.

The workbook will be available soon at: <http://gender-chemicals.org/road-map>