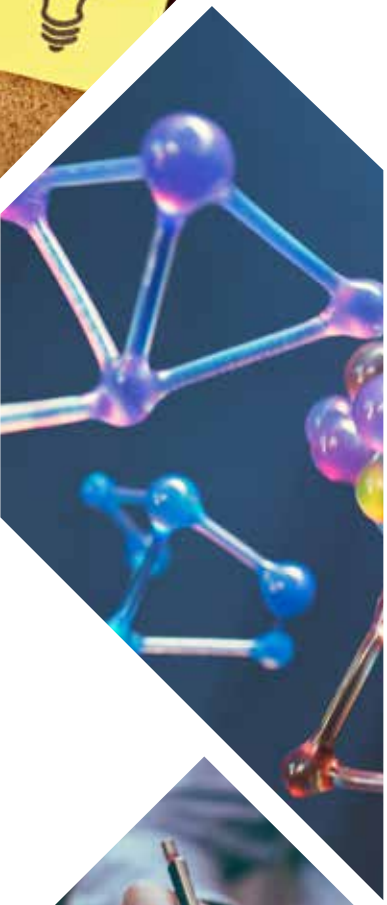
UN environment programme

Intergovernmental Science-Policy Panel on Chemicals, Waste and Pollution (ISP-CWP)











Foundational document of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Panel on Chemicals, Waste and Pollution

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*Annexed to Decision IM/1, adopted by the intergovernmental meeting to consider the establishment of a science-policy panel to contribute further to the sound management of chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution held on 20 June 2025 in Punta del Este, Uruguay**

I. [Scope, objective and functions of the Panel]

1. The objective of the Panel is to strengthen the science-policy interface to contribute to the sound management of chemicals and waste and pollution prevention [for the protection of human health and the environment], [without being policy prescriptive] with the following functions:

   (a) Undertaking "horizon scanning" to identify issues of relevance to policymakers and, where possible, proposing evidence-based options to address them;
   (b) Conducting assessments of current issues and identifying potential evidence-based options to address, where possible, those issues, in particular those relevant to developing countries;
   (c) Providing up-to-date and relevant information, identifying key gaps in scientific research, encouraging and supporting communication between scientists and policymakers, explaining and disseminating findings for different audiences, and raising public awareness;
   (d) Facilitating information-sharing with countries, in particular developing countries seeking relevant scientific information;
   (e) Integrating capacity-building into all functions and the work of the panel to strengthen the science-policy interface. Such capacity-building activities should enhance individual capacities of scientists, policymakers and other relevant stakeholders and thereby institutional capacities, particularly in developing countries,

* See the report of the intergovernmental meeting to establish a science-policy panel to contribute further to the sound management of chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution (UNEP/SPP-CWP/IM/5).

guided by the capacity-building priorities, identified by governments and other stakeholders, related to the Panel's functions and work, by encouraging access to different forms of knowledge, data, and best practices, and enabling the dissemination and encouraging the utilization of the deliverables of the Panel at international, (sub)regional and national levels. In so doing the Panel will ensure effective, geographically balanced [and gender balanced] [and gender-responsive] [and inclusive] participation and avoid duplication of work[1].

II. Operating principles and approaches of the Panel

2. In carrying out its work, the Panel will be guided by the following operating principles and approaches:

(a) Being scientifically independent, and ensuring credibility and legitimacy including through peer review of its work.
(b) Upholding consensus in its decision-making processes.
(c) Respecting independence of science, while ensuring differing scientific views are adequately reflected by the Panel.
(d) Ensuring impartiality and transparency.
(e) Taking an interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approach that incorporates a broad range of relevant disciplines and sources, including appropriate sectoral, scientific, technical, and socioeconomic expertise, and taking into account as appropriate, relevant forms of knowledge, including Indigenous knowledge and local knowledge.
(f) Recognizing the technical knowledge and experience of workers, including informal workers, involved in the management of chemicals and waste, and the importance of promoting a safe and healthy work environment.
(g) Having geographical, regional, [and gender balance] [as well as balance between men and women] and promoting inclusivity of participation, and considering linguistic diversity, in all relevant aspects of its work.

[1] A proposal was made to replace the term gender with men and women.

(h) Integrating [gender equality and equity] [equality between men and women] in all relevant aspects of its work.
(i) Producing deliverables that are policy relevant without being policy prescriptive, and, scientifically robust, unbiased and accessible.
(j) Avoiding overlap and duplication of work, and promoting coordination and cooperation, as appropriate, with relevant multilateral environmental agreements, recognizing their independent and autonomous nature, and with other relevant international instruments and intergovernmental bodies.
(k) Having the flexibility to respond to members' needs, in particular needs of developing countries.
(l) Integrating capacity-building into all relevant aspects of its work.

III. Institutional arrangements for the Panel

A. Governing and Decision-making body of the Panel

3. The Plenary is the governing and decision-making body of the Panel.

1. Membership

4. Membership of the Plenary is open to States Members of the United Nations and United Nations non-member observer states having expressed their intent to be a member of the Panel.

2. Participation of observers

5. The Plenary is open to participation as observers to any State not a member of the Panel.

6. The Plenary is open to participation as observers to any United Nations entity, as well as any other body, organization or agency, whether national or international, governmental, intergovernmental or non-governmental, Indigenous Peoples [,][and] local communities, and groups in vulnerable situations, qualified in matters covered by the Panel, and which has informed the Secretariat of the Panel of its wish to be represented, subject to the rules of procedure and subject to the following provisions:

(a) Bodies, organizations and agencies that already have observer status with any United Nations system entity, consultative status with ECOSOC, or are accredited to the United Nations Environment Assembly or to any relevant multilateral environmental agreement with broad participation are considered observers of the Panel if they so request, unless at least one third of the Plenary members object;
(b) The Plenary will decide on the observer status of other observer candidates not covered by the provisions of paragraph 6(a) subject to non-objection from the members of the Plenary, as set out in relevant procedural documents[2].

7. The Plenary is open to participation by regional economic integration organizations as observers. The European Union is allowed enhanced participation in sessions of the Plenary, including the right to speak in turn; the right of reply; the right to introduce proposals; the right to provide views; and the ability to support the implementation of the work programme of the Panel through financial support, among other means. These rights do not grant the ability to be elected to the Bureau of the Panel.[3]

3. Functions

8. The functions of the Plenary include:

(a) Adopting the Panel's work programme to deliver on each of its functions;
(b) Responding to submissions and requests for the work programme from governments, including through the governing bodies of relevant United Nations entities, relevant multilateral agreements, other international instruments and intergovernmental bodies by following procedures and processes set out in relevant documents[4];
(c) Collecting, as appropriate, views from relevant stakeholders by following procedures and processes set out in relevant documents[5];

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2 Documents outlining the procedures and processes will be considered and adopted following the establishment of the Panel
3 This provision applies on an interim basis. The Panel will decide by consensus on a resolution on the status of Regional Economic Integration Organizations in the Panel
4 See footnote 2
5 See footnote 2

(d) Fostering active and efficient participation of civil society organizations as observers in the Plenary;
(e) Electing the Bureau, the members of the Interdisciplinary Expert Committee and other subsidiary bodies, in accordance with the rules of procedure;
(f) Establishing subsidiary bodies, in accordance with the rules of procedure.
(g) Accepting, adopting or approving scoping documents and deliverables, in line with procedures and processes set out in relevant documents[6].
(h) Approving a budget and overseeing the allocation of the Trust Fund.
(i) Deciding on the periodic, independent and external review and evaluation process of the Panel's efficiency and effectiveness and the associated terms of reference;
(j) Assuring scientific and technical coordination among the bodies set up under the Panel and facilitating communication between the Panel and other relevant science policy bodies, international organizations, international instruments and relevant multilateral environmental agreements in order to build upon existing efforts and avoid overlap and duplication of work.
(k) Adopting the rules of procedure by consensus.
(l) Amending the rules of procedure as provided for in the rules of procedure[7].

6 See footnote 2
7 Decision IM/2 on recommendations for consideration by the Plenary of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Panel on Chemicals, Waste and Pollution at its first session, Annex I, Rule 49, without prejudice to the future legal status of this document. This note is provided to explain this provision of the foundational document.

B. Bureau

9. A Bureau is established.

1. Membership

10. The Bureau will be comprised of two members from each of the five United Nations regional groups and elected by the Plenary, including one chair and nine vice chairs, one of whom acts as rapporteur, as provided for in the rules of procedure.

11. Members of the bureau are selected for their expertise relevant to the functions of the bureau.

2. Functions

12. The functions of the Bureau include, but are not limited to:

    (a) Advising the Chair and the secretariat on the preparation and conduct of business of the Plenary and its subsidiary bodies;
    (b) Monitoring the observance of the Panel's procedures and processes set out in relevant documents[8];
    (c) Supporting the Panel's work during the intersessional period;
    (d) Monitoring progress in the implementation of decisions of the Plenary, if so directed by the Plenary;
    (e) Overseeing efforts related to communication between the Panel and other relevant science policy bodies, international organizations, international instruments and relevant multilateral environmental agreements in order to build upon existing efforts and avoid overlap and duplication of work.

[8] See footnote 2.

C. Subsidiary bodies

1. Interdisciplinary Expert Committee

13. An Interdisciplinary Expert Committee is established.

2. Membership of the Interdisciplinary Expert Committee

14. The Interdisciplinary Expert Committee will be comprised of experts from each of the five United Nations regional groups, with due regard to equitable geographical representation.

15. Members of the Interdisciplinary Expert Committee are nominated by regions and elected by the Plenary, taking into account the need to ensure the committee is interdisciplinary and inclusive.

16. Interdisciplinary Expert Committee members are selected for their expertise, including but not limited to scientific, socioeconomic, and technical expertise, and knowledge of the main elements of the work of the Panel.

17. The chair of the Interdisciplinary Expert Committee may invite the Bureau members to participate as observers to a meeting of the Committee. The chair of the Interdisciplinary Expert Committee may invite representatives of the IPCC and IPBES to participate as observers to a meeting of Committee. The invitation of the chair of the Interdisciplinary Expert Committee is subject to the rules of procedure, noting that the Plenary is to be informed.

18. The Plenary may further decide on the procedures for which the chair of the Interdisciplinary Expert Committee may invite members of the Panel and observers of the Panel to participate as observers to a meeting of the Committee, noting that the Plenary is to be informed.

3. Functions of the Interdisciplinary Expert Committee

19. The functions of the Interdisciplinary Expert Committee include, but are not limited to:

    (a) Providing advice to the Plenary and the Bureau on, and coordinating the delivery of, scientific and technical and capacity building aspects of the Panel's programme of work;
    (b) Providing advice and assistance on technical and/or scientific communication matters to the Panel;
    (c) Developing a transparent peer review process to ensure the highest levels of scientific quality, independence, inclusivity, integrity, and credibility for the Panel's deliverables following procedures and processes set out in relevant documents[9];
    (d) In consultation with the Bureau, advising on the process for defining the scope of deliverables;
    (e) Selecting experts for Panel activities as agreed in the Work Programme taking into account, inter alia, the need for relevant expertise [gender balance[10]] and effective contribution and participation by experts from developing countries;
    (f) Reporting on its work to the Plenary.

4. Other subsidiary bodies

20. The Plenary may establish other subsidiary bodies under the Panel, in line with the rules of procedure, such as a body focused on policy matters.

[9] Documents outlining the procedures and processes will be considered and adopted following the establishment of the Panel.

[10] A proposal was made to replace the term gender with men and women.

D. Secretariat

21. The Panel will be supported by a Secretariat with the following functions:

    (a) Organizing meetings and providing support on organisational, communication, and administrative activities, and technical services, of the Panel, including the preparation of documents and reports to the Plenary;
    (b) Supporting members of the Plenary, Bureau, Interdisciplinary Expert Committee and other subsidiary bodies, to undertake their respective functions;
    (c) Facilitating communication among any other bodies that might be established by the Panel;
    (d) Facilitating communication amongst members of the Panel and with relevant stakeholders;
    (e) Disseminating the Panel's deliverables;
    (f) Supporting the Panel in outreach activities and in the production of relevant communication materials;
    (g) Preparing the Panel's draft budget for submission to the Plenary, and preparing financial reports;
    (h) Managing the Trust Fund, as guided by the Plenary;
    (i) Mobilizing financial resources;
    (j) Assisting in the facilitation of monitoring and evaluation of the Panel's work;
    (k) In consultation with the Bureau, proposing potential partnerships to the Plenary;
    (l) Under direction of the Plenary, supporting the implementation of any partnerships;
    (m) Carrying out any other functions assigned to it by the Plenary.

22. The panel at its first plenary session will secure secretariat services provided by UNEP. The secretariat would be hosted in a single location based on proposals by members.

E. Financial Arrangements

23. A Trust Fund will be established at the request of Plenary to:

    (a) be allocated by Plenary in an open and transparent manner;
    (b) collect voluntary contributions to support the work of the Panel;
    (c) be governed by financial rules and procedures adopted by the Plenary.

24. The contributions to the Trust Fund:

    (a) will come without conditionalities;
    (b) will not orient the work of the Panel;
    (c) cannot be earmarked for specific activities, unless otherwise decided by the Plenary.

25. At its first session, the Plenary will decide on the financial procedures, including details on the modalities related to 24(c).

F. Partnerships

26. At its first session, the Plenary will request the Secretariat to develop a proposal on establishing different types of partnerships to be considered by the Panel.

IV. Evaluation of the effectiveness of the panel

27. The Panel's efficiency and effectiveness will be independently and externally reviewed and evaluated on a periodic basis, based on the Terms of Reference as decided by the Plenary.



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Learn more:

isp-cwp@un.org

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