

Implementation of the Gender and Chemicals Road Map in Germany

Pilot phase: April 2021- March 2022

This flyer presents first implementation steps, results and lessons learned of the Gender and Chemicals Road Map in Germany during the pilot phase of the project GenChem-RoadMap, implemented by the MSP Institute in 2021-2022.

Download the road map and workbook:

<http://gender-chemicals.org/road-map>

STEP 1: UNDERSTANDING WHY GENDER MATTERS

Exchange | Research

In April and May 2021, the German SAICM Focal Point and the MSP Institute held webinars and online courses, exchanged information and views on the interlinkages of gender and chemicals, and discussed their relevance in Germany.

STEP 2: INITIATING THE PROCESS

Stakeholder Analysis

In May and June 2021, the German SAICM Focal Point and the MSP Institute conducted a comprehensive stakeholder analysis, as described in the workbook, based on the existing contacts of the German Environment Agency comprising over 600 organizations and individuals. 48 relevant stakeholders were identified.

Stakeholder Round Table

These relevant stakeholders were invited to a two-hour virtual round table meeting. Over 40 participants from industry, government and NGOs as well as professional associations and the scientific community discussed the interlinkages of gender and chemicals in Germany. Some stakeholders volunteered to provide additional support during the first implementation steps.

PILOT ACTIVITIES

STEP 1: Understanding why gender matters

STEP 2: Initiating the process

STEP 3: Gender Analysis

STEP 4: Gender Impact Assessment



LESSONS LEARNED & RECOMMENDATIONS:

If you have a mailing or contact list of stakeholders relating to chemicals issues, you can use these as the basis for your stakeholder analysis.

Show stakeholders that uncertainties in dealing with gender issues are understandable, and exemplify careful communication about sensitive issues.

STEP 3: GENDER ANALYSIS

Research | Interviews | Brainstorming | Survey | Teamwork

From October 2021 to January 2022, a core working group of interested stakeholders held five virtual meetings to take stock of the integration of gender in German chemicals management, and to develop first ideas for improvement. In order to narrow the scope of the work the team decided to focus on the issue of chemicals in building material.

How to improve gender mainstreaming in chemicals management in Germany?

Focus: chemicals in building materials

Policy integration

Although gender aspects are increasingly discussed in chemicals management, especially at UN and EU level, gender mainstreaming is not implemented in German national legislation.

→ Germany should strongly support gender mainstreaming efforts at European and global level. The interlinkages of gender and chemicals should be included in German national chemical legislation.

Data & information

Data show differences of exposure between women and men in Germany, but there is little research and few research methods to find out what causes these differences, despite the fact that various stakeholders ask for gender data and research.

→ Research on gendered ways of exposure should be intensified. Collecting and discussing sex- and gender-disaggregated data in Germany should be good practice in chemical sciences and should be made obligatory in regular studies and reports, e.g. in the building sector.

Capacity building

In chemical related governmental institutions measures are taken to support women and to increase capacity building on gender, but there are still major knowledge gaps on the linkages of gender and chemicals.

→ In governmental institutions gender focal points should be established in chemicals departments; there should be workshops and trainings on gender and chemicals; and relevant references, online courses, and expert contacts for staff should be compiled.

Institutional coordination

Gender mainstreaming has been set out as a guiding principle for all German government institutions. However, implementation is slow in many areas, and there is no inter-ministerial or multi-stakeholder exchange on gender and chemicals.

→ Gender mainstreaming methods and tools should be included in the specialist work of organisations working on chemicals, pollution and occupational safety. Inter-ministerial and multi-stakeholder collaboration on gender issues should be fostered, e.g. by establishing a women and gender network for sustainable building.

Dedicated financial resources

Gender budgeting has not yet been carried out in Germany, but several civil society projects on chemicals and pollution were supported financially.

→ Concepts for gender budgeting should be piloted in federal ministries. Funding allocation should require gender mainstreaming and gender balance; and special funds and sustainability awards for female entrepreneurs in chemistry should be created.

Various organisations, projects and political activities in Germany deal with gender differences, the lack of sex- and gender-disaggregated data, or the promotion of women in chemicals management.

However, a strategic overview for the improvement of gender mainstreaming in chemicals management has been missing to date.

LESSONS LEARNED & RECOMMENDATIONS:

Ask interested stakeholders to support the project with research or by sharing their knowledge and experience in interviews.

Use an online platform to work together if face-to-face meetings are not possible.

Intensive discussions are needed to agree on a topic to focus on. Plan enough time and more than one meeting for this.

In order to achieve sufficient participation in surveys, explain in an easily understandable way and provide examples of why gender matters in chemicals management.



STEP 4: GENDER IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Research | Expert Interviews | Brainstorming

In order to assess one specific policy measure of chemicals management, the project team conducted desk research and expert interviews on gender aspects of a policy proposal currently under discussion: the introduction of a digital building resource passport in Germany.

How are gender and gender relations affected?
How can the policy measure be gender-responsive?
Focus: digital building resource passport

Definition of the policy purpose

The digital building resource passport shall help to take stock of the material composition of buildings and is intended to contribute to a circular economy in the German building sector. It is an information tool for building planners as well as customers and can be used as a steering instrument in building policy.

Checking gender relevance

The construction sector in Germany is still male-dominated; gender data are scarce. Developing the passport without considering gender aspects at customer level could result in a tool less suitable to meet women's information needs, thus being less effective.

Analysing and weighing gender impact

- Health awareness will increase if gender-specific health information on building materials is offered.
- With the introduction of the passport, real estate sale prices and rents may increase, affecting women more than men due to differences in income (gender pay gap).
- If the passport provides easily accessible information on both technical and health related aspects, it might break traditional gender roles ("men responsible for seeking technical information, women for health information").
- Women's perceived safety might increase when they have better access to information on risks and protection measures.
- Gender-specific consumption patterns should be considered, which might lead to an increase in the demand and product range of sustainable building material – women tend to regard characteristics of health and sustainability especially important.
- Different information levels should be considered: women often have less prior technical knowledge about construction.
- Women are often sceptical about actors in construction. The passport might help to build trust.

Findings and recommendations for improvement

The introduction of the passport, if done in a gender-responsive way, can promote gender equality and empower homeowners. It should be developed like a comprehensive user manual for customers with clear, easily understandable information; technical details; health information relevant to different life situations; and service and learning tools. During the further development process, funding and research projects should promote women in the sector and ensure that their perspectives are included in the design.

„The gender impact assessment helps us to design measures in chemical management more effectively to meet the needs of all genders and to leave no one behind - this is sustainable chemistry in action.“



Dr Anita Breyer,
President of ICCM5

More details on the results of the pilot phase in Germany can be found here:

www.gender-chemicals.org/road-map

LESSONS LEARNED & RECOMMENDATIONS:

Allocate sufficient time to identify interview partners and conduct interviews.

Reassure interview partners that they do not need to be experts on gender issues and that the 'interview' is rather a conversation, thinking together from a gender perspective.



REFLECTION AND EVALUATION

Challenges

- It was difficult to motivate people to participate in the survey and to find interview partners for the Gender Impact Assessment.

Successes

- It was possible to build on the experiences of gender experts in the German Federal Ministry for the Environment and the German Environment Agency and using existing networks (such as the International Sustainable Chemistry Collaborative Centre, ISC3) for outreach and mobilization.
- Various stakeholders show interest in the project, in particular small and medium-sized enterprises.

General recommendations on the process

- Seek and involve Gender Focal Points, e.g. National UNFCCC Gender Focal Points, Ministries of Health, departments of women's health.
- Establish clarity in stakeholder roles and tasks and identify contact persons with key responsibility and capacities.
- Allocate time for process management: ensure a transparent process design and keep the big picture in mind.
- Develop a communication strategy for reaching out to relevant stakeholders.
- Keep in mind that gender mainstreaming is not an easy path, but even small successes are valuable.

Policy suggestions for international cooperation of SAICM National Focal Points

- More networking activities and exchange on gender mainstreaming among SAICM National Focal Points are needed, e.g. via a mailing list, workshops, etc.
- Support for developing gender-responsive National Action Plans is needed, as well as national mandates.
- More collaboration with gender experts or gender focal points of other environmental policy fields, e.g. the UNFCCC National Gender Focal Points, would be useful.

“SAICM taught me that collaboration among stakeholders and sectors is key for the sound management of chemicals and waste. The Gender and Chemicals Road Map project taught me how important gender aspects are for such a multi-stakeholder approach and that it can even be fun to put this into practice!”

Dr Hans Christian Stolzenberg,
German SAICM Focal Point



INVITATION

Do you want to improve gender mainstreaming in your work as a SAICM National Focal Point? Do you want to know more about the Gender and Chemicals Road Map or the pilot phase in Germany?

Please don't hesitate to contact us:

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A future-proof chemicals management needs to be gender-responsive!

Further information at:
www.gender-chemicals.org

