

PILOT PHASE

Implementation of the Gender and Chemicals Road Map in Germany

April 2021- March 2022

Content



- Project GenChemRoadMap Slides 4-8
- Pilot phase in Germany Slides 9-11
- Pilot activities Slides 12-19
- Pilot results Slides 20-45
- Reflection: pilot experiences Slides 46-52

Abbreviations

BMUV	German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection
BRS	Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions
CoP	Community of Practice
DAX	German stock index
EU	European Union
GerES	German Environmental Health Survey for Adults
GIA	Gender Impact Assessment
ISC3	International Sustainable Chemistry Collaborative Centre
MEAs	Multilateral Environmental Agreements
ILO	International Labour Organization
DIN	German Institute for Standardization
MSP	Multi-Stakeholder Processes
NGOs	Non-governmental organizations
REACH	Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals
SAICM	Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SMEs	small and medium enterprises
STEM	science, technology, engineering and math
UBA	German Environment Agency
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
WHO	World Health Organization

Project GenChemRoadMap

Background

More than two million people died in 2019 as a result of exposure to selected chemicals (WHO 2021).

Global production of the chemical industry will double by 2030 (UNEP 2019).

- A holistic transformation of the chemical sector and industry is needed

Gender inequalities have negative impacts on human health and the environment

- Gender mainstreaming + gender expertise is necessary

Background, cont'd

Discussion at the SAICM Community of Practice on SDGs, Sept 2020:

- 87.5% of the CoP participants believe that gender inequalities in relation to chemicals exist in their countries.
- The majority of participants consider the development of gender action plans and additional research to be important.
- In more than 50% of the countries, gender has not yet been taken into account in environmental and health policy.

Only very few ideas and approaches for practical implementation of Gender Mainstreaming at the national level.

Project GenChemRoadMap

Title: GenChemRoadMap –
Implementation of a Gender Road
Map in National Chemicals
Management

Project period: April 2021 -
March 2022,
supported by BMUV und UBA

Purpose: to promote sustainable
chemicals management by
reinforcing gender equality

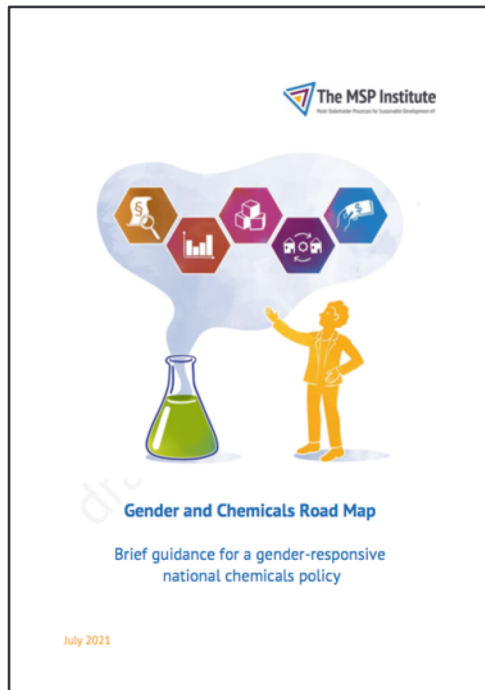
Goals:

- the systematic integration of gender,
- the equal participation of women,
- the participation of gender experts in the national chemicals management

Project activities

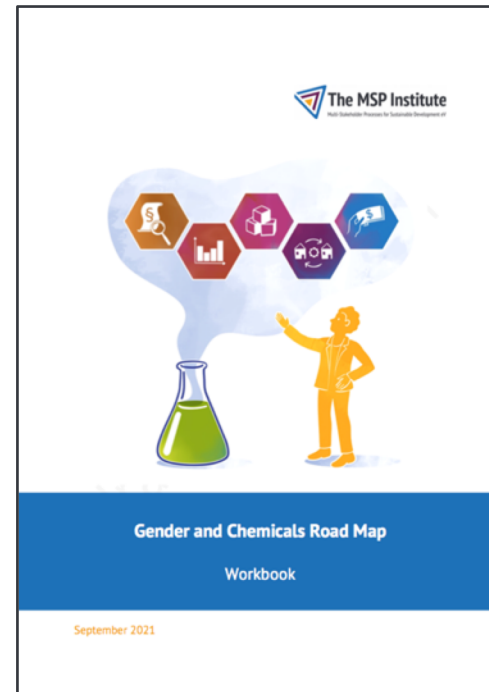
- Publishing the Gender and Chemicals Road Map + Workbook,
- Pilot phase in Germany

Gender and Chemicals Road Map + Workbook



Gender and Chemicals Road Map

Brief guidance for SAICM National Focal Points;
twelve pages with overview of main working steps



Workbook

Detailed description of the working steps;
with examples, references, graphics,
check-lists and space for your notes;
Over 70 pages; draft for discussion

Pilot phase in Germany

Pilot objectives



Implementing first steps of the Gender and Chemicals Road Map in Germany:

- Getting an overview of the current status of gender mainstreaming in national chemicals management + developing first ideas for improvement
- Exemplary testing of the gender impact assessment method in national chemicals management

Pilot timetable



STEP 1: Understanding the context

April - June 2021

German SAICM Focal Point participated in webinars and courses on gender



STEP 3: Gender Analysis

Oct - Jan 2021/22

Stock taking of the integration of gender,
Developing ideas for improvement
Focus: Chemicals in building material



STEP 2: Initiate the process

June/July 2021

Stakeholder Analysis

Stakeholder round table on
gender and chemicals in
Germany



STEP 4: Gender Impact Assessment

Jan - March 2022

Assessment of one specific
policy measure

Focus: digital building passport

Pilot activities

STEP 1 – Understanding why gender matters



Exchange | Research

The German SAICM Focal Point and the MSP Institute:

- exchanged views and information on the interlinkages of gender and chemicals,
- shared literature and webinars,
- and discussed their relevance in Germany.

STEP 2 – Initiate the process



Stakeholder Analysis

- The German SAICM Focal Point and the MSP Institute conducted a comprehensive stakeholder analysis
- Using contact lists comprising over 600 organizations or individuals of the German Environment Agency
- 48 relevant stakeholders were identified

Stakeholder Round Table

- Relevant stakeholders were invited to a two-hour virtual round table meeting on the 20th of July 2021
- Over 40 participants from different stakeholder groups
- Participants discussed the interlinkages of gender and chemicals in Germany
- Some stakeholders volunteered to provide additional support during the first implementation steps

Lessons learned & recommendations

– STEPS 1 and 2



- If you have a mailing or contact lists of stakeholders relating to chemicals issues, you can use these as a 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

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.

This was done along five action areas by using the questions in the workbook.

Focus: chemicals in building materials



Lessons learned & recommendations – STEP 3

- Ask interested stakeholder to support the project with research by sharing their knowledge and experiences 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 it.
- 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 (GIA)

Research | Expert Interviews | Brainstorming



In order to assess one specific policy measure of chemicals management in depth:

- The German SAICM Focal Point and the MSP Institute conducted desk research and expert interviews
- Focus: introduction of a digital building passport in Germany.

Lessons learned & recommendations – STEP 4



- 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.

Pilot results

Results of the Gender Analysis

*How to implement gender
mainstreaming
in the chemicals management of
Germany?*

Focus: chemicals in building
materials



Action Area I: Policy Integration

Current Situation

- Gender aspects are increasingly discussed; especially at UN and EU level, e.g. by BRS and Minamata conventions, EU Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability
- Gender mainstreaming is not implemented in German national legislation.
- The issue of chemical exposure is hardly taken into account in gender equality policy, except for the special protection of pregnant women

Action Area I: Policy Integration, cont'd

Potential Activities

- Germany should strongly support gender mainstreaming efforts at EU and UN level (e.g. at EU Chemicals Strategy, REACH, SAICM, MEAs, WHO, ILO, DIN)
- Gender aspects should be included in national chemical legislation, e.g. the collection of gender data
- Chemical exposure and toxicology needs to be taken into account in gender equality policy, increasing debates on gender medicine might be an entry-point

Action Area II: data & information

Terminology:

Gender data is a collective term for data and statistics highlighting gender differences and inequalities.

According to the UN (2015) **sex-disaggregated data** is data that is grouped based on whether a person is – biologically - a man or a woman. For example, one would record the respective levels of EDCs in the blood of men/boys and women/girls.

For **gender-disaggregated data**, there is no universally accepted definition yet. We use the term to indicate one step further than disaggregating data by sex: collecting gender-disaggregated data means to record exposure, the use of health information and safety measures, or other aspects relevant to chemicals and analyse them in relation to gender-specific roles. For example, gender roles in the household may determine gender-specific exposure rates to cleaning chemicals.

→ For effective policy-making in chemicals management **both sex- and gender-disaggregated data are necessary** to uncover inequalities and health impacts, illuminate solutions and monitor progress.

Resource: UN (2015): UN Gender Statistics Manual

Action Area II: data & information, cont'd

Current Situation

- Sex-disaggregated data on exposure and human biomonitoring show differences between women and men in Germany, e.g. more women suffer from multiple chemical sensitivity
- But little research and research methods to find out what causes these differences
- A small survey during our project with actors from the building sector showed that 46% of respondents from various stakeholder groups see a need for gender data and further research

Action Area II: data & information, cont'd

Potential Activities

- Gender aspects need to be fully considered in research design, and research on methods to identify gender-specific exposure patterns should be intensified.
- Collecting and discussing sex- and gender-disaggregated data should become good practice, and should be made obligatory especially in important nation wide data bases and annual studies and reports (e.g. in GerES, the Environmental Awareness Survey and accident statistics).
- Chemical exposure should be discussed in the next report on women's health in Germany (Frauengesundheitsbericht).

Action Area III: Capacity Building

Current Situation

- In chemical related governmental institutions measures are being done to support women, especially in leadership positions and junior staff
- There are increasing efforts for capacity building in government institutions (BMUV, UBA), e.g. gender strategies, guidance documents for gender-sensitive language, training activities on gender mainstreaming
- Still major knowledge gaps exist on the linkages of gender and chemicals, due to a lack of capacities

Action Area III: Capacity Building, cont'd

Potential Activities

- In governmental institutions gender focal points should be established in departments, working on chemicals or other environmental policy fields
- Guidance documents, workshops and trainings on how to integrate gender in chemicals policies and other environmental policy fields should be conducted
- Links and relevant references on gender and chemicals as well as contact list of gender experts should be compiled for staff

Action Area III: Institutional coordination

Current Situation

- Since the EU-Treaty of Amsterdam in 1999 and the Bundesgleichstellungsgesetz in 2001, Gender Mainstreaming is a guiding principle for all German governmental institutions
- Chemical industry is increasingly supporting women in leadership positions and gender & diversity activities in human resources (e.g. Majority of DAX chemical companies improved in the Gender Diversity Index from 2020-2021)
- Implementation is lacking on a content-level, and neither on chemicals as such nor on chemicals and gender does systematic/strategic inter-ministerial and/or multi-stakeholder exchange exist.

Action Area III: Institutional coordination, cont'd

Potential Activities

- Gender mainstreaming methods and tools (like GIA) should be included into the specialist work and research of organisations working on chemicals, pollution and occupational safety
- Inter-ministerial and multi-stakeholder collaboration on gender issues should be fostered for a mutual learning process, e.g.:
 - by establishing a multi-stakeholder partnership or a women and gender network for sustainable chemistry and sustainable building

Action Area V: Dedicated financial resources

Current Situation

- Gender budgeting has not yet been carried out in Germany
- Several civil society projects on chemicals and pollution or promoting women in chemistry were supported financially by Germany
- Chemical start-ups are mostly founded by men, and there are no special funds or projects to support women start-ups in Germany

Action Area V: Dedicated financial resources, cont'd

Potential activities

- Concepts for gender budgeting should be piloted in federal ministries.
- Funding allocation should require gender mainstreaming and gender balance in project or research teams
- Special funds and sustainability awards for female entrepreneurs should be created, e.g. in chemistry or building

Results of the Gender Impact Assessment

How are gender and gender relations affected?

How can the policy measure be designed in a gender-responsive way?

Focus: digital building passport



Definition of the policy purpose

- A transformation of the building sector is urgently needed on the way to sustainable development:
 - the building sector is responsible for 35% of energy consumption and about one third of CO2 emissions in Germany;
 - one of the sectors with the highest resource consumption in Germany, an annual input of 321 million tonnes of raw materials and 200 million tonnes of waste (Netzwerk Ressourcenwende 2022)
- New approaches for sustainable construction consider the entire life cycle of a building (Ott & Hausmann 2015)
- Problem: a lack of information on the material side of buildings (ebd.)

Definition of the policy purpose, cont'd

- The digital building resource passport shall help to take stock of the material composition of buildings
- It is an information tool for building planners as well as customers
- It supports marketing and makes a sustainability assessment of the building possible
- It can also be used as a steering instrument in building policy (e.g. in funding programs for new buildings or modernisation of existing buildings)

(see Ott & Hausmann 2015)

Checking gender relevance



Construction sector in Germany is still a male-dominated discipline:

- 10-15 % women working in the construction industry (Uhlmann 2020)
- Women mostly working in architecture, engineering, calculation, surveying technology, with increasing numbers of female students
- Barriers for women according to construction companies and our survey: strenuous physical work, gender stereotypes and sexism, and difficulties in reconciling work and family life (Heinrich 2019)

Checking gender relevance, cont'd

- Recommendations:
 - supporting women's interest in STEM;
 - activities and information events for technical fields;
 - targeted communication, including the use of new media, to address interested women (ebd.).
- Little gender data and research in construction, although stakeholders in the construction sector express the need for gender data.

Checking gender relevance, cont'd

- The digital building passport might have positive effects on the way to a circular economy + offers all actors more information;
 - Developing the passport without considering gender aspects at costumer level could result in a tool less suitable to meet women's information needs, thus being less effective.
 - As a result, structural gender inequalities in the male-dominated construction sector would not be counteracted, and gender inequalities might even be indirectly reproduced.
- Gender relevance: the introduction of a digital building passport might have gendered impacts on women and men and gender relations

Analysing gender impact

Gender-specific health risks



might decrease if gender-related information on building materials is provided; and health awareness and safe use behaviour increases. Special health information (for pregnant women, children and people with pre-existing conditions and allergies) should be provided.

Uneven distribution of incomes



might increase because real estate sales prices and rents may increase in the long term.

Due to the gender pay gap, women are less able to afford a property and might be more affected.

Analysing gender impact, cont'd

Unequal use of time between women and men



might change if the passport provides easily accessible information on technical and health related aspects;

This might break traditional gender roles ("men responsible for seeking technical information, women for health information").

Women's perception of security



might be increased when they have better access to information on risks and protection measures and gain greater planning certainty (which is very important for women).

The employment rate of women



is not expected to change.

Analysing gender impact, cont'd

Gendered segregation of the labour market



is not expected to change much, for the instrument more computer science and technology is needed which is also a male dominated sector. Targeted promotion of women is necessary in the areas.

Gender-specific consumption patterns



should be considered in the developed of the passport.

Men are often very interested in technical innovations (on energy saving and climate protection);

Women are often very interested in practical aspects of the use in everyday life, the durability of materials and its health effects (Fischer 2011)

→ In the long term, the demand on sustainable building materials would increase, which could possibly lead to an increase in the product range.

Analysing gender impact, cont'd

Different levels of education



Should be taken into account in the design of the passport, because women often have less prior technical knowledge about construction.

Information in the passport should therefore be communicated in an easily understandable way. Additionally, information should be offered easily accessible online, in English and barrier-free.

Rights



In Germany, there is an information right about hazardous chemicals in building material. The passport will strengthen this right. Since women are very interested in health information related to building materials this would be of particular help to them.

Further gender-specific needs



Women are often sceptical about actors in construction, they have no trust and feel insecure (Fischer 2011), the passport will provide neutral information and might help to build trust.

Findings and recommendations for improvement

The introduction of a digital building resource passport, **if done in a gender-responsive way**, can be assessed as gender-positive overall and thus promotes gender equality.

One expert spoke of its **potential to "empower homeowners"**.

Recommendations for a gender-responsive design and implementation:

The digital building passport should be designed like a comprehensive user manual for costumers.

Findings and recommendations for improvement, cont'd

Therefore, the digital building passport should offer:

- clear and easily understandable information on building materials, if possible illustrated;
- technical details especially on climate protection and energy saving;
- health information on chemicals in building material with specific searching options for various life situations: pregnancy, living with children, persons with pre-existing conditions etc.;
- additional information on risks in regard to modifications or repair work, with contact information on the respective required craft.

Findings and recommendations for improvement, cont'd

The digital building resource passport should be introduced

- via a gender-stereotype free campaign;
- together with an information centre and a service hotline;
- and learning tools, e.g. videos and workshops should be offered.

During the further development process of the instrument, policy should ensure:

- that women in the sector are promoted in funding and research projects; and their perspective is included in the design process.
- that housing policy reacts to increasing sales and rental prices.

Pilot experiences

General reflection

Successes & Challenges

What went well?

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

What didn't go so well?

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

General recommendations on the process

What do we want to pass on to other SAICM National Focal Points?

- Seek and involve Gender Focal Points, e.g. National UNFCCC Gender Focal Point, and Ministries of Health, e.g. departments of women's health, for project initiation.
- Establish clarity in stakeholder roles and tasks and identify contact persons with key responsibility + 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 among 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 and platforms for gender experts or gender focal points of other environmental policy fields would be helpful.

Contact us

Do you want to mainstream gender 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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Thank you!

Road map, workbook, and more information,
webinars and policy suggestions:

www.gender-chemicals.org



The MSP Institute

Multi-Stakeholder Processes for Sustainable Development eV

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