

Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods and on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals

Sub-Committee of Experts on the Globally Harmonized
System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals

14 November 2023

Forty-fifth session

Geneva, 6-8 December 2023

Item 2 (e) of the provisional agenda

**Work on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification
and Labelling of Chemicals: Potential hazard issues and
their presentation in the Globally Harmonized System**

Activities to support the mandate on endocrine disruptors

**Transmitted by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and
Development (OECD)**

Background

1. At its forty-third session in December 2022, the Sub-Committee agreed to include a new item on its programme of work for the biennium 2023- 2024: “potential hazard issues and their presentation in the GHS”. The European Union volunteered to coordinate an informal working group to address this topic (PHI-IWG) based on the workplan and terms of reference (ToR) in ST/SG/AC.10/C.4/2022/18¹ as amended in informal document INF.39 (forty-third session)², as agreed by the Sub-Committee³.
2. At the forty-fourth session in July 2023, the GHS Sub-committee generally supported a mandate for OECD to undertake a gap analysis in current GHS hazard classes regarding the identification of endocrine disruptors (EDs) presented by the European Commission at the PHI-IWG and described in paragraph 12 of document ST/SG/AC.10/C.4/2023/6 and the 2023-2024 workplan for the PHI-IWG in paragraphs 15 to 19 of informal document INF.19⁴, and this has also been added to the OECD programme of work.
3. In brief, the OECD agreed to convene and coordinate an ad hoc expert group to review the state of the science for identification and classification of substances and mixtures that have ED properties. The scientific review may support the potential creation of new hazard classes at the global level or propose other option(s) to identify and to classify endocrine disruptors for human health and/or for the environment.

¹ [Proposal for new work on unaddressed hazard classes in the programme of work for the biennium 2023-2024](#)

² See informal document INF.39 (forty-third session), paragraph 4
<https://unece.org/transport/documents/2022/12/informal-documents/addendum-stsgac10c4202218-unaddressed-hazard-classes>

³ Report of the Sub-Committee on its forty-third session (ST/SG/AC.10/C.4/86, paragraphs 51 to 53 and Annex I)

⁴ See informal document INF.19 (forty-fourth session), paragraphs 15-19
<https://unece.org/transport/documents/2023/07/informal-documents/potential-hazard-issues-and-their-presentation-0>

OECD activities to support the mandate

4. Following approval of the mandate in July 2023, the OECD Secretariat sent to delegates of the OECD Chemicals and Biotechnology Committee and members of the PHI-IWG a request for nomination of experts to the ad hoc group tasked with implementing the mandate. There was a high level of interest, and the ad hoc group includes 55 members, as well as an additional group of another 55 experts who are kept informed of these activities. In addition, at the request of the OECD Secretariat, the ad hoc group is co-chaired by an expert on ED effects on human health (Joint Research Centre of the European Commission) and an expert on ecotoxicology (Swiss Federal Institute of the Environment).

5. The ad hoc expert group has met via teleconference four times in Q3 and Q4 2023 to discuss and clarify the mandate, agree to a timeline for the work, review the existing GHS hazard classes that are expected to be most relevant to EDs, and begin to address how to move forward with the gap analyses. In addition, the group discussed examples of approaches for identifying EDs used by other organisations.

Timeline

6. The OECD Secretariat presented a proposed timeline (Figure 1) for progressing with the activities detailed in the mandate from the GHS Sub-Committee. The OECD ad hoc group generally agreed to the proposed timeline, but noted the timeline was extremely ambitious. The OECD Secretariat clarified that the reports to the GHS Sub-Committee will be determined by the timing of meetings, and progress will be reported at each subsequent meeting. While progress will be reported at each GHS Sub-Committee session, there may be a need to continue aspects of these activities beyond the current 2023-2024 biennium. The timeline of allocated activities is as follows:

- September 2023 to January 2024
 - Clarify and agree to an understanding of the mandate;
 - Agree on the provisional timeline and milestones for progress;
 - Begin to address potential gaps in existing GHS hazard classes regarding the ability to classify EDs interacting with oestrogen, androgen, thyroid and steroidogenesis (EATS) pathways;
 - Prepare an information document reporting on the anticipated timeline for progress for the 45th GHS Sub-Committee meeting (December 2023);
- January to June 2024
 - Continue meetings of the OECD ad hoc group via teleconference to address potential gaps in existing GHS hazard classes regarding the ability to classify non-EATS EDs;
 - Prepare an information document describing progress for the 46th GHS Sub-Committee meeting (July 2024);
- July to September 2024
 - Present the progress of the work to the Sub-Committee;
 - Continue meetings of the OECD ad hoc group via teleconference and propose options/recommendations based on the review completed at that point;
 - Prepare a working document describing the work done to date on the gap analysis of current GHS hazard classes, the state of science for EATS and non-EATS modalities and the adequacy of the current WHO/IPCS definition of EDs;
- October to December 2024

Present to the Sub-Committee the work done on the gap analysis of current GHS hazard classes, on the state of science and on the WHO/IPCS definition.

Figure 1: Provisional timeline for OECD activities to support the mandate on endocrine disruptors (EDs) from the GHS Sub-Committee to OECD

