

Concept Note for Online Trainings



Know-How for European Chemicals Focal Points
July 2025

Context

Every year, nine million people die worldwide as a result of pollution caused by exposure to toxic substances in air, water, and soil. Pollution also remains a serious problem in the EU: more than 10% of annual premature deaths are attributed to environmental pollution, - primarily due to air pollution, but also to chemical exposures, the impacts of which remain underestimated.

At the same time, women and girls are disproportionately affected by the harmful impacts of toxic substances due to economic, social, and physiological factors. Men also benefit from the inclusion of gender aspects, as they too are affected by gender-specific health impacts of certain chemicals. Effective chemicals management is therefore essential – not only to reduce environmental and health burdens, but also to promote social justice.

That is why, in recent years, gender equality has gained increasing attention in international chemicals policy. The new Global Framework on Chemicals (GFC) includes gender equality as a core principle and calls for gender integration through, among other measures, the development of a GFC Gender Action Plan. Similar discussions are ongoing in the new Intergovernmental Science-Policy Panel on Chemicals, Waste and Pollution (ISP-CWP), and its prior process the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on a Science-Policy Panel to Contribute Further to the Sound Management of Chemicals and Waste and to Prevent Pollution (SPP). European governments and stakeholders are likewise called upon to implement gender-responsive chemicals management. Although these obligations are increasingly recognized, implementation has so far been limited - particularly due to a lack of know-how.

Chemicals National Focal Points (NFPs) are key actors in this field. As central contacts for international chemicals processes such as the GFC and the SPP / ISP-CWP, they coordinate the national implementation of international goals. They serve as interfaces between levels as well as contact points for different stakeholders, including different government ministries, civil society organisations, industry, unions, science, among others.

The evaluation of the former Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM, now GFC) in 2019 showed that the success of NFPs' roles was strongly influenced by the degree of coordination and collaboration with various national stakeholder groups. Supporting and strengthening the coordination and communication role of NFPs in cross-sectoral, multi-stakeholder processes is therefore recommended – and also reiterated in the GFC. At the same time, SAICM NFPs expressed concern in the evaluation that they were not adequately able to consider and protect vulnerable groups such as women and children.

The project “Know-How for European Chemicals Focal Points” seeks to address these gaps by strengthening the knowledge and skills of European Focal Points through combined training on multi-stakeholder processes and the integration of gender aspects into chemicals management.

The training concept was developed based on a needs assessment of European Chemicals Focal Points, conducted via structured interviews in April-May 2025.

Target groups

The following Chemicals Focal Points will be the primary project beneficiaries and target groups of the online trainings:

- European National of the Global Framework on Chemicals (GFC) and NGO Focal Points that are based in Europe and work on national or European policy level.
- European National Focal Points of the Ad-Hoc Open-Ended Working Group on a Science-Policy Panel on Chemicals, Waste and Pollution Prevention and the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Panel on Chemicals, Waste and Pollution (ISP-CWP).

Purpose

The overall objective of the project is to reduce the negative impacts of chemicals on the environment and nature as well as human health by promoting effective, sustainable and gender-responsive chemicals management at national and European level through training and networking of the European GFC and SPP/ ISP-CWP Focal Points.

The online training sessions aim to strengthen participants' skills in stakeholder engagement and gender-responsive chemicals management. The trainings will focus on identifying and communicating with key stakeholders, ensuring equal participation, and integrating gender perspectives into policy-making. In addition, the trainings will facilitate ongoing networking and mutual learning among the European Focal Points.

Following the online trainings, the project foresees that a core group of motivated Chemicals Focal Points will be established to initiate national implementation activities to promote gender equality and multi-stakeholder engagement in their respective countries from April 2025 to December 2026. Members of this group will receive individual coaching sessions and the group will convene several times to ensure continuous support and progress.

While the project is currently focused exclusively on European Focal Points, the courses, materials, and methods to be developed are intended to be adaptable for use in other regions, and we hope to be able to offer courses for non-European Focal Points soon in the future.

Desired outcome(s)

Knowledge and skills transfer:

- Increased awareness for the relevance of multi-stakeholder engagement and the importance of gender in dealing with chemicals; and
- Strengthened capacities for working in multi-stakeholder constellations and for implementing gender-responsive chemicals management.

Exchange and co-operation:

- Increased networking among the Chemicals Focal Points;
- Increased exchange of knowledge, resources and strategies between the Chemicals Focal Points; and
- Stronger cooperation between the Chemicals Focal Points in overcoming gender-specific challenges in the management of chemicals and in the management of stakeholder engagement and multi-stakeholder processes.

National implementation:

- Increased motivation to initiate activities promoting gender equality, stakeholder engagement and multi-stakeholder processes at national level.

Training format

6 monthly online trainings, from October 2025 to March 2026

Each training will be 90 min long, roughly structured as follows:

- 1/3 on multi-stakeholder processes
- 1/3 on gender & chemicals
- 1/3 for facilitated informal exchange of Chemicals Focal Points

→ However, the design will remain flexible, depending on the needs of the focal points!

The overall time commitment for participation in the whole training is estimated at 3 hours per month, or 18 hours in total.

Training modules and content

Training I	Understanding Gender, Stakeholder Engagement and Multi-Stakeholder Processes (MSPs)
Training II	Engaging Stakeholders in Chemicals Policy
Training III	Facilitating High-Quality and Gender-Responsive Stakeholder Engagement
Training IV	Data and Knowledge for Chemicals Management
Training V	Empowering Chemicals Focal Points
Training VI	Strategies for National Implementation

→ However, the trainings will be designed flexibly and tailored to the preferences expressed by the focal points.

Training methods

Training methods and formats will include:

- PPT presentations
- Keynotes and input by guest speakers / practitioners
- Polls

- Tasks for individual and/or small group work
- Role plays
- Tools for interactive peer exchange and networking opportunities
- Space for reflection on own role
- Reflection questions / tasks to be completed in between training sessions
- Lists of reference materials, online platforms and repositories
- All materials, agendas, presentations, etc to be shared on a virtual course board

Logistics

All European Chemicals Focal Points will be invited to join the online training series via email. The online training sessions will be conducted via Zoom. Participants are required to register once to join the entire training series. A certificate of participation will be issued to those who attend at least five out of the six sessions in the series.

More information at: gender-chemicals.org

You want to take part? Please email to: info@msp-institute.org

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