Chemical Safety & Substitution

Source Metadata

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EU Taxonomy Definition

Chemical safety and substitution under the EU Taxonomy covers activities that substantially contribute to pollution prevention by reducing the use and release of hazardous chemicals and promoting safer alternatives. This includes development and production of safer chemical alternatives to substances of very high concern (SVHCs), implementation of green chemistry processes that eliminate hazardous inputs, chemical risk assessment and management services, contaminated site remediation, and development of chemical tracking and transparency systems. The 2026 revision strengthens alignment with the REACH Regulation revision and the EU Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability, introducing criteria for endocrine disruptor substitution and PFAS phase-out pathways.

Technical Screening Criteria Summary

Chemical substitution activities must replace SVHCs listed under REACH Annex XIV or substances restricted under Annex XVII with safer alternatives that demonstrate equivalent functionality and lower hazard profiles through comparative risk assessment. Green chemistry manufacturing must demonstrate reduction or elimination of at least one hazardous substance category (carcinogenic, mutagenic, reprotoxic, persistent bioaccumulative toxic, endocrine disrupting) while maintaining product performance. PFAS substitution must provide alternatives for at least one PFAS application with demonstrated equivalent performance. Chemical management services must implement systematic substitution planning following the OECD Substitution Toolbox methodology. Site remediation must achieve contaminant levels that restore environmental function and comply with soil and groundwater quality standards.

Do No Significant Harm (DNSH)

Chemical safety activities must not harm mitigation (substitute chemicals must not have higher lifecycle GHG emissions than the substances they replace), adaptation (chemical management must account for climate-related release risks), water (alternatives must not increase water pollution risk; wastewater from chemical production must meet discharge standards), circular economy (substitute materials must be recyclable and compatible with circular material flows), and biodiversity (no testing on endangered species; substitutes must not pose ecotoxicological risks exceeding those of replaced substances).

LATAM Relevance

Chemical safety is increasingly relevant for LATAM as the region's agricultural and manufacturing sectors face growing scrutiny from EU chemical regulations. The EU's PFAS restriction proposal and REACH revision create compliance requirements for LATAM chemical manufacturers and users exporting to Europe. Colombia's agricultural sector — heavily reliant on agrochemicals for export crops — faces particular exposure to EU maximum residue level (MRL) requirements and pesticide bans that drive taxonomy-aligned chemical substitution.

Colombia Green Finance Taxonomy Alignment

The TVC does not explicitly address chemical safety or substitution as a standalone category, representing a notable gap. Colombia's chemical management is governed by the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) commitments and national regulations (Decree 1076 of 2015), but these lack the EU's systematic substitution framework. The growing alignment between Colombian agricultural exports and EU chemical standards (particularly MRLs for pesticides) creates an indirect pathway for future TVC updates in this area.

Cleantech Taxonomy Crosswalk

Maps to Cleantech Taxonomy sector XS (Cross-Sectoral) — node XS-CHM (chemical safety), and IN (Industry) — node IN-CHM (chemicals manufacturing). Cross-references with AF (AFOLU) for agrochemical substitution, WW (Water) for chemical contamination of water resources, and IC (ICT) for chemical tracking and transparency digital systems.

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