

# Chemicals policy and regulation update

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## 1. Broad policy issues

### 1.1. Chemicals Strategy

The Government's 25 Year Environment Plan committed to a new strategy to tackle chemicals of concern and help ensure the levels of harmful chemicals entering the environment are significantly reduced. The commitment to publish a Chemicals Strategy was recently reiterated in the [Environmental Improvement Plan](#) (EIP), where the Government committed to publishing a Chemicals Strategy in 2023.

As trailed at the last CSF meeting in February, we established a sub-group of the UK Chemicals Stakeholder Forum – 'Friends of the Strategy' (FotS) - to act as an advisory group on the developing Chemicals Strategy. Through this group, we are testing emerging thinking and seeking feedback on the Strategy content. We have circulated a summary of our first meeting (from March) alongside this Policy Update Paper. Discussions included looking at structure and priority issues, as well as areas of common interest or difference in stakeholder views. The next FotS meeting is scheduled for August. We will continue to keep this group updated on the development of the Strategy.

### 1.2. Horizon Scan

The Defra led [Horizon Scan on Future Chemical Issues](#) was recently published in *Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry*. This was an activity to identify future issues that could positively or negatively impact environmental pollution drawing on the expertise of 25 scientists and practitioners.

Fifteen issues were shortlisted from a nominated list of 48 issues. Many of the identified issues relate to innovation, suggesting the need to support and guide innovations along precautionary lines to ensure environmental soundness e.g., advanced materials, whilst others provide new reflections on old or well-known issues and the implications of their legacies for the future of chemicals management e.g., Lead, PFAS.

The outcomes highlight the value of regular Horizon Scanning for framing of chemical issues and spotlight the need for whole systems thinking to enable development of a strong holistic understanding of the synergies between climate change, pollution, public health and biodiversity loss.

### 1.3. Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS)

#### PFAS CSF Working Group

To inform our policy development on PFAS, Defra have convened the PFAS CSF Working Group. The group gives NGOs, figures within industry that are involved with the use of PFAS and others, such as experts on innovation, to share their knowledge and experiences of transitioning away from the use of PFAS. The working group currently has a life span of 12 months, which will be reviewed to see how useful the group continues to be as we near the end of 2023. The aim by the end of the 12 months is to have a set of policy options that we can take forward for further consideration and analysis.

The group have developed short policy papers that articulate:

- The common barriers and challenges of moving away from PFAS e.g., demonstration that alternative PFAS products provide the required performance level and meet standards,
- The policy options available to government to accelerate leadership by industry users in moving away from PFAS and to address the most critical risks of specific PFAS; and,
- How government can support innovation for cost-effective alternatives to PFAS.

The policy papers have been collated to produce a single document that is representative of the combined views of the group's membership. The paper is being reviewed at the next meeting, in July 2023, with the final product contributing to the development of PFAS policy in the future. The meeting will also provide an opportunity for Government to present on, and discuss, the PFAS Regulatory Management Options Analysis (RMOA) published in April 2023. An update following the PFAS CSF working group meeting will be provided at the CSF July meeting. For any further information regarding the PFAS CSF working group, please contact [Fredric.Barratt@defra.gov.uk](mailto:Fredric.Barratt@defra.gov.uk).

### 1.4. Retained EU Law (Reform and Revocation) Act

The Retained EU Law (Reform and Revocation) Act removes the supremacy of retained European Union Law (REUL) and gives ministers powers to reform or repeal REUL. These powers expire in 2026. The Act includes a schedule listing specified items of REUL that will be removed at the end of 2023 and a clause giving effect to this. Any REUL that is not listed in the schedule will be automatically preserved, without the associated interpretive effects that previously applied to REUL. There is however a limited power for ministers from the UK Government and Devolved Administrations to preserve REUL included on the schedule, available until 31 October 2023.

Defra has a comprehensive REUL delivery programme that draws on policy, legal and analytical expertise from across the Department. This work is being driven by principles established by the Secretary of State, that Defra will retain REUL by default unless there is a good reason to remove it and, if legislation can be tailored to better fit the needs of the UK, Defra will reform it.

The REUL schedule isn't the limit of our ambition. Our future reform programme, planned for 2023-26, will continue to build on the opportunities for bespoke legislation that have come from leaving the EU. Defra will be working on future reforms as we look to ensure our laws work best for the UK. We will continue in our approach not to weaken our high standards. In reviewing retained EU law, Defra's aim is to ensure that environmental law is fit for purpose and able to drive improved environmental outcomes, whilst also ensuring regulators can deliver efficiently. This will ensure the UK regulatory framework is appropriate and tailored to the UK.

## 1.5. Detergents

The government have published an [Explanatory Memorandum \(EM\) relating to a European Commission proposal to repeal and replace EU regulation 648/2004 "the Detergents Regulation"](#).

An EM is the government's written evidence to Parliament about EU documents that propose changes to EU law that remains applicable to the UK, or on other matters which are relevant to the UK's new relationship with the EU. The terms of the Withdrawal Agreement and Windsor Framework provide that limited areas of EU law will continue to apply to, and in, the UK in respect of Northern Ireland. The Detergents Regulation is listed in Annex 2 of the NI Protocol and therefore the EU's proposal, if adopted, will apply in NI.

An EM summarises a specific EU document and the government's policy position on it. All EMs are considered by the Commons European Scrutiny Committee and the Lords European Affairs Committee and its Sub-Committee on the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland. Reports published by the Committees and correspondence with ministers on EMs considered can be found on the Committees' websites.

The proposal looks to update the rules on detergents primarily in the area of packaging, labelling and to account for technology advances in the market. It maintains the majority of the Detergents Regulation (EC 648/2004) and remains complementary to the general provisions applicable to chemicals, including detergents, notably the EU Classification, Labelling and Packaging (CLP) Regulation, EU Biocidal Products Regulation, and the EU REACH Regulation.

We are currently undertaking a statutory post-implementation review (PIR) of the of the [2010 Detergents Regulations \(SI 740/2010\)](#). These regulations are primarily concerned with the enforcement of the Detergents Regulation (EC) No 648/2004.

## 2. Update from Devolved Administrations

### 2.1. Scotland

With relevance for chemical use, the Scottish Government published a [Circular Economy Bill](#) on 14 June 2023. This new legislation will create the tools to tackle waste and increase reuse and recycling rates.

The Circular Economy Bill will give Ministers powers to:

- Set local recycling targets, building on the experience of Wales, which has the best recycling rate in the UK,
- Set statutory targets for delivery of a circular economy to measure progress in reducing waste and the nation's carbon footprint,
- Ban the disposal of unsold consumer goods, to prevent good products ending up in landfill; and,
- Place charges on single-use items like coffee cups to encourage the move to reusable alternatives.

#### Scottish Chemical Policy Network (SCPN)

There haven't been any SCPN meetings yet this year, but we are planning on holding a hybrid SCPN meeting towards the end of August at Scottish Government offices in Leith, Edinburgh. An email to corresponding members will be sent out in July. Anyone interested in participating in the SCPN, with any issues they wish to present to the Scottish Government should contact [chemicals@gov.scot](mailto:chemicals@gov.scot).

### 2.2. Wales

The [Environment \(Air Quality and Soundscapes\) \(Wales\) Bill](#) was introduced to the Welsh Parliament on 20 March. The Bill proposes:

- to provide a framework for setting national air quality targets,
- to amend existing legislation relating to the national air quality strategy, local air quality management, smoke control, clean air zones/low emission zones and vehicle idling,
- to place a duty on Welsh Ministers to promote awareness of air pollution; and,
- to place a duty on Welsh Ministers to publish a national soundscapes strategy.

The [Environmental Protection \(Single-use Plastic Products\) \(Wales\) Act 2023](#) received Royal Assent and became law in Wales on 6 June.

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## 2.3. Northern Ireland

DAERA continues to develop Northern Ireland's first Clean Air Strategy. A synopsis of consultation responses to the Clean Air Strategy Discussion Document was published in June 2022 and a cross Departmental stakeholder group, the Clean Air Strategy Inter Departmental Steering Group, has been established to further develop the scope of the strategy and specific actions. The Draft Clean Air Strategy has been prepared and required additional content to be added now that 2007 Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland, has been replaced with an England-only strategy as of 28th April 2023. **A public consultation on the draft Northern Ireland Clean Air Strategy will require approval from the NI Executive to proceed.**

The Environment Strategy for NI will be one of the main strategies underpinning the NI Executive's overarching Green Growth agenda. While other sister strategies will contribute more to the Green Growth aim regarding net zero carbon and sustainable economic growth, the Environment Strategy will provide the focus for protecting and enhancing our natural environment for the coming decades. The former DAERA Minister approved the finalised draft Strategy and made an Oral Statement to the NI Assembly in March 2022; however, the final version cannot be published without Executive approval.

### 3. UK REACH – Update from DEFRA

#### 3.1. Transitional registrations

In December 2021, Defra committed to consulting on extending submission deadlines, to allow time to develop an alternative model for transitional registration, and if the decision is made to proceed, to develop and pass the necessary legislation. It is also necessary to allow industry time to comply with any new arrangements.

Following a public consultation last year, the government has [legislated to extend the current deadlines for transitional registrations](#). The deadlines have been extended to 2026, 2028 and 2030 depending on tonnage and hazard profile.

#### 3.2. UK REACH Reports

Defra has published a [series of reviews and reports that are required under UK REACH](#).

##### Article 138

The reports under Article 138 follow reviews of three aspects of UK REACH:

- whether to extend the requirement to complete Chemical Safety Assessments (CSA) and Reports (CSR) to registrants who produce substances in quantities of less than the 10 tonnes a year.
- the scope of Article 33 where suppliers must provide, and consumers may demand, information about substances of very high concern (SVHCs) in articles (as defined in the Review of Article 33).
- the standard testing requirements for reproductive toxicity at lower tonnages.

##### Article 117 - [Evaluation of the early transition from EU REACH to UK REACH](#)

The project was the first of three evaluation projects Defra has planned for the transition to UK REACH. The focus for this first stage of the evaluation was on capturing early lessons on the delivery of the service and emerging potential impacts of the transition, as well as providing early insights into value for money. It covered the time leading up to the end of the transition period (31 December 2020), and the first year of operation of UK REACH (2021 to 2022). Many thanks to all the stakeholders who participated in this.

### 3.3. Decision-making on Applications for Authorisation

Defra has received **six** final UK authorisation application opinions from the UK Agency. Defra's Secretary of State has made decisions to grant authorisation on two of these applications and will make a decision on whether to grant the remaining applications in 2023. Consent from the Scottish ministers and Welsh ministers is required for decisions where the matter relates to areas of devolved competence.

Defra ministers have made decisions, with consent from the Scottish and Welsh ministers, on **ten** transitional applications for authorisation. These applications were from GB-based companies for which ECHA had adopted a final opinion, but the European Commission had not made a final decision before the end of transition period. Details of these applications and the decisions made are available on GOV.UK.

### 3.4. UK REACH Work Programme

Defra, Welsh and Scottish governments have worked with HSE, the Environment Agency and a wide range of stakeholders, including NGOs and trade associations, to identify priorities for the UK REACH Work Programme in 2023-2024. To do this, we considered proposals from various sources, including EU REACH, which remains a key information source, and sought views from across Defra and other government departments.

Since UK REACH came into force, our Work Programme has prioritised the issues that are most effectively addressed through UK REACH, and where action would have the greatest impact for human health and the environment.

The UK REACH Work Programme 2023/24 will be published in due course and will be accompanied by an updated rationale setting how we identified priorities for this financial year.

#### PFAS Regulatory Management Options Analysis (RMOA)

HSE published the [RMOA on perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances \(PFAS\)](#) on 4 April 2023.

Defra welcomes this publication, which represents a significant milestone in the UK's efforts to protect people and the environment from the potential impacts of PFAS.

Defra ministers have accepted the RMOA's recommendations, which include reducing PFAS emissions by developing UK REACH restrictions, beginning with a restriction on PFAS in fire-fighting foams, and exploring further restrictions covering a wide range of industrial and consumer uses. The RMOA took a grouping approach, to prevent regrettable substitution.

We will share further details in upcoming UK REACH Work Programmes and the Chemicals Strategy. We will continue to work with stakeholders as this work develops and build on the constructive dialogue initiated through the PFAS CSF Working Group.



## 4. UK REACH – Update from the UK Agency (HSE)

### 4.1. UK REACH Independent Scientific Expert Pool (RISEP)

HSE published the [RISEP list](#) on 12 October 2022. HSE have recruited 36 experts who advise on the safety of chemicals and support the Agency's scientific opinions.

In May 2023, [HSE opened up their Independent Scientific Expert Pool \(RISEP\) to new experts](#), this was communicated via an e-Bulletin on 25 May 2023. The deadline for applications was extended to 02 July 2023. HSE are now working through applications and interviews for shortlisted applicants will take place in July – August 2023.

### 4.2. UK Agency Accredited Stakeholders

Since April 2021, stakeholders have been invited to apply for Accredited Stakeholder Organisation (ASO) status.

HSE has recruited **58 ASOs** from industry and NGOs. The accredited stakeholders have been able to attend all formal meetings of RISEP and any relevant challenge panels to date.

There is no closing date for the ASO process and stakeholders can apply at any time. Details on how to apply can be found on the [Get involved in UK REACH page](#).

### 4.3. UK REACH Restriction Proposals

HSE announced the [extension to the lead in ammunition restriction process](#) by six months on 5 January 2023. This decision follows the public consultation receiving 2,759 responses, including many detailed and technical submissions that need to be worked through. The Agency will publish their Risk Assessment opinion in August and open a 60-day public consultation on the Socioeconomic Analysis opinion at the same time.

HSE published their [consolidated final opinion on tattoo and permanent make-up \(PMU\) inks](#) on 8 June 2023. This opinion has been reviewed by a Challenge Panel made up of independent experts from RISEP.

These opinions indicate the recommendations of HSE, in its role as the Agency for UK REACH, regarding the restriction of hazardous substances in tattoo and PMU inks. The Secretary of State for Defra, Welsh and Scottish Ministers, will now decide whether to bring legislation to restrict the presence of certain hazardous substances in tattoo and PMU inks.

#### 4.4. UK REACH Substance Evaluation Rolling Action Plan

HSE has published a rolling action plan (RAP) of substances to be evaluated.

Substance evaluation under UK REACH aims to clarify concerns that the manufacture and/or use of these substances could pose a risk to human health or the environment.

In line with our obligations under Article 44 of UK REACH and as stated within the 2022-2023 work programme, HSE has published a [RAP of substances which will be evaluated](#). HSE has one year from the date of publication of the RAP to evaluate substance(s) added to the RAP that year and, where necessary, to prepare a draft decision requesting further information from the registrants to clarify the identified concern.

In 2023-2024 HSE, working with the Environment Agency, will evaluate one substance: [N-butylbenzenesulphonamide](#).

As part of this process HSE has worked with the Appropriate Authorities to develop and agree criteria for prioritising substances for substance evaluation. [The criteria are available on the HSE website](#).

#### 4.5. UK REACH Authorisation Applications

HSE has held challenge panels on all 13 applications for authorisation received by the transitional deadline of 30 June 2022 and will have sent all 16 draft opinions to the applicants for comment by the end of July 2023, meeting the statutory deadlines. 15 new applications and 11 review reports were submitted to HSE in December 2022-June 2023, consultations on alternatives will begin in due course. Work on the 28 associated opinions is in progress.

A further 3 applications are expected by the end of October 2023.

Final Agency opinions were sent to the appropriate authorities in April (AFA006) and June (AFA022). 15 more will be completed in the coming months.

[Further information on the applications can be found on the HSE website](#).

## **5. International Chemicals: Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs)**

The Triple Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Basel, Rotterdam, and Stockholm (BRS) Conventions will take place from 1-12 May 2023. Parties considered standard joint agenda items related to programmes of work and budgets and elections of officers, in addition to substantive agenda items related to the implementation of each individual convention.

### **5.1. Basel Convention – Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal**

The overarching objective of the Basel Convention is to protect human health and the environment against the adverse effects of hazardous wastes. The Convention aims to control movements of hazardous waste between nations, preventing the transfer of hazardous and other problematic wastes from developed to less developed countries and protecting human health and the environment from adverse effects from these wastes.

#### **Triple COP May 2023**

The most significant decision taken under the Basel Convention was the adoption of the technical guidelines for the environmentally sound management (ESM) of plastic wastes. The major sticking point was the inclusion of chemical recycling, with some Parties wanting inclusion as an emerging technology and others wanting it to be excluded for now given the limited evidence about its merits and long-term impacts. It was finally agreed to include the section on chemical recycling in brackets in both the main body of the text and in an appendix, with a disclaimer noting the yet unproven environmentally sound potential of the technology. The final decision also acknowledges the need for further information on the ESM of plastic wastes through all the technologies listed in the guidelines.

The adoption of the guidelines was a major success for the UK, as a co-lead country alongside China and Japan, and given the high-profile of plastics currently and the ongoing negotiations around a new international treaty on plastic pollution. Technical guidelines under the Basel Convention establish the internationally accepted benchmark for the ESM of a particular waste.

There were also negotiations around a number of other issues, including the review of the annexes, new Strategic Framework and other technical guidelines, such as the ESM of waste lead acid batteries and used and waste tyres. However, as work on all these streams is at an earlier stage, no final decisions were adopted at this COP. Discussions will carry on between sessions and we will continue to be involved in this work ahead of the next COP in 2025.

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## Plastic Waste Exports

The UK Government is committed to ensuring that plastic waste is managed appropriately and recognises that some importing countries have difficulty in dealing with plastic waste. The Government is therefore committed to consulting on options to ban the export of plastic waste to countries which are not members of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (non-OECD countries) by the end of the year.

Defra officials participated in two stakeholder events aimed at engaging stakeholders in the policy development process and outlining the objectives and desired outcomes of the proposed ban. The first engagement event involved an online roundtable organised by Defra on 26 January 2023. Stakeholders in attendance included representatives from waste industry trade associations, NGOs, and local authorities. Stakeholders were keen to share their views on the benefits and risks/challenges of delivering the proposal, whilst Defra officials had an opportunity to advise on the drivers and scope of the proposals.

The second engagement event involved an online workshop organised by the British Plastics Federation (BPF) on 9 February 2023. Defra was invited to present the proposals to with BPF members and welcomed invited feedback on these. Key outcomes of the workshop included better clarity on BPF members' views on key assumptions underpinning the proposals.

Please send any enquiries on plastic waste exports to: [WasteMovements@defra.gov.uk](mailto:WasteMovements@defra.gov.uk).

### 5.1. Rotterdam Convention – Prior Informed Consent (PIC)

The Rotterdam Convention creates legally binding obligations for the exchange of information between Parties when certain hazardous chemicals and pesticides are traded internationally. Any chemicals listed in Annex III of the Convention become subject to the Convention's Prior Informed Consent (PIC) procedure.

#### Triple COP May 2023

Parties considered the listing of seven chemicals in Annex III of the Convention. Those included terbufos and iprodione, which were proposed for listing for the first time, in addition to carbosulfan, chrysotile asbestos, fenthion, paraquat, and acetochlor, which had been deferred from previous meetings due to a failure to reach consensus. The Convention of the Parties decided to list terbufos under Annex III. Consensus could not be reached on any of the remaining six chemicals which will roll over for consideration at the next COP.

Parties also considered a proposal to amend the Rotterdam Convention, which aimed to address the COP's inability to agree to list chemicals in Annex III of the Convention, despite the Convention's scientific body, the Chemical Review Committee (CRC), determining that they have met the scientific criteria. With Parties' views divided on this issue the amendment proposal failed to reach the threshold for adoption.

## 5.2. Stockholm Convention – Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs)

The UN Stockholm Convention on POPs agrees global bans of substances that fulfil the POPs criteria and requires all stockpiles and waste containing POPs to be identified and disposed of so that the POPs are destroyed or irreversibly transformed.

### Triple COP May 2023

Parties agreed the listing of three new substances to Annex A of the Stockholm Convention (for elimination): Methoxychlor, UV-328, and Dechlorane Plus. Methoxychlor was agreed without any available specific exemptions, whereas UV-328 and dechlorane plus were agreed with some specific exemptions available for parties to use for a time-limited period (including legacy spare parts in automotive vehicles for both UV-328, dechlorane plus; and mechanical separators in blood collection tubes for UV-328).

Proposals were also considered for amending Low POPs content limits (LPCL) in waste i.e., 'waste concentration limits', as given in the POPs waste technical guidelines under the Basel Convention, which Parties to the Stockholm Convention must consider. A new limit was agreed for recently added POP PFHxS and the guidelines were adopted, though new/amended limits could not be agreed for other POPs. The guidelines on the environmentally sound management of waste containing PFAS POPs were also updated.

Also agreed was a decision to establish a Compliance Committee – the members of which will be elected at the next COP in 2025 – with the aim to help Parties fulfil their obligations under the Convention. This is a significant milestone following more than a decade of work.

### Persistent Organic Pollutants Review Committee (POPRC) 19

The POPRC is the science-facing arm of the Stockholm Convention process and considers technical criteria for whether substances meet the criteria for listing as POP. The 19th POPRC meeting will be held in Rome this October.

The three substances that were considered at the risk profile stage at POPRC-18 last September - long-chain perfluorocarboxylic acids (LC-PFCAs), chlorpyrifos, and the UK-led nomination MCCPs - will also be considered by POPRC at the next meeting in October 2023, following recent evidence-gathering. MCCPs and LC-PFCAs will be considered at the risk management evaluation stage (socioeconomic considerations), but chlorpyrifos will again be considered at the risk profile stage (scientific criteria).

Final draft versions of the required evaluation documents for these substances have now been submitted to POPRC for translation ahead of the meeting in October. UK led the drafting for UK-nominated substance MCCPs. This follows several rounds of information gathering and commenting, and their consideration by POPRC will be a culmination of many years work. Earlier drafts of these documents were made available for comment on GOV.UK and the Stockholm Convention website.

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## POPs in Soft Furnishings Waste

The research report by the Environment Agency (EA) that involved analysis of nearly 1,000 samples of waste soft domestic seating was released to stakeholders in October 2021. In December 2022, the EA published [guidance](#) on how to comply with the legal requirements in managing soft furnishings waste containing POPs. Alongside the guidance, the EA also provided three Regulatory Position Statements (RPSs) that are designed to help local authorities dispose of this waste appropriately whilst they work on fully compliant solutions. The EA also sent a second letter providing clarification to the first letter sent in August 2022.

Defra continues to work with a stakeholder group (including representatives from the waste industry, furniture industry, charity sector, local authorities, and devolved administrations) as waste managers implement changes to ensure they are compliant with existing regulations on POPs. Defra's consultant-led research project worked to develop a deeper understanding of how organisations will achieve compliance and the longer-term socioeconomic impacts of that. We discussed headline figures of the report at our working group meeting in April.

## 6. International Chemicals: Voluntary international initiatives

### 6.1. The Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) and the Beyond 2020 framework on chemicals and waste

Negotiators met from 27 February-3 March in Nairobi at the second part of the Fourth Meeting of the Intersessional Process (IP4.2) for the Beyond 2020 (B2020) framework, a continuation of [SAICM](#). While some progress was made the meeting was adjourned and will re-open in September in Bonn.

The team are preparing for the meetings in Bonn, which will take place 23 – 29 September, and where stakeholders including governments, industry, and NGOs, will adopt the new Beyond 2020 (B2020) framework. The meeting will culminate in a High-Level Segment, attended by Ministers as well as CEOs from chemicals companies, with the aim of agreeing a High-Level Declaration.

Key areas of focus for the UK include the suite of draft, politically binding targets on the table, which will support delivery of the B2020 framework's goals, and financing of the new framework. The meeting in Bonn offers an opportunity to showcase the innovation coming out of the UK, particularly as regards the promotion of best practice in safe use and design of chemicals and pesticides; and investing in innovations advancing green and sustainable chemistry and cleaner production. Defra is engaging with other government departments and stakeholders in developing positions ahead of the meeting in Bonn.

### 6.2. Science-Policy Panel

The first round of negotiations to determine proposals for the new independent, intergovernmental science-policy panel (SPP), to further contribute towards the sound management of chemicals and waste, and to prevent pollution took place on 30 January-3 February. The intention is that the panel will be of similar stature to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) increasing the public and policy profile of chemicals and pollution.

At the meeting in January-February, progress was made on the scope of the panel's remit, its functions, overarching objective, and elements of its Operating Principles. The next meeting will take place in December, with an agenda that includes further consideration of Operating Principles, as well as the governance of the panel and the involvement of stakeholders in assessment reports. The team will be engaging with stakeholders, including through the CSF sub-group that addresses international chemical issues, on the latter subject.

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### **6.3. Partnership for the Assessment of Risk from Chemicals (PARC)**

PARC is a research and innovation programme under Horizon Europe to support EU and national risk assessment and risk management bodies with new data, knowledge, methods, networks, and skills to address current, emerging, and novel chemical safety challenges.

Work on PARC started in May 2022, and we have UK teams (from government and academia) who are active in all the work packages. Our structures for UK coordination of PARC activities are now fully up and running. This includes a steering group (with one representative from each UK partner) and the National Hub (with all those in the UK working on PARC invited).

In early July we held our first annual UK-PARC Science Day, where UK partners came together to share and collaborate on projects across the different work packages. There were over 70 attendees across both academia and government. Several research projects were presented including those on exposure, hazard, and risk assessment, addressing both humans and the environment. There were also discussions on how UK-PARC can contribute to and support UK chemical policy development. Further details will be shared with the CSF at the PARC themed July meeting.



## 7. OECD's Environment, Health, and Safety (EHS) Programme

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) [EHS programme](#) covers the safe use of chemicals, nanomaterials, pesticides, biocides, and products of modern biotechnology. It aims to protect health and the environment, while avoiding duplication of effort, ensuring that efficiencies are made and barriers to trade avoided. Defra continues to have oversight of the EHS programme, co-ordinating collective input from across UK government and external stakeholders.

The Chemicals and Biotechnology Committee (CBC) meeting took place the 5 – 7 July. The meeting discussed possible considerations for the substructure of the EHS programme and the four founding pillars that would govern the upcoming programme of work. The proposed workplan will help to build a coherent programme towards a set of common goals including: the evolution of risk assessment methods and data in transition towards new approach methods (NAMs), regulatory and non-regulatory risk management approaches, data access and exchange, and capacity building.

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