

Western Europe and Others Group Regional Briefing of the second session of the Ad hoc open-ended working group on a science-policy panel to contribute further to the sound management of chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution

8 and 9 November 2023

13:00 – 16:00 (CET)

Online meeting

Draft institutional arrangements and rules of procedure for sessions of the plenary

Note by the secretariat

The annex to the present note contains the draft institutional arrangements and rules of procedure for sessions of the plenary. The ad hoc open-ended working group for the science-policy panel to contribute further to the sound management of chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution. The annex is an advance edited version.

Draft institutional arrangements and rules of procedure for sessions of the plenary

Note by the secretariat

I. Introduction

1. At its resumed fifth session, held in Nairobi from 28 February to 2 March 2022, the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) decided, by its resolution 5/8, to establish a science-policy panel to contribute further to the sound management of chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution, with details to be further specified according to the resolution.
2. By the same resolution, the Environment Assembly decided to convene an ad hoc open-ended working group that would prepare proposals for the science-policy panel to consider a number of issues, including the institutional design and governance of the panel (para. 5 (a)), arrangements for secretariat support for the panel (para. 5 (h)), options for voluntary financing of the work of the panel (para. 5 (i)) and the rules of procedure governing the work of the panel (para. 5 (j)).
3. Section II of the present document contains a discussion of key design features and a presentation of proposals for the panel's institutional arrangements. Section III contains a table of contents as a starting point for elaborating the rules of procedure for sessions of the plenary. The present document is complemented by information document [UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.2/INF/4](#).

II. Institutional arrangements

4. **Institutional arrangements set out the architecture required for the panel to operate and deliver on its functions.** Five examples of science-policy interfaces (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, International Resource Panel and Global Environment Outlook process, and the assessment panels of the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer), were reviewed for organizational features. Institutional arrangements often encompassed financial arrangements and, in addition, each of those that were reviewed had:

- (a) A decision-making body;
- (b) One or more bodies providing administrative and scientific oversight;
- (c) Other bodies undertaking or supporting the science-policy interface's work;
- (d) A secretariat.

5. **Institutional arrangements are discussed in terms of composition, modalities of work and functions.¹**

(a) **Composition.** Composition represents a focus on who is engaged in the body or arrangement. The options put forward below focus on meeting the need, set out in Environment Assembly resolution 5/8, paragraph 6 (b), to ensure that the panel “is interdisciplinary, ensuring contributions from experts with a broad range of

¹ That three-pronged approach is in line with Sheila Jasanoff, “Judgment under siege: the three-body problem of expert legitimacy”, in *Democratization of Expertise? Exploring Novel Forms of Scientific Advice in Political Decision-making*, Sabine Maasen and Peter Weingart, eds. (pp. 209–224), (Netherlands, Dordrecht: Springer, 2005).

disciplinary expertise; has inclusive participation, including Indigenous Peoples; and has geographical, regional and gender balance”;

(b) **Modalities of work.** Modalities of work encompass considerations of how the body or arrangement undertakes its work. The options put forward below focus on meeting the need, set out in Environment Assembly resolution 5/8, paragraphs 6 (c), (f) and (h), to ensure that the panel “has procedures that seek to ensure that the work of the panel is transparent and impartial and that it can produce reports and assessments that are credible and scientifically robust”; “has the ability to address potential conflicts of interest and safeguard commercially sensitive information”; and “is cost-effective, with the leanest structure consistent with achieving the highest impact”;

(c) **Functions.** These address what the body or arrangement will deliver. The options put forward below focus on meeting the need, set out in paragraphs 6 (d), (e) and (g) of the resolution, to ensure that the panel “undertakes work that is complementary to and does not duplicate the work of the relevant multilateral agreements, other international instruments and intergovernmental bodies, including those that are members of the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals”; “coordinates, as appropriate, with other science-policy bodies such as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services”; and “has the flexibility to respond, to the extent possible, to the needs identified by stakeholders and agreed to by its member Governments, and to fulfil its principal functions”.

A. Decision-making body

6. **A science-policy interface’s decision-making body typically reflects the membership of the interface.** The Environment Assembly decided in paragraph 3 of its resolution 5/8 that “the panel should be an independent intergovernmental body with a programme of work approved by its member Governments to deliver policy-relevant scientific evidence without being policy prescriptive”. Features of the decision-making body also help to ensure, in accordance with Environment Assembly resolution 5/8, paragraph 6 (a)–(e), the following:

(a) Ability to deliver outputs that are policy relevant without being policy prescriptive;

(b) Interdisciplinarity, ensuring contributions from experts with a broad range of disciplinary expertise; inclusive participation, including Indigenous Peoples; and geographical, regional and gender balance;

(c) Procedures that seek to ensure that the work of the panel is transparent and impartial and that it can produce reports and assessments that are credible and scientifically robust;

(d) That its work is complementary to and does not duplicate the work of the relevant multilateral agreements, other international instruments and intergovernmental bodies, including those that are members of the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals;

(e) That it coordinates, as appropriate, with other science-policy bodies, such as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services.

7. Table 1 in the annex to the present document provides a summary of key features of the decision-making bodies of the science-policy interfaces reviewed. The greatest variation in decision-making bodies relates to whether the decision-making body is

made up of member government representatives or experts serving in their personal capacity.

8. Key considerations for the composition of the decision-making body of the panel. The decision-making body of the panel would be made up of representatives of States Members of the United Nations that are members of the panel. Stakeholders could participate in meetings of the decision-making body as observers.

9. Key considerations for the modalities of work of the decision-making body of the panel. Potential trade-offs between budgetary commitments and the pace and scale of the work the panel might undertake may determine the modalities. For example, limits on the frequency of meetings of the decision-making body might lead to delays between the completion of deliverables by a subsidiary body and its adoption or endorsement by the decision-making body. This concern might also apply to any interim steps in preparing deliverables. This, however, has generally been overcome through the delegation of oversight to the bodies described in section B. The provision of simultaneous interpretation at meetings provides another illustration of potential trade-offs. The cost of interpretation at meetings can be significant but its availability can greatly improve the transparency of the process and the legitimacy of the panel. Modalities for observer participation in meetings of the decision-making body can also play a key role in the panel's ability to deliver outputs that are policy relevant without being policy prescriptive, and in the panel's inclusive participation and its coordination with existing intergovernmental bodies and science-policy interfaces.

10. Key considerations for the functions of the decision-making body of the panel. Common functions of the decision-making body include oversight of the secretariat and any other bodies established under the panel, and establishing the work programme and budget for the panel. In considering further functions, it is important to include any functions that are required to produce deliverables related to the functions of the panel. In so doing and with the aim of ensuring that the panel is "cost-effective, with the leanest structure consistent with achieving the highest impact" (Environment Assembly resolution 5/8, para. 6 (h)), the ad hoc open-ended working group may wish to consider whether some of those functions may be better undertaken by the panel's administrative and scientific oversight body or bodies.

Proposal for a way forward

11. The ad hoc open-ended working group may wish to propose designating the plenary as the decision-making body of the panel with the following key features:

- (a) Composition:
 - (i) Open to States Members of the United Nations that are members of the panel;
- (b) Modalities of work:
 - (i) Meets at least annually, or as often as required by the work programme approved by the plenary;
 - (ii) Interpretation in the six official languages of the United Nations available at meetings of the plenary;
 - (iii) Members of the panel take decisions on matters of substance by consensus, unless otherwise provided in its rules;
 - (iv) Meetings open to participation of States not members of the panel, United Nations bodies and other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations;

(v) Participation in the panel as observers by any State not a member of the panel, any United Nations body and any other body, organization or agency, whether national or international, governmental, intergovernmental or non-governmental, Indigenous Peoples and local communities qualified in matters covered by the panel, and which has informed the secretariat of the panel of its wish to be represented at sessions of the plenary, may participate in the panel as an observer, subject to the rules of procedure. Observers participate without the ability to cast votes or join or block consensus;

(vi) 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 vote or to be elected to the Bureau of the panel;

(c) Functions:

(i) Acting as the panel's decision-making body;

(ii) Responding to requests from Governments, including those transmitted by relevant multilateral environmental agreements as determined by their respective governing bodies;

(iii) Welcoming inputs and suggestions from, and the participation of, related United Nations bodies as determined by their respective governing bodies;

(iv) Encouraging and taking into account, as appropriate, inputs and suggestions made by relevant stakeholders, such as other intergovernmental organizations, international and regional scientific organizations, environmental trust funds, non-governmental organizations, Indigenous Peoples and local communities and the private sector;

(v) Ensuring the active and efficient participation of civil society in the plenary;

(vi) Selecting officers of the plenary, taking due account of the principle of geographical balance, based on criteria, a nomination process and length of service to be decided by the plenary;

(vii) Establishing subsidiary bodies as appropriate and selecting their members, taking due account of the principle of geographical balance, based on criteria, a nomination process and length of service to be decided by the plenary;

(viii) Approving a budget and overseeing the allocation of the financial arrangements;

(ix) Deciding on an evaluation process for independently reviewing the panel's efficiency and effectiveness periodically;

(x) Adopting a programme of work for the panel to deliver on each of the functions of the panel;

(xi) Setting up a transparent peer review process for the production of deliverables by the panel;

(xii) Deciding on a process for defining the scope of reports and for the adoption or approval of any deliverables produced by the panel (following agreement on the work programme);

(xiii) Adopting and amending rules of procedure and financial rules.

B. Bodies providing administrative and scientific oversight

12. **Most science policy interfaces have either combined or separated administrative and scientific oversight bodies.** They help to ensure, in accordance with Environment Assembly resolution 5/8, paragraphs 6 (a)–(c), the following:

(a) Ability to deliver outputs that are policy relevant without being policy prescriptive;

(b) Interdisciplinarity, ensuring contributions from experts with a broad range of disciplinary expertise; inclusive participation, including Indigenous Peoples; and geographical, regional and gender balance;

(c) Procedures that seek to ensure that the work of the panel is transparent and impartial and that it can produce reports and assessments that are credible and scientifically robust.

13. Table 2 in the annex to the present document provides a summary of the key features of the oversight bodies of the science-policy interfaces reviewed. The greatest variation in institutional arrangement relates to whether administrative and scientific oversight are undertaken by a single or separate bodies.

14. **Separating administrative and scientific oversight has advantages and disadvantages.** Maintaining administrative and scientific oversight in a single oversight body might facilitate coordination and coherence, especially when decisions on a scientific issue might have implications for administrative decisions. Separating out administrative and scientific oversight may allow for more targeted, and more manageable, responsibilities and greater flexibility by differentiating the composition and modalities of work of each body. Concerns over coordination can be addressed by providing for members of the administrative oversight body to observe meetings of the scientific oversight body.

15. **Key considerations for the composition of the body or bodies providing administrative and scientific oversight of the panel.** While relevant expertise is essential for members of both administrative and scientific oversight bodies, separate oversight bodies can allow for further differentiating the needs for expertise and the approach to the membership of each body. For example, an administrative oversight body might prioritize regional representation in its member selection process and composition, while the counterpart scientific oversight body might prioritize interdisciplinarity and inclusiveness. In the light of the Environment Assembly resolution 5/8 provision that the panel will be “an independent intergovernmental body”, an administrative oversight body might include two or three seats per region, while a scientific oversight body might opt to include five seats for each region and to allocate seats for specific intergovernmental organizations or stakeholder groups.² For example, under the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, the membership of the 25-person Science-Policy Interface includes five seats for observers with at least one each from a relevant civil society organization, a relevant international organization and a relevant United Nations organization.³ The Global Environment Outlook illustrates the opportunity to differentiate the specializations

² The number of regions can be determined in the context of establishing the panel but it may be most appropriate to align the number of regions for the panel with the number of regions of the organization hosting the secretariat or providing secretariat services for the panel (see sect. II.D of the present document).

³ See terms of reference of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification Science-Policy Interface, 2017, C: Composition (p. 2), available at https://www.unccd.int/sites/default/files/2022-02/SPI_Terms_of_Reference_110717_1.pdf.

sought from members of an administrative and scientific oversight body. For example, members of the Global Environment Outlook administrative oversight body should have “demonstrated previous experience with intergovernmental processes in relation to environmental policy and sustainable development” while members of the scientific oversight body should have “scientific, technical or policy expertise and knowledge of the main elements of the work” of the Global Environment Outlook process.⁴

16. Key considerations for the modalities of work of the body or bodies providing administrative and scientific oversight of the panel. It is common practice for science-policy interfaces to provide for the administrative and scientific oversight bodies to establish their own modalities of work once they have been established. Some general considerations can be included in the institutional arrangements for the panel, including provisions for online work when meeting outside of sessions of plenary and detailing the approach to who can participate in meetings. The approach to who can participate in meetings of the Bureau for the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management may present an instructional model for a scientific oversight body. Four representatives of non-governmental participants as well as the Chair of the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals participate in Bureau meetings. The four representatives of non-governmental participants are elected by and from non-governmental participants to represent each of the health, industry, trade union and public interest groups.⁵

17. Key considerations for the functions of the body or bodies providing administrative and scientific oversight of the panel. Many of the functions required of administrative and scientific oversight bodies are a reflection of a science-policy interface’s functions. In addition, some of the work processes and procedures that are put in place to prepare a science-policy interface’s deliverables may lead to additions to these functions over time and as processes are developed and refined.

Proposal for a way forward

18. The ad hoc open-ended working group may wish to consider:

(a) Establishing a Bureau to provide administrative oversight, with the following key features:

(i) Composition:

a. Two members from each of the regions of the institution provide secretariat services;

b. Members of the Bureau are nominated by regions and elected by plenary, keeping in mind the need for the Bureau’s membership to have geographical, regional and gender balance;

c. Members are selected for their subject matter expertise and demonstrated previous experience with relevant intergovernmental processes;

(ii) Modalities of work:

a. Bureau meets as necessary, including during sessions of the plenary;

b. Bureau meetings, especially intersessional meetings, should be convened online;

⁴ See UNEP, “Global Environment Outlook: intergovernmental and expert-led scientific assessment procedures”, sections 4.2 (d) and 4.3 (d) (pp. 7–8), for guidelines for the nomination and selection of Intergovernmental and Multi-stakeholder Advisory Group and on Multidisciplinary Expert Scientific Advisory Group members, respectively.

⁵ See Bureau of the Conference and the Working Group, available at <https://www.saicm.org/About/Bureau/tabid/5458/language/en-US/Default.aspx>.

- c. Bureau meetings are conducted in English;
 - d. Bureau meetings are closed but reports of Bureau meetings are made available for transparency;
- (iii) Functions:
 - a. Addressing requests related to the panel's programme of work and products that require attention by the panel between sessions of the plenary;
 - b. Overseeing communication and outreach activities;
 - c. Reviewing progress in the implementation of decisions of the plenary, if so directed by the plenary;
 - d. Monitoring the secretariat's performance;
 - e. Organizing and helping to conduct the sessions of the plenary;
 - f. Reviewing the observance of the panel's rules and procedures;
 - g. Reviewing the management of resources and observance of financial rules and reporting thereon to the plenary;
 - h. Advising the plenary on coordination between the panel and other relevant institutions;
 - i. Identifying donors and developing partnership arrangements for the implementation of the panel's activities;
- (b) Establishing an interdisciplinary expert committee to provide scientific oversight, with the following key features:
 - (i) Composition:
 - a. Five members from each of the regions of the institution providing secretariat services;
 - b. Four representatives of non-governmental participants as well as the Chair of the United Nations Environment Management Group may participate in interdisciplinary expert committee meetings. The four representatives of non-governmental participants are elected by and from non-governmental participants engaged in the work of the panel to represent each of the health, industry, trade union and public interest groups;
 - c. Members of the interdisciplinary expert committee nominated by regions and elected by plenary, taking into account the need to ensure the committee is interdisciplinary, ensuring contributions from experts with a broad range of disciplinary expertise; has inclusive participation, including Indigenous Peoples; and has geographical, regional and gender balance;
 - d. Interdisciplinary expert committee members are selected for their scientific, technical or policy expertise and knowledge of the main elements of the work of the panel;
 - e. Members serve for three years; terms are staggered;
 - (ii) Modalities of work:
 - a. Interdisciplinary expert committee meetings are convened as necessary, including during sessions of the plenary;
 - b. Interdisciplinary expert committee meetings, especially intersessional meetings, should be convened online;

c. Interdisciplinary expert committee meetings are conducted in English; and,

d. Members of the Bureau, representatives of other relevant science-policy interfaces (including the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services) and representatives of relevant multilateral environmental agreements can participate as observers in meetings of the interdisciplinary expert committee;

(iii) Functions:

a. Providing advice to the plenary on scientific and technical aspects of the panel's programme of work;

b. Providing advice and assistance on technical and/or scientific communication matters;

c. Managing the panel's peer-review process to ensure the highest levels of scientific quality, independence and credibility for all products delivered by the panel at all stages of the process;

d. Engaging the scientific community and other knowledge holders with the work programme, taking into account the need for different disciplines and types of knowledge, gender balance and effective contribution and participation by experts from developing countries;

e. Assuring scientific and technical coordination among structures set up under the panel and facilitating coordination between the panel and other related processes to build upon existing efforts.

C. Other bodies undertaking or supporting the science-policy interface's work

19. **The science-policy interfaces reviewed are supported by a range of other bodies regarding their deliverables.** They help to ensure, in accordance with Environment Assembly resolution 5/8, paragraphs 6 (b)–(c) and (f)–(g), the following:

(a) Interdisciplinarity, ensuring contributions from experts with a broad range of disciplinary expertise; inclusive participation, including Indigenous Peoples; and geographical, regional and gender balance;

(b) Procedures that seek to ensure that the work of the panel is transparent and impartial and that it can produce reports and assessments that are credible and scientifically robust;

(c) Ability to address potential conflicts of interest and safeguard commercially sensitive information;

(d) Flexibility to respond, to the extent possible, to the needs identified by stakeholders and agreed to by its member Governments, and to fulfil the panel's principal functions.

20. Table 3 in the annex to the present document provides a summary of key features of a selection of other bodies of the science-policy interfaces reviewed. There are generally two broad categories of such bodies: those established specifically to fulfil one of the interface's functions and those that support the interface's work more generally.

21. **Key considerations for the composition of the other bodies of the panel.** Examples of these other bodies undertaking or supporting the panel's work include

expert working groups, task forces, committees and author teams. Upon another body's establishment, the interface's decision-making body will typically adopt for it detailed terms of reference setting out composition, modalities and functions. The composition of these other bodies reflects the expertise and other needs dictated by their specific mandate and will also often reflect key features related to inclusiveness and balance detailed in the interface's operating principles. There is a great deal of variety in the size of those other bodies. Larger bodies can make it easier to satisfy notions of balance and inclusiveness; conversely, they can be more time- and cost-intensive to convene and administer.

22. Key considerations for the modalities of work of other bodies of the panel.

The nature of work to be undertaken by these other bodies and the time needed to undertake the work according to best practices (for example adequate time for review processes) will be a key consideration in determining the frequency and mode of meetings. Decisions related to which subsidiary bodies to establish, and their modalities of work, also have budgetary implications. Even as great progress has been made in expanding virtual work modalities since March 2020, many arguments remain for the advantages of in-person work, especially when bringing together participants from across regions (and time zones). Another consideration with budgetary implications related to a key difference among the interfaces concerns the provision of interpretation at meetings. Only the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change provides for interpretation at meetings of subsidiary bodies, namely meetings of its three working groups when they meet in plenary to finalize their work. Similar differences exist among science-policy interfaces in areas of chemicals, waste and prevention of pollution. For example, meetings of the Persistent Organic Pollutants Review Committee of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants have simultaneous translation and include translation of working documents in advance of meetings while meetings of the Chemical Review Committee of the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade are held in English only.⁶

23. Key considerations for the functions of other bodies of the panel.

Considering the five planned functions of the science-policy panel (undertaking horizon scanning, conducting assessments, knowledge management, information-sharing and capacity-building),⁷ it may be helpful to note that many of the other bodies summarized in table 3 focus primarily on an assessment function. In the light of the need to ensure that the panel “is cost-effective, with the leanest structure consistent with achieving the highest impact” (para. 6 (h)), clearly defined and delineated functions can be an important means of ensuring that any other bodies that are established by the panel deliver on their mandate.

⁶ See terms of reference of the Chemical Review Committee of the Rotterdam Convention, set out in decision RC-1/6, available at <https://www.pic.int/Portals/5/download.aspx?d=UNEP-FAO-RC-COP.1-RC-1-6.En.pdf>, and terms of reference of the Review Committee of the Stockholm Convention, set out in decision SC-1/7, available at <https://chm.pops.int/Portals/0/download.aspx?d=UNEP-POPS-COP.1-SC-1-7.English.PDF>, amended by decisions SC-4/20, available at <https://chm.pops.int/Portals/0/download.aspx?d=UNEP-POPS-COP.4-SC-4-20.English.PDF>, and SC-5/11, available at <https://chm.pops.int/Portals/0/download.aspx?d=UNEP-POPS-COP.5-SC-5-11.English.PDF>. Note that under the SC-4/20 revision of the terms of reference of the Review Committee of the Stockholm Convention, it is stated that for “practical reasons, only the major resource documents for a meeting will be translated into the six official languages of the United Nations and distributed at least six weeks in advance of the meeting. The term ‘major resource documents’ means the summary in English of the documents supporting the proposal for adding a chemical to Annexes A, B or C to the Convention, the risk profile, the risk management evaluation and any report or recommendation for the meeting”.

⁷ See [UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.1/7](#), annex II.

Proposal for a way forward

24. The ad hoc open-ended working group may wish to propose:

- (a) That the plenary and administrative and scientific oversight body or bodies may establish other bodies under the panel, whether to aid in delivering panel functions or in meeting the panel's cross-cutting needs, and include that provision in their respective functions and in the rules of procedure;
- (b) Providing for specific types of other bodies that can be established, including for example expert groups that will undertake assessments or horizon scanning and task forces that will undertake work on cross-cutting issues;
- (c) Providing guidance on the composition, modalities of work and functions of any predefined types of other bodies the panel may establish;
- (d) Preparing terms of reference (including composition, modalities of work and functions) for any other bodies that are established as a result of outcomes to examine other issues for consideration before the ad hoc open-ended working group, including for example relating to work products and processes.

D. Secretariat arrangements

25. **Resolution 5/8 (para. 5 (h)) provides for the ad hoc open-ended working group to prepare proposals for arrangements for secretariat support for the panel.** Secretariat support is essential to help to ensure, in accordance with paragraphs 6 (c), (e), (g) and (h), the following:

- (a) That the work of the panel is transparent and impartial and that it can produce reports and assessments that are credible and scientifically robust;
- (b) That the panel coordinates, as appropriate, with other science-policy bodies, such as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services;
- (c) That the panel has the flexibility to respond, to the extent possible, to the needs identified by stakeholders and agreed to by its member Governments, and to fulfil its principal functions;
- (d) That the panel is cost-effective, with the leanest structure consistent with achieving the highest impact.

26. Table 4 in the annex to the present document provides a summary of key features of secretariat arrangements of the science-policy interfaces reviewed. It highlights the use of technical support units, hosted by countries or partner organizations, as a means of providing targeted administrative and scientific support for other bodies established under the panel.

27. **Key considerations for the composition of the secretariat arrangements of the panel.** Some science-policy interfaces turn to technical support units as part of their secretariat arrangements to provide administrative and scientific support dedicated to one of the science-policy interface's bodies. They are typically hosted by a Government (or a science institution in the country in question). Technical support unit staff are employed by the host institution and can be an effective means of deploying in-kind support for the work of the science-policy interface. If both the secretariat and technical support units are to provide secretariat arrangements for the panel, then attention should be paid to clarifying work responsibilities and providing for strategies to ensure coordination of their work as both are in a position to, for example, provide technical assistance and substantive support.

28. Key considerations for the modalities of work of the secretariat arrangements of the panel. Determining whether the secretariat should be housed or hosted by one or more existing intergovernmental organizations is a central consideration when establishing the secretariat. Existing science-policy interfaces point to a variety of strategies to ensure the secretariat can benefit from the existing infrastructure of an intergovernmental organization, such as existing financial rules. These strategies can include hosting or co-hosting, where one or more intergovernmental organizations are explicitly designated as “parent” institutions (the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change follows that model), or arranging for the intergovernmental organization to provide secretariat services to an independent secretariat (the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services follows that model). Selecting either strategy does not preclude the science-policy interface from establishing special relationships, or partnerships, with other intergovernmental organizations (see [UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.2/5](#)). The ad hoc open-ended working group is convened under the auspices of the United Nations Environment Assembly that, in paragraph 9 of its resolution 5/8, invites the World Health Organization (WHO) “to play a role, as appropriate” in the group. In considering secretariat arrangements, benefits could be harnessed that would arise from close partnerships with UNEP and WHO, such as access to the depth of expertise among each organization as well as access to the breadth of engaged stakeholders across both the environment and health issue arenas.

29. Key considerations for the functions of the secretariat arrangements of the panel. In addition to specifying those secretariat functions that arise from the everyday operation of a science-policy interface (preparing and supporting meetings, preparing the budget and overseeing financial arrangements), secretariat functions can also include those arising from the functions of the science-policy interface and the establishment of other bodies. In assigning functions to the secretariat, it is important to consider whether the task is administrative in nature or substantive. If work will require expert judgment, an expert body under the science-policy interface may be a means of ensuring the panel’s legitimacy and credibility. Conversely, when considering establishing a body under the science-policy interface, careful consideration of its envisioned functions may help in determining whether they may more suitably, or more efficiently, be undertaken by a technical support unit or the secretariat.

Proposal for a way forward

30. The ad hoc open-ended working group may wish to propose:
- (a) Establishing a secretariat for the panel with the following functions:
 - (i) Organizing meetings and providing administrative and technical support for meetings, including the preparation of documents and reports to the plenary and its subsidiary bodies as needed;
 - (ii) Assisting members of the plenary, and administrative and scientific oversight body or bodies, to undertake their respective functions as decided by the plenary, including facilitating communication between the various stakeholders of the panel;
 - (iii) Facilitating communication among any other bodies that might be established by the panel;
 - (iv) Disseminating public information and assisting in outreach activities and in the production of relevant communication materials;
 - (v) Preparing the panel’s draft budget for submission to plenary, managing the financial arrangements and preparing any necessary financial reports;

- (vi) Assisting in the mobilization of financial resources;
- (vii) Assisting in the facilitation of monitoring and evaluation of the panel's work;
- (b) The provision for technical support units to provide scientific, technical and organizational assistance to bodies established under the panel, with the following functions:
 - (i) Supporting the Co-Chairs and Bureau of the body they assist on behalf of the panel;
 - (ii) Contributing to the implementation of relevant policies, such as the conflict of interest policy, if there is one;
 - (iii) Participating, through their technical support unit heads, as advisory members in the administrative oversight body of the panel;
- (c) Securing secretariat services from, or hosting or co-hosting arrangements with UNEP and WHO, or from another intergovernmental organization;
- (d) That the ad hoc open-ended working group secretariat solicit proposals from States to host the Secretariat for consideration at the third session of the ad hoc open-ended working group.

E. Financial arrangements

31. **Resolution 5/8 (para. 5 (i)) provides for the ad hoc open-ended working group to prepare proposals for voluntary financing of the work of the panel.** Financial arrangements are essential to help ensure, in accordance with resolution 5/8, paragraphs 6 (a), (c), (g) and (h), the following:

- (a) The panel's ability to deliver outputs that are policy relevant without being policy prescriptive;
- (b) The panel has procedures that seek to ensure that the work of the panel is transparent and impartial;
- (c) The panel has the flexibility to respond, to the extent possible, to the needs identified by stakeholders and agreed to by its member Governments, and to fulfil its principal functions;
- (d) The panel is cost-effective, with the leanest structure consistent with achieving the highest impact.

32. Table 5 in the annex to the present document provides a summary of key features of financial arrangements of the science-policy interfaces reviewed. The summary table highlights the importance of voluntary contributions, both financial and in-kind, and the need for transparency regarding contributions and the budget process.

33. Financial arrangements typically include a trust fund for collecting resources and a budget process (often tied to the programme of work) for allocating and disbursing funds. The budget is typically adopted at set intervals by the interface's decision-making body.

34. The financial arrangements of a science-policy interface require transparency and oversight is typically provided by both the decision-making body and the administrative oversight body, while administration falls under the secretariat functions. Contributions to a science-policy interface are typically welcomed from a range of resources, although in practice most resources are from member Governments. Science-policy interfaces also rely on a range of in-kind contributions.

In addition to the essential contribution by experts participating in the work of the panel, such in-kind contributions can include secretariat staffing, the provision of technical support unit services, provision of conference services and provision of communication services. Transparency in regard to the origin of in-kind and monetary contributions can guard against potential conflicts of interest.

35. The financial arrangements of a science-policy interface are essential to ensure the panel has the flexibility to respond, to the extent possible, to the needs identified by stakeholders and agreed to by its member Governments, and to fulfil its principal functions.

Proposal for a way forward

36. The ad hoc open-ended working group may wish to propose:

(a) Establishing a trust fund, to be allocated by plenary in an open and transparent manner, to collect voluntary financing to support the work of the panel, to be governed by financial rules and procedures adopted by the plenary;

(b) That contributions be welcomed from Governments, as well as from United Nations bodies, the Global Environment Facility, other intergovernmental organizations and stakeholders such as the private sector and foundations, on the understanding that such funding will come without conditionalities, will not orient the work of the panel and cannot be earmarked for specific activities;

(c) Providing an exception allowing additional contributions for specific activities approved by the plenary such that:

(i) Single contributions in excess of \$300,000 per contributor per activity require approval by the plenary;

(ii) Single contributions not exceeding \$300,000 per contributor per activity require approval by the Bureau;

(d) Providing for the plenary to regularly review panel expenditures and budget proposals, and to adopt budgets for the panel;

(e) Providing for the administrative oversight body to regularly review budget information prepared by the secretariat;

(f) Providing for the secretariat to prepare the panel's draft budget for submission to plenary, managing the financial arrangements and preparing any necessary financial reports.

III. Rules of procedure for sessions of the plenary

37. It is expected that resolution on items discussed in section II of the present document will largely inform the details of the rules of procedure document. A proposed table of contents for the rules of procedure for sessions of the panel's plenary, developed based on a review of rules of procedure of other science-policy interfaces, is set out below:

- (a) Scope
- (b) Definitions
- (c) Venues, dates and notice of sessions
- (d) Members and observers
- (e) Admission of observers

- (f) Agenda
- (g) Representation, credentials and accreditation
- (h) Members and operation of the Bureau and/or equivalent structure(s)/
institution(s)
- (i) Election of members of the Bureau and/or equivalent structure(s)/
institution(s)
- (j) Nominations
- (k) Subsidiary bodies (members, operation, election of members, etc.)
- (l) Conduct of business
- (m) Decision-making
- (n) Languages
- (o) Modifications to the rules of procedure

Proposal for a way forward

38. The ad hoc open-ended working group may wish to consider:

- (a) Whether the outline for the rules of procedure may serve as an appropriate starting point for developing rules of procedure for sessions of the plenary, for consideration at the third session of the ad hoc open-ended working group, reflecting agreements reached during the second session;
 - (b) The potential outline for rules of procedure for sessions of the plenary.
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