EU GLOBAL THREATS PROGRAMME

PROJECT 097

IMPROVEMENT OF CHEMICAL SAFETY AND SECURITY IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND GCC

SEPTEMBER 2026

CONTEXT

The misuse of **toxic chemicals and chemical terrorism** pose a significant threat to international peace and security, particularly in the **Middle East**, where the use of industrial chemicals as chemical weapons and as tools of terror in other countries, including Iraq, were confirmed. These developments pose a critical challenge to the international community and security and the development of the region. The explosion at the port of Beirut in 2020 highlighted the danger of unauthorised and poorly-managed storage and use of hazardous chemicals. The accident involving a chlorine gas container explosion at the port of Aqaba in 2022 further underscores these risks. **GCC countries** have also identified chemical safety and security as key pioritiy in their region and seek to enhance the legal framework and governance of major hazardous facilities as well as the management of hazardous materials to protect people, environment, and the economy.

€ 3 000 000

IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS
SCK CEN: Studiecentrum voor Kernenergie (Belgian Nuclear Research Centre), in partnership with: Instytut Przemysłu Organicznego (Lukasiewicz –Industrial Chemistry Institute) RSS: Royal Scientific Society, Jordan

5 years
From December 2022 to November 2027

COUNTRIES COVERED
Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and UAE, and partially Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia

Whereas **Iraq**, **Jordan, Lebanon** as well as the **six GCC Countries** differ in terms of implementation of relevant legislation and its enforcement, they share a common need for improvement of both their legislation and the verification of its correct implementation.

OVERALL OBJECTIVE

The overall objective of this project is to **improve chemical safety and security** in the Partner Countries in the Middle East, perform similar activities in the UAE as the pilot country of the GCC, while inviting all other GCC countries to all activities that can be organised at the regional level.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- **Perform a gap analysis and develop proposals for recommended adaptations** of the legal frameworks providing a legal basis for inspection and enforcement activities.
- **Identify chemical facilities** of concern followed by risk assessment and a comprehensive national risk management programme.
- **Develop a database of relevant industrial sites**, the chemicals on-site and other safety related information for risk governance and inspection purposes.
- **Increase the capacities** for chemical accident risk governance.
- **Train competent authorities** to conduct inspections and establish appropriate control mechanisms.

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- **Establish sustainable competence building mechanisms** via a solid competence building hub based in the MIE and GCC regions.

CONCRETE ACTIVITIES

- Sharing of international best practices for chemical safety supporting a comprehensive national risk management programme
- Mapping of chemical facilities and supporting the development of a chemical inventory database
- Development, presentation and practical application of a risk assessment and risk management methodology
- Support to procurement of equipment for Iraqi inspectors
- Training of inspectors via theoretical courses, tabletop exercises, site visits, and train-the-trainer events
- Capacity-building on disposal and neutralization of chemicals

EXPECTED RESULTS

Sustainable capacity in the Partner Countries regarding chemical risk management, chemical inspection capabilities, disposal and neutralisation of chemicals, thus contributing to the overall chemical safety and security:

- National chemical risk management programmes in the Partner Countries based on best international practices developed.
- Capacities of the national authorities to manage chemical safety and security issues increased.
- Recommendations for establishing national database using international best practice able to fulfil the requirements of an inventory of chemical facilities in each Partner Country developed.
- A risk assessment and risk management methodology for hazardous chemicals developed and practically applied in the Partner Countries.
- Storage of hazardous chemicals in Partners Countries improved.
- Capabilities of inspectors in performing detection activities enhanced.
- Concepts, procedures and guidelines for safe disposal and neutralisation of chemicals elaborated.

CURRENT ACHIEVEMENTS

- Gap analysis on existing legal and institutional framework for chemical safety and security in the 3 MIE countries finalised and recommendations to strenghten regulatory basis in the 3 MIE countries delivered.
- Drafting of proposed regulatory changes finalised in Lebanon (2025) and initiated in Jordan. Changes to the regulatory framework in Lebanon are underway based on the delivered drafts.
- Regional seminar on existing regulatory frameworks for major hazard facilities, terminologies and practices on hazardous materials for the MIE accomplished end 2025.
- Regional seminars on tools and models for risk assessment, risk management of major hazard facilities, on storage of chemicals including best practices and tools, and on inspection based on OPCW best practices (2024-2025) delieverd.
- Tabletop exercises preparing mock inspections and industrial site visits in the MIE ongoing.
- Train-the-trainer event for inspectors finalised in Jordan, and ongoing in Lebanon and Iraq.
- Preparation of the format of a database for major hazard facilities in Iraq ongoing.

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