

Safe And Sustainable-By-Design

Accelerating chemical innovation

The vision EU policymakers have in the Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability (CSS) is that “Chemicals are produced/used in a way that maximises their benefits to society while avoiding harm to planet & people and production and use of safe and sustainable chemicals in Europe becomes a benchmark worldwide”. This reflects [the journey to sustainability](#) that the chemical industry has embarked on, as well as our [vision for 2050](#).

The concept of “Safe and sustainable-by-design” will determine the future of not only chemical innovation but also chemical markets. Grounded in the latest cutting-edge science, it should further the development of chemicals that are safe for humans and environment, offer an improved environmental footprint, and deliver the expected performance and value to stakeholders throughout the value chain.



This paper is not exhaustive on the topic and does not represent our final views on Safe and Sustainable-by-Design. Instead, it is a work in development and an invitation to you to discuss the concept, criteria, and the way forward on SSbD

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THE “SAFE AND SUSTAINABLE BY DESIGN: BOOSTING INNOVATION AND GROWTH WITHIN THE EUROPEAN CHEMICAL INDUSTRY”



This report proposes guiding design principles for a selected set of safety

at the level of product-application and more.

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THE "SAFE AND SUSTAINABLE BY
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What is our take on the definition?

The EU chemical industry sees "Safe and sustainable-by-design" as a process to accelerate widespread market uptake of new and alternative chemical products and technologies that deliver greater consumer confidence in their safety, environmental and societal benefits and advance the transition towards a circular economy and climate-neutral society.

Delivering higher levels of consumer confidence means working together with policymakers, civil society, academia and others to achieve stronger consensus. There is no universally accepted definition of a safe and sustainable by design chemical yet. We believe that criteria for chemicals that are safe and sustainable-by-design must address the three pillars of sustainability – environmental, social and economic factors – and take a life cycle approach.

What next?

Developing criteria

Moving ahead in this journey to sustainability, will require a set of criteria and an assessment framework, commonly agreed on by all stakeholders.

The chemical industry has already been making strides to identify safe and sustainable-by-design criteria for chemicals. In 2018, the World Business Council on Sustainable Development launched a [roadmap for the Chemical Industry Methodology for Portfolio Sustainability Assessments](#). This roadmap identifies different approaches used by pioneering chemical companies to assess their sustainable performance, to proactively

steer their overall product portfolios towards improved sustainability outcomes. Based on these practices, Cefic has mapped a long list of criteria.



The Commission has introduced a proposal for the [Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation](#) (ESPR), as part of the broader Sustainable Product Initiative. ESPR provides a framework of legal requirements to improve the environmental sustainability of products. It covers a wide range of criteria considering the entire lifecycle – from the extraction of raw materials to production, distribution and use – all the way to recycling, reparability and remanufacturing.

We look forward to engaging with the European Commission and other stakeholders to arrive at a common assessment framework. This framework is essential to the success of the Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability and can accelerate innovation in the chemical sector and the value chains we serve, to the benefit of realising the SDGs in general and the circularity and climate-neutrality objectives in particular. Cefic has outlined its views on the future framework in a recent [survey](#) in support of the Commission services' work on the definition of Safe and Sustainable-by-Design criteria for chemicals and materials.

Establishing a Future Chemistry Network

The chemical industry recognises that making chemical products and technologies safe and sustainable-by-design is not a standalone exercise. We aim to bring to life the European chemical industry's commitment towards the future of chemistry by creating a multi-stakeholder platform for supporters of sustainable chemistry to raise awareness of the latest developments, help promote stronger markets here in the EU for sustainable chemistry and to accelerate chemical innovations which are safe and sustainable-by-design.

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How industry can boost the innovation for safe and sustainable chemicals:
Concept of Safe and Sustainable-

by-design

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