GENDER & CHEMICALS PARTNERSHIP – G&CP

Theory of Change

The Partnership

→ **G&CP** is an international, multi-stakeholder, and multi-sectoral partnership. The novel coalition brings together key stakeholders from governments, academia, civil society, and industry to address the global pollution crisis through the lens of gender equality and empowerment.

The partnership contributes to reducing the global pollution crisis and to achieving sustainable development and gender equality goals, as agreed in the

→ 2030 Agenda,
→ Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action,
→ Global Framework on Chemicals (GFC), Resolution V/4,
→ Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm (BRS) Conventions,
→ Minamata Convention,
→ Intergovernmental Science-Policy Panel on Chemicals, Waste and Pollution (ISP-CWP).

Glossary

Basel, Rotterdam & Stockholm Conventions	**BRS**
Gender & Chemicals Partnership	**G&CP**
Gender Action Plan	**GAP**
Global Framework on Chemicals	**GFC**
Intergovernmental Science-Policy Panel on Chemicals, Waste and Pollution	**ISP-CWP**
Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning	**MEL**
Sustainable Development Goal	**SDG**
Working Group	**WG**

The G&CP contributes to gender-responsive and sustainable chemicals management by addressing a critical gap: while the impacts of chemicals and waste are highly gendered, gender perspectives remain insufficiently embedded in data, policy, and implementation. Through its multi-stakeholder approach, the partnership connects gender expertise with chemicals governance and supports stakeholders in translating commitments into practice.

Our *theory of change* traces the pathways through which our joint work on data and information, education and training, policy and implementation delivers impact. It articulates the assumptions that guide us, the key actions required for success, and how we will learn and adapt along the way. Change is not linear: policy incentives, institutional practices, and capacities evolve in parallel and reinforce each other through multiple feedback loops. The G&CP's impact depends on harnessing these interactions effectively and maintaining coherence across its Working Groups (WGs) and the partnership as a whole.

This document serves both as a shared compass for our members and a transparency tool for our funders and the broader community of practice with whom we collaborate.

How do we achieve impact?

The impact the G&CP seeks to achieve is a contribution to reducing the global pollution crisis and advancing gender equality, by embedding gender-responsive approaches in chemicals and waste governance, in line with the SDGs, especially SDG 5, 12, and 17, as well as GFC Resolution V/4, and relevant processes under the BRS and Minamata Conventions and the ISP-CWP.

As laid down in our → **G&CP Partnership Rules**, we have set ourselves **six objectives** that will help make this impact possible:

Raise awareness on the linkages of gender, chemicals, and waste, and **foster gender mainstreaming** activities.	**Assist stakeholders** in implementing gender mainstreaming activities.	**Support gender data collection and gender research**.
Support knowledge sharing and training.	**Provide input to international policy processes**.	**Monitor and evaluate our own activities** for sustained learning and success.

The partnership's main added value is its diversity: a global network linking governments, civil society, academia, and the private sector. It enables shared learning, inclusive decision-making, and collective action that no single actor could achieve alone.

The partnership harnesses this diversity in four working groups that, while not identical to the six strategic objectives, each drive a key lever of change: research, policy, implementation, and learning. Their work is interdependent: Collaboration across WGs—combined with the partnership's shared identity and joint initiatives—creates the coherence and momentum needed for meaningful, sustained impact.

In the partnership's work, we test and refine our theory of change through our Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL, one of the six objectives) approach. Each WG monitors its own indicators, and the partnership synthesizes the insights gained. Regular reflection allows partners to validate assumptions, identify leverage points and risks, and adjust strategies in response to changing political, institutional, and resource conditions.

Barriers and drivers

Experience from within the partnership shows that progress towards gender-responsive chemicals governance is shaped by both enabling conditions and structural barriers. High thematic complexity, limited time and financial capacities of key actors—particularly policy-makers—and weak incentive structures, especially in parts of the private sector, can slow implementation. At the same time, committed institutional champions, top-level support, sustained resources, and clearly defined evidence-based priorities have been driving change and proven decisive in generating commitments and translating them into practice.

Key barriers	Key drivers / enabling conditions
High complexity and abstraction of both chemicals governance and gender equality, leading to fragmentation, lack of systematic approaches, and a perception that efforts remain isolated or marginal.	**Institutional champions** – competent and committed individuals within ministries, companies, IGOs, and NGOs who actively advance gender mainstreaming.
Limited capacities of key actors, especially policy-makers (time constraints, limited financial resources, insufficient policy-ready knowledge).	**Top-level political and managerial support**, creating institutional legitimacy and space for implementation.
Weak incentive structures, particularly in the private sector, where gender mainstreaming is not clearly linked to economic or regulatory benefits.	**Adequate and sustained resources**, combined with clearly defined thematic priorities (e.g. convention-linked focus areas), enabling continuity and practical action.

The G&CP's theory of change therefore focuses not only on producing and disseminating knowledge and guidance, but also on strengthening enabling conditions: supporting champions, providing policy-relevant evidence, fostering institutional legitimacy, and maintaining continuity in times of crises and geopolitical uncertainty.

The structure of this document:

- A section on the **partnership**, explaining how credibility, growth, and governance support its influence and long-term effectiveness.
- A presentation of the **four WGs** and their respective impact pathways, including inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, as well as illustrative stories, and cross-WG interactions.
- A **summary**.

Enjoy reading!

The Partnership

Impact pathway: *A credible and growing multi-stakeholder coalition turns coordination into influence, influence into institutional practice, and practice into sustained, gender-responsive chemicals governance.*

Through a functioning secretariat, regular peer learning and co-creation, facilitated strategic networking and alliance-building within and beyond the partnership, and active participation in relevant policy processes, the G&CP provides structures and processes that enable collaboration and support the WGs. This foundation builds trust and alignment across members — the conditions for joint action and lasting commitment.

G&CP Assembly 2024, Berlin

As the partnership grows, it gains visibility and capacity to promote and mainstream gender more effectively across chemicals and waste governance and to sustain change beyond projects.

- *Quantitative growth* strengthens reach and influence: more members, wider geographic and sectoral coverage, and a larger base of practitioners who share knowledge, test approaches, and create peer pressure for progress.
- *Qualitative growth* deepens credibility and leverage: when governments, convention secretariats, research institutions, standards bodies, and respected NGOs engage, the partnership's legitimacy, technical depth, and access to policy processes all increase.
- *Resource growth* ensures resilience and independence: diversified funding and institutional backing enable continuity, professional support, and the capacity to respond strategically to new opportunities.

Over time, this combination of solid collaboration, scale, credibility, and resources attracts further strategic actors, multiplying access points into decision-making processes.

Interaction with the WGs: With increasing experience, scale, credibility, and resources, the partnership amplifies the reach and impact of each WG — providing the coordination, visibility, and trust that make their combined efforts add up to systemic change.

WG **Gender Data & Information**

Impact Pathway: *Creating open and reliable gender data and strengthening awareness of data gaps enables better research; better research deepens understanding and informs fairer policies and practices; fairer policies support systemic sustainability and gender equality.*

Through mapping existing data, information, and materials, developing and maintaining the → G&C Knowledge Platform; publishing material on the platform; and conducting outreach activities on global data, partners enhance access to and awareness of gender-related information in chemicals management. These efforts strengthen data collection and research capacities across the partnership (and beyond).

Current project:
G&C Knowledge Platform, 2025-27, funded by UBA & BMUKN

Over time, this leads to more robust, inclusive, and gender-responsive research and gender analysis. As the quality and scope of research improve, it helps deepen our understanding on gender aspects of chemicals management, providing stronger evidence for policies and practices that address gendered roles, exposure patterns, and needs across populations.

Why gender matters for addressing chemical pollution

Where our work leads us: ***Calling on the Scientific Community to Integrate Gender***

During the initiation of the G&CP, multi-stakeholder and multidisciplinary partners and friends published a high-visibility outreach article on → Why gender matters for addressing chemical pollution by Wang et al. (2024) in the prominent open-access journal The Lancet Planetary Health, calling on the scientific community to integrate gender into research on chemical pollution.

Interaction with other WGs: By improving data quality, access, and gender analysis, this group provides the evidence base that informs capacity building, advocacy messages, and policy design across all other WGs.

WG **Education and Training**

Impact pathway: *Education and evidence-informed training on gender-responsive chemicals management build capacity for change; increased capacity enables inclusive practice; and inclusive practice strengthens the conditions for gender equality and sustainability.*

Current project:
Know-How for European Chemicals Focal Points,
2025-27, funded by EURENI / BMUKN

Through mapping initiatives; developing and delivering awareness-raising workshops and presentations for stakeholder groups; developing and delivering the → European Chemicals Focal Points Trainings; and publishing articles and materials that increase knowledge, the G&CP promotes learning and visibility around gender and chemicals, expanding access to high-quality educational resources and strengthening partners' skills to integrate gender perspectives into their work.

Over time, these learning processes enable the development of Gender Action Plans (GAPs) and more gender-responsive approaches in project design, policy development, and implementation, as well as strengthening knowledge through targeted publications, and monitoring. As gender-responsive education becomes more widespread, especially women and girls are encouraged and empowered to engage in chemicals and waste management, and institutions begin to embed inclusion and equality in their structures and processes.

Where our work leads us: ***Internal Awareness-Raising and Organizational Change***

As a result of → ZDHC's commitment within the partnership, the organization held several internal webinars and workshops on the gendered dimensions of chemical pollution. These activities raised awareness and interest among the textile industry and strengthened ZDHC's internal organizational development, including the appointment of official gender focal points and the initiation of more concrete implementation activities related to sector-specific challenges and gender-disaggregated impact data.

Interaction with other WGs: Through education and training, this WG equips internal and external partners who implement GAPs and represent gender-related priorities in policy spaces, thus bridging knowledge and action.

WG **International Policy Processes**

Impact pathway: *Building gender-responsive capacity enables stakeholders to shape international negotiations and embed gender-responsive approaches and language in global policy processes; inclusive and gender-responsive negotiations lead to fairer and more effective agreements; and such agreements create frameworks that enable progress toward gender equality and sustainable chemicals management.*

Through conversations with relevant stakeholders and policy-makers; organizing side events; convening a global conference on gender and chemicals; authoring blog articles; and supporting the development and implementation of Gender Action Plans (GAPs) at international level, the G&CP helps raise awareness of gender dimensions in chemicals and waste management. Strategies to strengthen gender-responsive language in science–policy panels further equip stakeholders with the skills and confidence to engage meaningfully in international policy processes.

Over time, these efforts strengthen the integration of gender perspectives into global discussions and negotiations. As GAPs become implemented and gender mainstreaming becomes more routine in international chemicals and waste governance, the partnership helps build more inclusive and equitable decision-making.

Where our work leads us: ***Drafting a Gender Action Plan for GFC Implementation***

Through the organization of multiple side events on gender at key international policy processes — such as the Global Framework on Chemicals, the BRS Conventions, and the Minamata Convention — spaces were created for exchange on policy approaches among governments and other relevant stakeholders. These exchanges helped to strengthen the integration of gender considerations in negotiations and to foster political will and new coalition-building in challenging geopolitical contexts.

Panel discussion at BRS COP, May 2025 © Permanent Mission of Mexico

Interaction with other WGs: As gender perspectives become better anchored in international negotiations, this WG also creates enabling conditions for the WG on national and regional level implementation — plus, it enhances the G&CP's credibility, driving its growth and influence.

WG **National and Regional Implementation**

Impact pathway: *Building national and regional capacity to design and implement Gender Action Plans (GAPs) through practical tools and tailored support turns commitment into practice; implementation generates evidence and ownership; and ownership drives systemic gender equality and pollution reduction.*

By mapping good-practice examples for publication on the Knowledge Platform; supporting Chemicals Focal Points in gender-responsive implementation; supporting governments to develop national GAPs or gender-responsive national action plans; assisting stakeholders and sectors in developing gender roadmaps; and developing gender-mainstreaming tools and methods in chemicals and waste management the G&CP equips stakeholders with practical knowledge on how to design and implement gender-responsive approaches in chemicals and waste management.

Over time, this strengthens national and regional capacities to adopt and operationalize GAPs and apply gender-mainstreaming tools more consistently across sectors. As these plans take effect, they institutionalize inclusive practices in chemicals and waste management across institutions, improve accountability, and embed gender considerations in everyday decision-making — which is a key component of the GFC Resolution V/4.

Webinar on GFC GAP, May 2025

Where our work leads us: ***Fostering Gender- Responsive Policy Dialogue in Times of Crises***

Following Resolution V/4, the Partnership supported UNEP via a small-scale agreement to draft a → Gender Action Plan for the Global Framework on Chemicals for consideration at its first respective international conference in 2026. The GAP aims to ensure gender equality is systematically integrated into chemicals and waste management and will include strategic goals and priority actions for all relevant stakeholders and sectors.

Interaction with other WGs: Successful national GAPs and institutional reforms showcase what works, feeding concrete examples into our WG on international policy processes and strengthening the partnership's legitimacy and own learning.

Summary

Impact pathway: *This theory of change explains how a diverse, well-functioning, and credible partnership can turn gender expertise into concrete change in chemicals and waste governance.*

Each of the presented WGs represents a distinct but interlinked key lever of change:

- **Data & Information** creates the evidence base for research and eventually fairer policy and practice.
- **Education & Training** builds the capacities and mindsets that sustain transformation.
- **International Policy Processes** transform evidence into global norms and commitments.
- **National & Regional Level Implementation** turns commitments into institutional practice and accountability.

The Partnership connects these levers, ensuring coordination, visibility, and continuity.

Together, these pathways contribute to progress on SDGs 5, 12, and 17 – advancing gender equality, sustainable production and consumption, and partnerships for the goals, as well as the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, GFC Resolution V/4, gender-related goals and agreements of the BRS and Minamata Conventions and the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Panel on Chemicals, Waste and Pollution (ISP-CWP).

This theory of change is our shared compass and complements our G&CP Partnership Rules. In addition to this foundation, it is equally important who is working together on this journey.

The G&CP does not act in isolation. Progress depends on political will, institutional mandates, resources, and broader geopolitical dynamics. The partnership contributes to shaping these conditions, while recognising that systemic change requires sustained collective effort beyond the partnership itself. The partnership looks forward to collaborating with civil society and women's organizations, executing agencies, governments, the Global Environment Facility and its implementing agencies, and other interested entities.

Please contact the secretariat if you want to collaborate or join in: → **info@msp-institute.org**.

Thank you very much for your interest!

We developed our theory of change between August 2025 and January 2026. This participatory process was supported by the G&CP secretariat and financially assisted by our partner International Sustainable Chemistry Collaborative Centre (→ ISC3, Anna Becker). → Dr Marcus Andreas facilitated the overall process. A key component was the impact narrative workshop led by John Contenius from → Partnerships2030. Valuable feedback and advice were provided by Mariella Noto from ZDHC, Verona Collantes from the Global Environment Facility and Raymond Brandes from the United Nations Environment Programme. We would like to thank all participants who have shared their knowledge and experience!

IMPACT

INTENDED SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OR SYSTEM CHANGE

- 2030 Agenda
- Beijing Declaration & Platform for Action
- Basel, Rotterdam & Stockholm (BRS) Conventions
- Intergovernmental Science-Policy Panel on Chemicals, Waste & Pollution (ISP-CWP)
- Global Framework on Chemicals (GFC) Resolution V/4
- Minamata Convention

5 GENDER EQUALITY · 12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION · 17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

ULTIMATE OUTCOME

LONG-TERM / SUSTAINABLE CHANGE OF STATE OF AFFAIRS

- Advanced gender equality & empowerment in chemicals & waste mgmt.
- Reduced global pollution crisis

INTERMEDIATE OUTCOME

MID-TERM, SUCH AS A CHANGE IN PRACTICE

- Gender-responsive action aligned & amplified through partnership coordination
- Gender analysis & evidence systematically applied in research & decision-making
- Gender-responsive approaches embedded in int'l chemicals & waste policy processes
- GAPs & other gender-mainstreaming tools developed & implemented
- Gender-responsive practices adopted in programmes, projects, and institutions

IMMEDIATE OUTCOME

SHORT-TERM, SUCH AS INCREASED AWARENESS, KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS OR ACCESS

- Internal alignment & a shared change narrative across the partnership strengthened
- Access to & capacities for gender-responsive data collection & analysis strengthened
- Knowledge, confidence & skills to strengthen gender considerations in int'l policy processes on chemicals & waste
- Practical knowledge & readiness to design GAPs & gender roadmaps strengthened
- Awareness, shared understanding, and capacities to integrate gender perspectives strengthened

ACTIVITIES & OUTPUTS

ACTIONS TAKEN OR WORK PERFORMED

G&CP Partnership as a whole

- Running a functioning secretariat; active WGs; regular peer learning & co-creation → Coordination structures & processes enabling cross-WG collaboration
- Active participation in relevant policy processes → Strengthened networks and alliances
- MEL: WG monitoring & partnership synthesis & reflection/adaptation → MEL approach in operation

WG Gender Data & Information

- Mapping of data, information, & materials
- Developing & maintaining the G&C Knowledge Platform
- Publishing material on the platform
- Conducting outreach

→ G&C Knowledge Platform

WG Int'l Policy Processes

- Conversations with stakeholders & policy-makers
- Convening events → Side events; Global conference on gender & chemicals
- Developing strategies to strengthen gender-responsive language → Strategies to strengthen gender-responsive language
- Supporting development & implementation of GAPs at int'l level → Support to int'l GAP development & implementation
- Authoring blog articles → Blog articles

WG Nat'l & Regional Implementation

- Mapping good-practice examples for publication on the Knowledge Platform
- Supporting Chemicals Focal Points in gender-responsive implementation
- Supporting governments to develop national GAPs / gender-responsive nat'l action plans → Nat'l GAP / gender-responsive nat'l action plan development support
- Assisting stakeholders/sectors in developing gender roadmaps → Gender roadmaps
- Developing gender-mainstreaming tools & methods → Gender-mainstreaming tools & methods

WG Education & Training

- Mapping initiatives
- Developing & delivering awareness-raising workshops → G&C Awareness-raising workshops
- Developing & delivering the Chemicals Focal Points Trainings → Chemicals Focal Points Trainings
- Developing training materials for other stakeholders → Articles & materials
- Publishing articles → Articles & materials

GENDER & CHEMICALS PARTNERSHIP – G&CP