

Defining Sustainable Chemistry Project Background Information for External Engagement Feedback

Project rationale: Sustainable chemistry has been broadly defined to date, including its connection to other fields, such as green chemistry. With its incorporation into the European Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability (the concept of Safe and Sustainable by Design) and the US Sustainable Chemistry R&D Act, as well as increasing demands for sustainable chemistry from investors and the marketplace, there is a pressing need to develop a clear and concise definition and actionable criteria. This project's efforts aim to develop a definition and criteria such that it could be adopted by the US Office of Science and Technology Policy, as they are currently tasked to develop these elements from the R&D Act.

Project progress to date: The 20-person Expert Committee on Sustainable Chemistry (ECOSChem) was formed in Spring 2022 and includes representatives from industry, academia, governmental and non-governmental organizations. The charge of ECOSChem is to establish an ambitious, actionable definition and criteria for sustainable chemistry that can enable effective government policy, inform business and investor decision making, enhance chemistry education, and spur the adoption across all supply chains of chemicals that are safer and more sustainable. ECOSChem deliberations are informed by key government and non-governmental efforts on the topic to date. Since ECOSChem was formed, four large group meetings and several smaller subcommittee meetings have shaped a draft definition and criteria that are now ready for feedback from interested parties. The primary outcome of this project is a published statement (anticipated in 2023) that outlines a usable definition and associated criteria that can catalyze future progress and actions.

Project support: The ECOSChem process is facilitated and supported by Beyond Benign and the Lowell Center for Sustainable Production (LCSP) at the University of Massachusetts Lowell. The initiative is funded by the New York Community Trust and other philanthropic funders.

External engagement to date: The Lowell Center for Sustainable Production at the University of Massachusetts Lowell and Beyond Benign hosted two external engagement meetings on November 1 and 3. At these meetings, the Project Team introduced the project and the draft definition and criteria and then participants moved into sector breakout groups for discussion that were facilitated by the Project Team, with the support of ECOSChem members. *Note: the definition and criteria will be accompanied by a preamble, however, this was not ready to be shared for these meetings.*

Timeline:

- November 23 – Deadline for submission of external feedback
- December 15 – Finalization of preamble, definition, and criteria