



Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

Preliminary Workshop Agenda

DEVELOPING SCIENCE-INFORMED POLICY RESPONSES TO CURB ENDOCRINE DISRUPTION IN FRESHWATER

18-19 October 2022
OECD La Murette, Conference Room CC2
2, rue André Pascal
75775 Paris Cedex 16

The workshop on “Developing science-informed policy responses to curb endocrine disruption in freshwater” aims to recommend key actions to manage endocrine disruption in freshwater. The workshop brings together academia, policy practitioners and business. The workshop takes place on 18-19 October 2022 at the OECD La Murette premises in Paris. It is organised by the Water Team of the OECD Environment Directorate.

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Background

As part of its work on water quality, the OECD Environment Directorate has published a series of policy papers on Contaminants of Emerging Concern (CECs). Earlier publications have addressed pollution from pharmaceutical residues (OECD, 2019) and microplastics (OECD, 2021). In these publications, the OECD emphasized the need for monitoring and supported a life cycle approach to managing substances, such as pharmaceuticals and microplastics.

Endocrine disrupting chemicals (EDCs) are a group of contaminants of emerging concern that have been detected widely in freshwater in OECD countries. A modification of the endocrine system in the body can lead to adverse health effects, some of which may not manifest until many years after exposure. EDCs are associated with disease outcomes such as obesity, fertility loss, hormone-sensitive cancers, thyroid malfunctions and neurodevelopment impacts (Gore et al., 2015). In wildlife, similar effects are occurring. Moreover, endocrine disruption in wildlife can negatively affect populations of species - raising concerns for the integrity of ecosystems and biodiversity.

Challenges and opportunities posed by endocrine disrupting chemicals (EDCs) in freshwater may need new forms of water quality regulation. EDCs and their effects are being monitored worldwide, but translating this knowledge into policy has been a challenge in many countries. Moreover, life cycle approaches that were recommended to manage water pollution by pharmaceutical residues and microplastics may not be fitting to EDCs. The sources of EDCs in freshwater vary widely, ranging from consumer products, industry, pharmaceuticals, agriculture, hormones, etc. These chemicals can act in mixtures when the life cycles of single products come together. The cross-sectoral, transboundary and multidisciplinary nature of this problem demands attention across multiple policy domains, such as those related to water resources management, chemical safety, public health, agriculture and food, environment

and biodiversity, industry, trade, and waste management. Lastly, not all EDCs are listed or even known as EDCs, which challenges governments to make decisions under uncertainty.

Objectives

The ultimate objective of the workshop is to provide policy guidance, founded on scientific knowledge and country practices, to manage endocrine disruption in the freshwater environment. The workshop builds on the scoping paper, case studies submitted by OECD countries and discussions held at previous OECD meetings of the Working Party on Biodiversity, Water and Ecosystems. The objectives of the workshop are to:

- Build a policy-relevant knowledge base on endocrine disruption in freshwater and its impacts on ecosystems and human health
- Identify lessons learnt and good practices from country case studies on monitoring and policy approaches on freshwater
- Explore policy options to advance from monitoring and data collection to mitigating endocrine disruption. Some options might be centered around the effects of endocrine disruption to complement “conventional” life-cycle approaches of sources, uses and disposal of chemicals.

The workshop is designed to be interactive. Each session will start with a series of short presentations, followed by a discussion on the themes raised. A number of discussion themes are suggested in the agenda. The moderator will provide a summary of the discussion.

The outcomes of the workshop will inform the OECD report on Policy Responses to Endocrine Disruption in Freshwater, which will feature case studies and include policy recommendations.

For more information, please contact Marijn Korndewal (marijn.korndewal@oecd.org).

Preliminary agenda

Day 1 (18 October 2022)	
9:30 – 10:00	Opening
10:00 – 11:00	<p>Session 1: Setting the scene for a policy-relevant knowledge base on endocrine disruption in freshwater</p> <p>Keynote</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Origins of endocrine disruptors and where we find them in freshwater and drinking water • Critical complexities of endocrine disruptors: mixtures, low doses, non-monotonic dose responses <p>Questions for clarification</p>
11:00 – 11:30	Morning tea
11:30 - 12:30	<p>Session 2: Making the case & Dealing with scientific uncertainty and near-certainty</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human health impacts • Ecosystem impacts

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uncertainties • Hazard versus risk approaches <p>Discussion:</p> <p>What is the impact of endocrine disruption on balances in the ecosystem?</p> <p>What risks do EDCs in the environment pose to human health?</p> <p>What is an acceptable level of risk? For whom is it acceptable (think of vulnerable groups, ecosystems, etc.)? How much are we willing to pay for an acceptable level of risk?</p> <p>In addressing EDCs, are there substances that should be prioritized? Are there any shortcuts?</p>
12:30 – 14:00	Lunch break
14:00 – 17:00	<p>Session 3: Mainstreaming monitoring and assessing endocrine disruption in freshwater and drinking water</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New developments in monitoring and assessment • Market trends of new technologies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Costs of bioassays, availability of relevant bioassays and endpoints • Effect-based monitoring as a policy instrument (moving from monitoring to policies) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Sampling, grouping of chemicals, trigger values, endpoints, effect-directed analysis • Monitoring ecology <p>Discussion:</p> <p>What kind of institutional embedding is needed to put an effect-based monitoring system in place?</p> <p>What are the steps from monitoring and collecting data to shaping policy actions?</p>
17:00	Cocktail

Day 2 (19 October 2022)

09:30 – 11:00	<p>Session 4: Country responses to managing EDCs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case studies on managing EDCs <p>Discussion:</p> <p>What has worked? What has not?</p> <p>What was the process from monitoring to policy action?</p> <p>What institutional arrangements have been made to bridge the gap between sectors? E.g. from the chemical to the health and environmental sectors?</p>
11:00 – 11:30	Coffee break
11:30 – 12:30	Session 4: Country responses to managing EDCs (continued)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thought-provoking academic reflection on prevailing country approaches to EDCs and a proposition for effect-centered policy approaches for water quality <p>Discussion:</p> <p>How well do we manage EDCs at the moment?</p> <p>How have effect-centered approaches been applied in OECD countries? What could they look like in the future?</p> <p>To what extent will effect-centered policy approaches be relevant? How will they complement existing approaches?</p> <p>What are policy options to manage the adverse effects of mixtures?</p>
12:30 – 14:00	Lunch break
14:00 – 15:30	<p>Session 5 Multilateral approaches to support action by the environmental sector</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A rationale for international collaboration: transboundary and global concerns • Critical elements of a multilateral approach to managing EDCs (including global test standards, trigger values, knowledge sharing) • Accelerating the uptake of bioassays (including verification and market access) • Partnerships between science, industry and policy communities <p>Discussion</p> <p>Existing initiatives (UN GHS, EC, OECD, else)</p> <p>On what areas is international cooperation needed to regulate EDCs?</p> <p>What improvements are needed in the market development of bioassays? What needs to be done to accelerate the uptake of effect-based monitoring?</p> <p>What critical partnerships need to be forged to pave the way for policy alignment?</p>
15:30 – 16:00	Closing