OVERVIEW OF THE OECD GLOBAL FORUM ON ENVIRONMENT - PLASTICS IN A CIRCULAR ECONOMY: DESIGN OF SUSTAINABLE PLASTICS FROM A CHEMICALS PERSPECTIVE

Second meeting of the Ad Hoc Open-Ended Expert Group on Marine Litter and Microplastics
4 December, 2018

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The main objectives of the Programme are to:

• Assist OECD Member countries' efforts to protect human health and the environment through improving chemical safety and biosafety

• Make chemical control policies more transparent and efficient and save resources for government and industry; and

• Prevent unnecessary distortions in the trade of chemicals, chemical products and products of modern biotechnology.
OECD Global Forum on Environment:
Plastics in a Circular Economy

Designing sustainable plastics from a chemicals perspective

29-31 May, Copenhagen

oe.cd/plastics-forum    @OECD_ENV

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RT8pEDdvmDM&t=1s
Topics of focus of Global Forum

Design of ‘sustainable plastics’ from a chemicals perspective

• **Scene setting & case examples**

• **Topic 1:** What does it mean to be "sustainable" from chemicals perspective

• **Topic 2:** Identification of available technical **tools** for use at the design stage of a plastic product

• **Topic 3:** Approaches to **incentivise**, at the design stage, the use of more benign materials.

• Opportunities for Potential Further Work at the OECD
Plastics are important materials that generate significant economic benefit but they need to be made and used in a more sustainable way.

Circular economy
- need closed loops and clean loops
Highlights of What We Heard

• Opportunity to take advantage of issue attention cycle

• Address whole value chain and integrate environmental, economic and social goals

• Life-cycle thinking needs to take place at the design stage and include considerations along the value chain; the chemicals-waste interface is an important dimension
Highlights of What We Heard

• Gaps in information along life cycle, including traceability, are a challenge
• Need consistent terminology
• Need to future-proof approaches
Highlights of What We Heard – Policy Approaches

- **Suite of policy instruments** are necessary
  - Voluntary and regulatory measures are complementary

- **Voluntary approaches** allow to act fast and stimulate actions across the market

- **Extended Producer Responsibility** is a key policy but challenging to incentivise good design

- **Green deals** to facilitate experimentation and innovation

- **Recycling targets** as key drivers

- Measures to **create markets** for recycled plastics, but **no differentiation in chemicals/material standards**
• Finalised background documents to be declassified and published:
  – Considerations/criteria for defining 'sustainability' from a chemicals perspective
  – Technical tools and approaches for chemical selection at the design stage
  – Policy approaches to incentivise sustainable plastic design

• Workshop report (available on-line)

• Menu of ideas of possible future work at the OECD
Possible Areas of Work

• Expand criteria for defining sustainability from a chemicals perspective
• Identify best practices for considering trade-offs (methods, benchmarks, costs, or optimisation)
• Good practices for information exchange along the supply chain
Possible Areas of Work

Policy approaches

• Assess economic and voluntary instruments that can support sustainable plastics design in order to develop recommendations on their design and to analyse their economic costs and benefits;

• Improve incentives for sustainable plastics design in the framework of Extended Producer Responsibility;

• Improve understanding of linkages between chemicals and waste management legislation.
Future Microplastics work at OECD

• Stock-taking of microplastics generated during *product use-phase*
  – Major sources
  – Environmental fate
  – Options for mitigating the sources
  – Policies in place
  – Additional policies that could be envisioned
Further Information

• Website
  – http://www.oecd.org/chemicalsafety

• EHS Newsletters (sign up to receive automatically)

• Email: eeva.leinala@oecd.org