



Chemical Persistence - Why Biodegradability is Taking Centre-Stage in the Global Policy Landscape

**Chesney Swansborough, Environmental Chemist/Ecotoxicologist
Ricardo**

Presenter biography

Chesney, an Environmental Chemist and Ecotoxicologist at Ricardo, specialises in assessing environmental hazards and risks posed by chemicals. Her focus is on understanding chemical persistence and ecotoxicological impacts across mediums like water, soil, and sludge. With a Chemistry degree and a Master's in Environmental Geochemistry, Chesney possesses expertise in environmental fate processes and ecotoxicology, crucial for risk assessment and regulatory frameworks.

Chesney's diverse laboratory background covers environmental fate, ecotoxicology, and physico-chemical properties, aligned with OECD testing guidelines. She also has extensive experience in collating, interpreting, and communicating evidence on the potential environmental impacts of chemicals.



Presentation abstract

There is growing societal concern about persistent chemicals. These are substances that are slow to degrade in the environment, leading to greater exposure of people and organisms, and accumulation that may be difficult to reverse. This issue has been highlighted by flagship issues such as plastic pollution and contamination of drinking water by per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) and is translating into significant developments both in terms of policy and the market. But what does this issue mean for chemical businesses, what regulatory developments can be anticipated and how should these be responded to?

This session will explore the topic of persistence from a regulatory perspective, including how chemicals are assessed, current implications and how the policy landscape is evolving. We will pay particular focus to Europe, where the Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability is introducing major policy changes such as a restriction on all non-essential uses of PFAS and the introduction of a new hazard class for persistent, mobile, and toxic (PMT/vPvM) substances. We will also cover how companies are already responding to these growing concerns. Finally, we will discuss what this all means for organisations placing products on the market, and how they can prepare.