

The Critical Chemicals Alliance

WG1 – Critical molecules and Critical production sites

February 17th 2026

Welcome note by France & CEFIC – Mandate, organization and work flow

1. Introduction & coordination of the working group

The working group (WG) number 1 of the Critical Chemicals Alliance (CCA) is set to deal with **“Critical molecules and critical production sites” within the European chemical industry**. This WG is **pivotal to the work of the Alliance** and to the proper implementation of the European Chemical Industry Action Plan, as it will help consolidating a **common vision of the key value chains that need to be protected, fostered and perpetuated to ensure Europe’s strategic autonomy and resilience**.

This introductory note is intended towards all members of the extended WG 1 of the CCA, and aims at providing a view on the mandate, organization principles and work flow of the working group.

This working group is **chaired by France**. The French national authority involved is the Directorate General for Enterprise, from the Ministry of Economy, Finances, and Industry. The chair should be contacted preferably via the following generic address: france-cca.dge@finances.gouv.fr. The working group is **co-chaired by CEFIC** (European Chemical Industry Council). The vice-chair should

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be preferably contacted through Willem Huisman, at: cca@cefic.be. The representatives from the French authorities and from CEFIC will be introduced during the first extended WG meeting.

France and CEFIC would like to **warmly welcome all the members of WG 1** and thank them for their involvement and dedication to this important task.

2. Mandate, deliverables and timelines

WG 1 carries the name “Critical molecules and critical production sites”. Following the General Assembly on January 13th and the first Steering Board meeting on February 5th, **the Commission (DG GROW) has set a clear mandate, deliverables and timelines for this working group:**

“This Working Group will provide support to identify chemical molecules and production sites that are key for the functioning of Europe’s economy and its strategic objectives. To this end, the Group will develop an EU-wide methodology and carry out a mapping exercise of such molecules and sites.”

WG 1 is thus dedicated to providing support on **identifying critical chemical molecules and production sites** that are key for the EU economy and its strategic objectives. To this end, the Group will develop **EU-wide criteria and a unified methodology to assess the critical character of a given molecule or site**. The group will thoroughly review existing methodologies produced by several key players amidst the EU chemical industry, and converge towards a methodological consensus. This methodology will then be tested by carrying out a tentative and non-restrictive mapping exercise of such molecules at the Union level, and **defining a common ground of what is critical to the entire European industry**. Each Member State will then be able to adapt and transpose the methodology to its local industry, resulting in the **identification of additional critical molecules and key production sites at a national level**.

Based on the agreed methodology and criteria, the working group will **ultimately develop recommendations on how the critical molecule productions capacities in Europe could be supported, protected, or promoted** through existing or, where necessary, new instruments. These outputs will therefore be shared with the other working groups, e.g., those addressing trade or modernization and investments.

The three main deliverables for WG 1 are detailed hereafter:

Deliverables	Timeline
A methodology, or set of methodologies, for assessing criticality for both molecules and sites.	[APRIL 2026]
A set of ~10 EU-wide criteria to identify critical and strategic molecules and sites.	[APRIL 2026]
Recommendations for a matrix of critical and strategic molecules and sites across the Union, applying the agreed methodology.	[JUNE 2026]

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The suggested timeline (see table above) is quite tight (first deliverables by April), which will require intense work and close collaboration of the members. However, considering the importance and the sensitivity of the WG1 mandate, the high quality of the final deliverables should be ensured.

3. Structure of the working group:

The initial intent of DG GROW was to have 15-20 members per working group. However, due to a very high interest, all the working groups are oversubscribed. WG 1 in particular has received applications from 100+ organizations (individual companies, trade associations, national or regional public bodies, universities, etc). Therefore, it has been decided to **welcome all candidates into the extended working group**.

However, given the tight timelines and needed agility to produce the expected deliverables on time, it was agreed during the first meeting of chairs and vice-chairs of CCA, and later validated by the first Steering Board meeting, to create **core groups of maximum 20 participants within each WG**.

Core group members are expected to show a significantly higher commitment in time, with nearly weekly meetings and first-hand participation to producing the key output documents for the WG.

For WG 1, that core group was chosen from the 59 organisations that answered positively on the related poll from DG GROW. **This selection aims at maximizing the diversity among the core group members**. The **resulting list of 20 core members was endorsed by DG GROW** (see attachment: list of core group members).

The selection of core members for WG 1 was conducted through a structured and balanced approach to ensure broad and representative participation. As 50% of the applicants to the extended WG were individual companies, it was considered essential that companies also represent 50% of the core group. Particular attention was given to achieving diversity across several dimensions:

- i. Different branches of chemistry were taken into account in order to ensure appropriate representation of the various segments of the European chemical industry;
- ii. In addition, companies of different sizes were included to reflect the structural diversity of the sector;
- iii. A balanced geographical distribution was also ensured, maintaining a fair equilibrium among Member States.

Overall, the final composition constitutes a balanced group that represents, as accurately as possible, the diversity and breadth of the European chemical industry.

A word of reassurance to all the working group members: the sole focus of the work that will be carried out by the core group is to study thoroughly, synthesize, merge, complete and unify the existing methodological proposals into one commonly approved methodology. There is no room for defending individual interests, and hence **it should come as obvious that missing out on the core group cannot be - and will not be - detrimental to the identification of a given molecule as critical**.

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4. Meetings, communication, data sharing:

All the meetings of the WG will be held virtually. Email will be used to communicate with the entire group. The Commission will provide a digital safe space for the Alliance – CIRCABC. A Share Point will also be installed for the core group, where working documents can be shared. **Participants will not be authorized** to use any audio, video, transcription, or AI tools **to record** virtual meetings.

As most of the discussion items will touch sensitive topics, participants will also have to be collectively vigilant to **stay in full compliance with EU competition law**. Therefore, discussions should not be held on processes, production plans of individual companies, transportation rates, or market procedures. The chair & vice-chair will be available to mediate communication if needed.

5. Working plan and meeting agenda:

The core group will meet on a weekly basis by default, unless specified otherwise (meetings could be set closer or further apart depending on the work time necessary between each milestone). The extended WG will gather every 4 to 6 weeks, assessing the progress and findings of the core group.

The first kick-off meeting of the extended WG will take place on February 19th 2026 at 3 pm. A Webex online connection has in principle been shared by DG Grow to all participants.

This first meeting will be the opportunity to present briefly the mandate, working methods, as well as detail the methodology behind the composition of the core group. It will provide a clear outline of the tentative agenda drafted by the chair and vice-chair, positioning the different milestones in time and suggesting appropriate frequencies for core and extended working group meetings.

In a nutshell, **following this kick-off meeting with the extended group, three consecutive core group meetings will be held very close in time, by the end of February.** Each of these meetings will be the opportunity to present one of the three currently proposed methodologies to define critical molecules and sites (by Advancy/France Chimie, by Chemelot, and by PwC/CEFIC). For each meeting, the authors or relevant entities will be invited on an *ad hoc* basis to present their methodology and answer questions. After these presentations, one full week will be allocated for core members to work individually on identifying the strengths and weaknesses of each methodology, followed by another week to consolidate the work, under the supervision of the chair and vice-chair. **Once finalized, this analysis will be presented for debate, feedback and input to the extended group (around mid-March).** The core group will operate in full transparency and collaboration with all the members of the working group. The same process will be applied to each deliverable of the project (e.g., defining criteria and constructing the matrix), with iterative meetings of the core group before a wider presentation.

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Attachment:

List of core group members

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