

Pharmaceuticals in the Environment and the Global Framework on Chemicals

“Prescription for Change: Safe and Sustainable Chemistry in Global Pharmaceutical Systems”
22 July 2026

Stephanie Laruelle, Chemicals and Health Branch, UNEP

Pharmaceuticals in the Environment

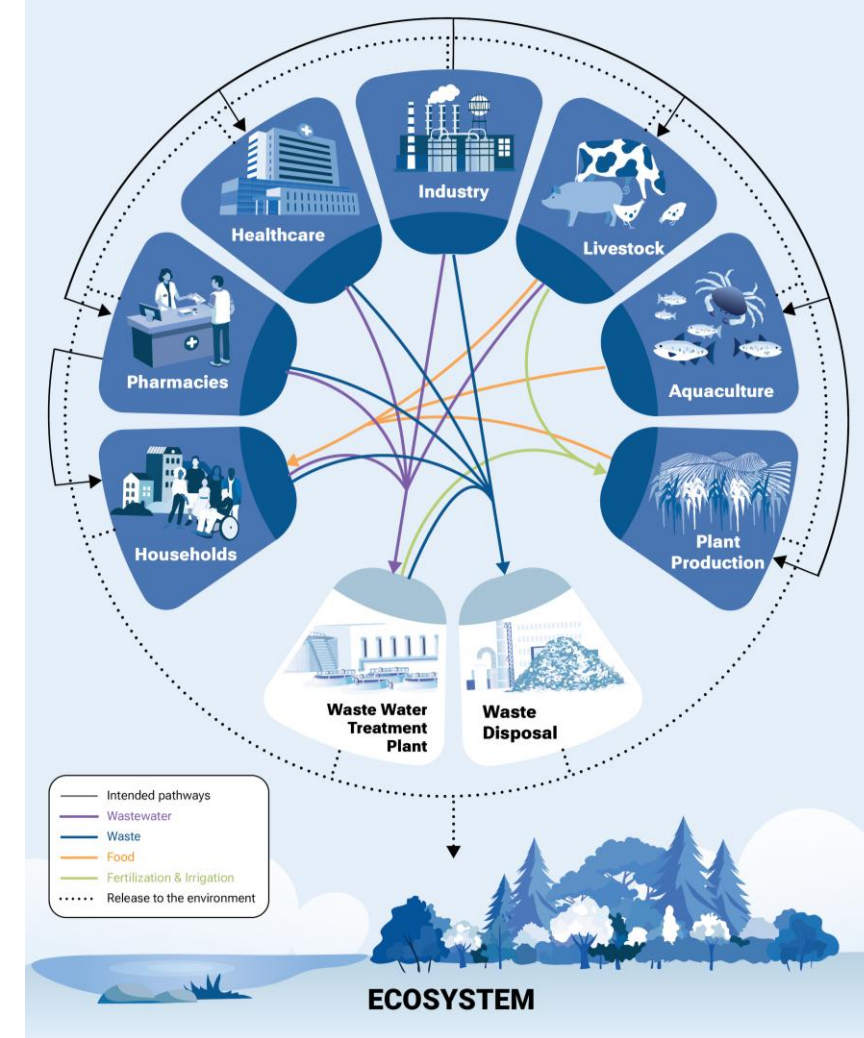
- *Increased reported presence in the environment globally*
- *Serious risks to the environment, human and animal health, including AMR*



Sources and Pathways of Unused Medicines, UNEP (2026)

Pharmaceuticals in the Environment

- *Multiple release pathways*
- *Complex and interconnected network of stakeholders and sectors*



Safe disposal of unused medicines

One Health Approach for National Systems

- *Support national implementation*
- *Provide a multisectoral framework*
- *Cover the medicines lifecycle*
- *Engage relevant stakeholders*
- *Four action pillars*
- *Practical and experience-based*





Safe Disposal of Unused Medicines from Key Sectors

Four Pillars



Ongoing UNEP work - Awareness raising

Event series: “Addressing Pharmaceuticals in the Environment through a Lifecycle Approach”



One Health Approach to Addressing Pharmaceuticals in the Environment Across Key Sectors | 2025 BRS COPs Side Event
9 May 2025



Preventing the Environmental Release of Pharmaceuticals: Solutions at the Source
16 July 2025



Pharmaceutical Residues in Wastewater: Addressing Challenges at the End-of-Pipe
8 October 2025



Innovation Opportunities to Address Pharmaceutical Pollution: Green Chemistry and Sustainable Value Chains Strategies
2 December 2025



Launch | Safe disposal of unused medicines — A One Health Approach for National Systems
6 May 2026



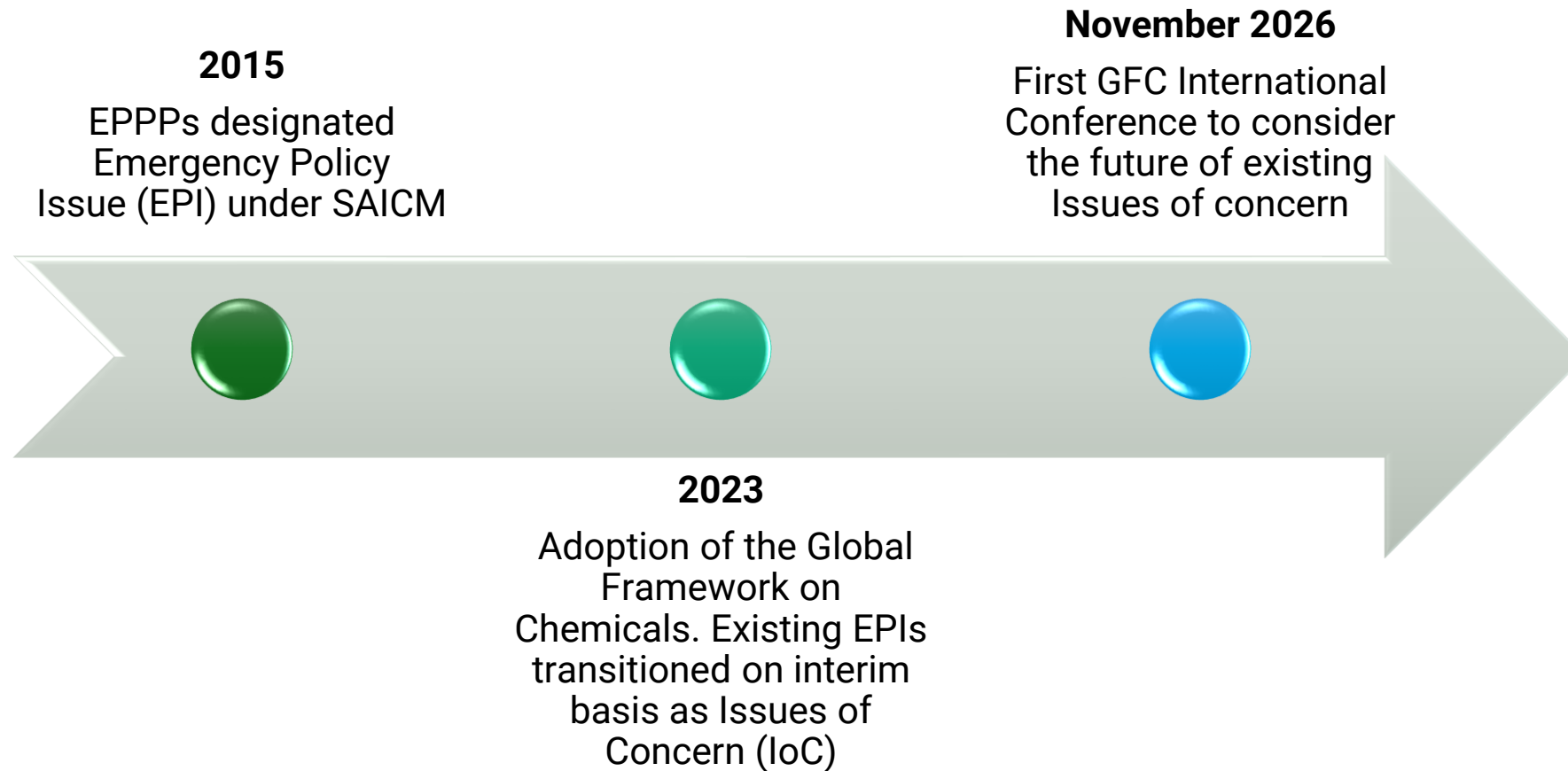
The hidden pollution behind your pills

CHEMICALS & POLLUTION ACTION

VIDEO



EPPPs as an issue of concern : from SAICM to GFC



The Global Framework on Chemicals

For a Planet Free of Harm From Chemicals and Waste

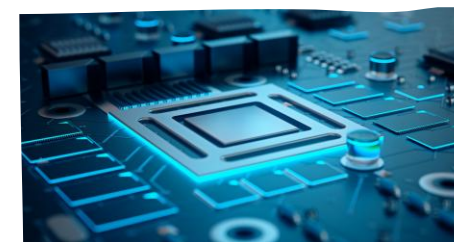
Multisectoral and multistakeholder framework for safe and sustainable management of chemicals and waste adopted at the Fifth meeting of International Conference on Chemicals Management in Bonn, Germany in September 2023.

5

Strategic objectives

28

Targets

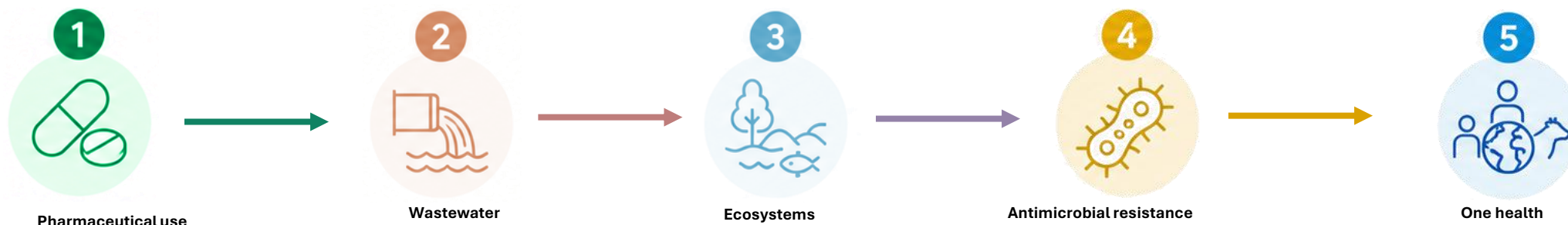


Issues of Concern under the GFC: the case of EPPPs



What are issues of concern?

An issue involving **any phase in the life cycle** of chemicals that has **not yet been generally recognized**, is **insufficiently addressed**, or arises as a potential concern from the current level of scientific information, and that may have **adverse effects on human health** and/or the **environment** that would benefit from **international action**.

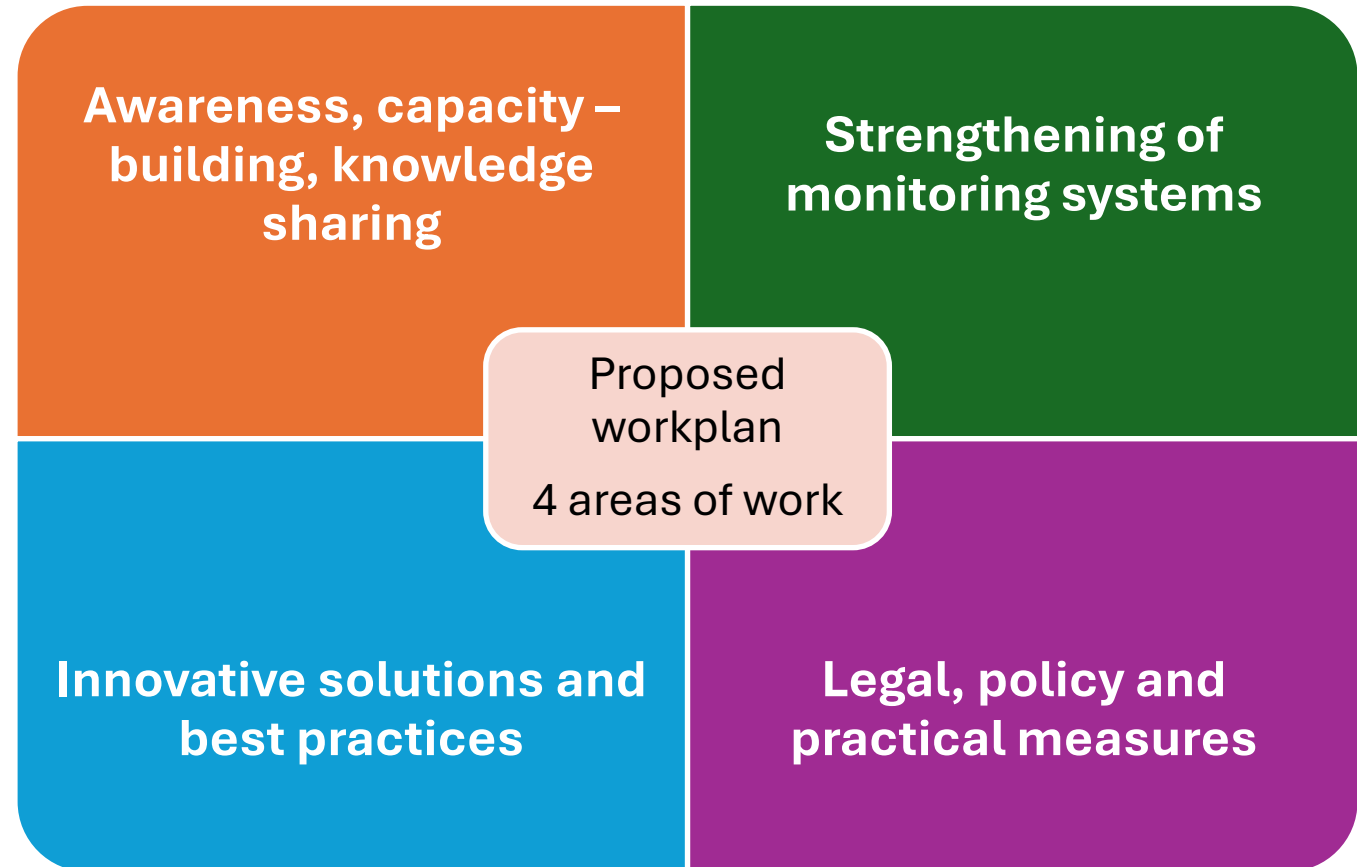


At the Open-ended Working Group meeting in June 2025, delegates reaffirmed the need for continued collaboration on EPPP, reinforcing its relevance under the GFC Issues of Concern process.

EPPPs under the GFC – proposed approach

*Multi-stakeholder consultation workshops
(May 2026) on EPPPs to build proposed
workplan, building on existing efforts*

*Proposal to establish a dedicated
ad hoc working group, bringing together
representatives from relevant
stakeholder groups*



Thank you

Stephanie Laruelle
Chemicals and Health Branch
UNEP
