



Ministerie van Infrastructuur
en Waterstaat

Safe and Sustainable by Design: from Momentum to Impact

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SSbD: basic approach



Regulation is essential—but
not always sufficient



SSbD as a voluntary
approach



It should support
companies decision making
and SSbD strategy

Where are we in the Netherlands?

- › National SSbD hub (March 2 2026)
- › Collaboration: RIVM, Industry, Ministries, TNO
- › **Focus:**
- › Practical support individual companies
- › Sectoral blueprints
- › Policy support (a.o. transition stress test)





National initiatives in Europe: differences in scope

- › Local networks
- › Understanding national culture
- › Embedded in national industry agendas and innovation agendas
- › Based in Science, Technological Knowledge Centers, government
- › Guide to information and practical help
- › Innovation support in the value chain





Connecting Efforts across Europe

- › Many initiatives (IRISS, SPINE, national hubs)
- › Limited structured connection
- › Need for a European layer:
 - Knowledge exchange
 - Alignment of approaches
 - Scaling best practices
 - Connecting expertise



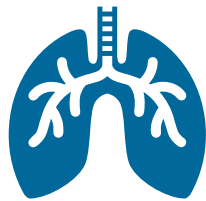
Way Forward: what could we do?



Combine

National hubs →
implementation

European hub →
coordination



Conditions

Long-term commitment
Structural funding



Focus

Advanced materials
PFAS substitution
(complex uses)



Conclusion

- > Especially for complex cases such as PFAS in technical applications, where substitution is not straightforward...
- > Support regulators and companies in dealing with complex uses by providing better insight into feasible alternatives and timelines for substitution.
- > Don't drown in data but focus on the real changes we want to make

What are the potential benefits for companies of 'Safe and Sustainable by Design'?

- Working in a socially responsible manner and anticipating regulation matters, makes companies future-proof.
- Companies have a good reputation and are appealing to partners, investors, employees and consumers.
- SSbD encourages companies to innovate, which provides them with a competitive advantage.
- Companies discover potential safety risks early, enabling them to adjust their innovation process.
- Companies reduce the risk of becoming liable in the future for harm to human health and the environment.
- Value chain partners develop a common language and work method that facilitates cooperation.

What are the potential drawbacks for companies of 'Safe and Sustainable by Design'?

- It takes time to build up the necessary knowledge, skills and collaboration in the value chain.
- Not all companies have the capacity and resources to invest in SSbD.
- To work in accordance with the SSbD principles and achieve long-lasting results, a culture change is necessary.
- SSbD may require the modification of production processes and chemical installations.
- Responsibly developed chemicals and materials may be more expensive.
- Not all companies will be successful in developing safer, more sustainable alternatives with the same functionality.