



**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
Second session**

Nairobi, 11–15 December 2023
Item 5 of the provisional agenda*

**Options for the timetable and organization of the future work of the
ad hoc open-ended working group**

**Update from the secretariat on work undertaken in the period
between the first and second sessions, budget and expenditure
and the provisional workplan**

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 decided, by its resolution 5/8 of 2 March 2022, 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. In paragraph 12 of the resolution, the Assembly invited Governments and others in a position to do so to provide extrabudgetary resources for the implementation of the resolution, in particular to enable the full participation of developing countries and countries with economies in transition in the ad hoc open-ended working group. Furthermore, in paragraph 13, it requested the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to provide a secretariat for the working group and to prepare the analytical and summary reports necessary for the group's work.
3. The ad hoc open-ended working group agreed at its resumed first session that, as the working group process was extrabudgetary, the budget should not be negotiated in detail, and that the secretariat would be entrusted with updating it on the basis of the future activities decided on by the working group and would present an updated budget, including expenditures to date, to the ad hoc open-ended working group at its next session.
4. Section II of the present note provides an update on the work undertaken by the secretariat since the resumed first session of the ad hoc open-ended working group, held in Bangkok from 30 January to 3 February 2023. Section III presents the current status of contributions and pledges pursuant to paragraph 12 of resolution 5/8, as well as the 2023–2024 budget and expenditures incurred since the start of the working group process, while section IV presents a provisional timetable and workplan for the working group.

* UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.2/1.

II. Work undertaken by the secretariat during the intersessional period

5. In the lead-up to the second session of the ad hoc open-ended working group, the secretariat has worked in close coordination with the Bureau, holding eight Bureau meetings dedicated to intersessional work after the working group's resumed first session. All Bureau meeting documents and summaries of the meetings are available on the Bureau meetings webpage.¹

6. The Bureau agreed to convene regional meetings in order to hold strategic discussions to prepare for the second session of the working group. The following regional meetings were planned:

- (a) Asia-Pacific regional meeting, held in Bangkok on 7 September 2023 (hybrid format);²
- (b) Africa regional meeting, held in Nairobi on 14 September 2023 (in person);³
- (c) Latin American and Caribbean Group (GRULAC) regional meeting, held in Brasília on 7 October 2023 (in person);⁴
- (d) Western Europe and Others Group regional briefing, held over two sessions on 8 and 9 November 2023 (online);⁵
- (e) Eastern European regional briefing, held on 21 November 2023 (online).⁶

7. During the period since the resumed first session, the secretariat and the Geneva Environment Network have jointly organized a "Road to OEWG 2" series of webinars and side events to inform the open-ended working group process and engage with a wide range of stakeholders. The following events took place in advance of the working group's second session:

(a) A webinar entitled "Developing Operating Principles of the Science-Policy Panel on Chemicals, Waste and Pollution Prevention"⁷ was held on 26 April 2023. The secretariat presented a background document on operating principles of other science-policy panels. Member States and accredited non-government stakeholders were invited to submit input on the draft operating principles to be considered at the second session. The written submissions are accessible online.⁸

(b) A side event entitled "Building the Linkages from Science to Action"⁹ was held during the 2023 conferences of the parties to the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal, the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade, and the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, on 2 May 2023. Reference was made to the decision¹⁰ previously taken by the conferences of the parties to strengthen their mandate for international cooperation with other organizations in support of Environment Assembly resolution 5/8.

(c) A World Health Assembly side event entitled "The Impact of Chemicals, Waste and Pollution on Human Health"¹¹ was held in Geneva on 25 May 2023. Reference was made to the

¹ <https://www.unep.org/oewg-spp-chemicals-waste-pollution/bureau/bureau-meetings>.

² Meeting information available at: <https://www.unep.org/events/working-group-meeting/asia-pacific-regional-meeting-2nd-oewg-science-policy-panel-chemicals>.

³ Meeting information available at: <https://www.unep.org/events/working-group-meeting/africa-regional-meeting-2nd-oewg-science-policy-panel-chemicals-waste>.

⁴ Meeting information available at: <https://www.unep.org/events/working-group-meeting/lac-regional-meeting-2nd-oewg-science-policy-panel-chemicals-waste-and>.

⁵ Meeting information available at: <https://www.unep.org/events/working-group-meeting/weog-regional-meeting-2nd-oewg-science-policy-panel-chemicals-waste>

⁶ Meeting information available at: <https://www.unep.org/events/working-group-meeting/eeg-regional-meeting-2nd-oewg-science-policy-panel-chemicals-waste-and>

⁷ <https://www.genevaenvironmentnetwork.org/resources/updates/road-to-oewg-2-science-policy-panel-to-contribute-further-to-the-sound-management-of-chemicals-and-waste-and-to-prevent-pollution-spp-cwp-webinar-series/>.

⁸ <https://www.unep.org/operating-principles>.

⁹ <https://www.genevaenvironmentnetwork.org/events/science-policy-panel-on-chemicals-waste-and-pollution-prevention-building-the-linkages-from-science-to-action-brs-cops-2023-side-event/>.

¹⁰

<https://www.brsmeas.org/Decisionmaking/COPsandExCOPs/20212022COPs/Overview/tabid/8395/language/en-US/>.

¹¹ <https://www.genevaenvironmentnetwork.org/events/the-impact-of-chemicals-waste-and-pollution-on-human-health/>.

seventy-sixth World Health Assembly, which called upon Member States to engage with Environment Assembly resolution 5/8 to prepare proposals for the science-policy panel to contribute further to the sound management of chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution.

(d) A World Resources Forum side event entitled “Linking Science and Action Using a Life-Cycle Approach”¹² was held in Geneva on 6 September 2023.

(e) A webinar on options of engagement and participation modalities for major groups and stakeholders to the open-ended working group was held on 13 September 2023.

(f) A side event entitled “Connecting the Science-Policy Panel and the Beyond 2020 Framework” was held during the fifth session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management in Bonn on 27 September 2023; it was organized by Germany with coordination support from the secretariat of the open-ended working group, the secretariat of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management and the Geneva Environment Network.

(g) A side event entitled “Building the Linkages from Science to Action”¹³ was held in Geneva on 9 October 2023 in conjunction with the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention on Mercury.

(h) A webinar entitled “Procedures for Addressing Conflicts of Interest: Lessons Learned from Existing Science-Policy Interfaces” was held on 18 October 2023.

(i) A webinar to close the “Road to OEWG 2” series will be held on 22 November 2023, shortly before the working group’s second session.

8. At the resumed first session of the open-ended working group,¹⁴ Member States requested the secretariat to solicit input from Member States and relevant stakeholders regarding the **needs** and **questions** the panel might handle in order to inform negotiations through the open-ended working group process at the second and third sessions. Member States and non-governmental stakeholders were invited to submit input on the needs and questions that the panel might handle for consideration at the second session.

9. At the resumed first session, Member States also requested the secretariat to prepare a mapping of capacity-building in the chemicals, waste and pollution space. Accordingly, the secretariat solicited submissions from multilateral environmental agreements and United Nations organizations on their capacity-building activities in the sound management of chemicals and waste and pollution prevention in order to inform the working group’s second session.

III. Contributions and pledges, and 2023–2024 budget and expenditures

10. **Contributions to date.** As at 31 October 2023, UNEP had received financial contributions and pledges in the amount of \$5,222,398, as shown in table 1.

Table 1
Contributions and pledges received as at 31 October 2023
(United States dollars)

<i>Contributor</i>	<i>2021</i>	<i>2022</i>	<i>2023</i>	<i>Total</i>
Switzerland	809 234	445 545	445 545	1 700 324
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland		327 360	192 252	519 612
France		158 395	285 330	443 725
Germany		196 514		196 514
Norway		140 890	649 879	790 769
European Commission			620 040	620 040
Netherlands (Kingdom of the)			212 025	212 025

¹² <https://www.genevaenvironmentnetwork.org/events/science-policy-panel-on-chemicals-waste-and-pollution-prevention-linking-science-and-action-using-a-life-cycle-approach-wrf2023-lab-road-to-oewg-2-series/>.

¹³ <https://www.genevaenvironmentnetwork.org/events/science-policy-panel-on-chemicals-waste-and-pollution-prevention-building-the-linkages-from-science-to-action-minamata-cop-5-side-event-road-to-oewg-2-series/>.

¹⁴ Meeting information is available at <https://www.unep.org/oewg1.2-ssp-chemicals-waste-pollution>.

<i>Contributor</i>	<i>2021</i>	<i>2022</i>	<i>2023</i>	<i>Total</i>
Japan			136 986	136 986
United States of America			128 713	128 713
Belgium			63 762	63 762
Finland			10 627	10 627
				—
				—
UNEP reserve allocation ^a		228 000		228 000
UNEP Environment Fund		275 000		275 000
Total income^b	809 234	1 771 704	2 641 460	5 222 398

a This contribution was initially provided as a loan by the Executive Director of UNEP and later reclassified as a grant.

b These figures are net of the 1 per cent coordination levy (where applicable) but include the programme support costs (13 per cent where applicable) applied to all extrabudgetary contributions to the Organization.

11. Table 1 does not capture the in-kind contributions provided by UNEP and other donors to support the work of the secretariat and facilitate the OEWG process. In 2023 alone, UNEP provided staff time services equivalent to a value of approximately \$620,000 to facilitate the governance process of the OEWG process, while the Governments of France and China provided two P-2 Programme Officers, under their respective Junior Programme Officers initiatives, for a yearly cost estimated value of \$160,900.

12. Table 2 shows a breakdown of the incurred costs as well as budgeted costs, which cover the hosting of three sessions of the working group, as well as expenditures incurred since the start of the working group process.

13. The proposed budget includes financial support for the participation of eligible countries in regional meetings and in the working group's second and third sessions and, subject to the availability of funding, for the participation of major groups and stakeholders, in accordance with the established practice at the United Nations Environment Assembly. It is noted that the current budget for regional meetings and for the working group's third session in 2024 is higher than the indicative budget provided at the first session (see UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.1/6) due to higher air travel costs of in-person meetings and to confirmations of meeting venues.

14. A formal offer to host the third session of the ad hoc open-ended working group from 17 to 21 June 2024 has been received from Switzerland.

Table 2

Proposed budget and expenditures for the ad hoc open-ended working group process

(United States dollars)

			2022	2023	2024		
<i>Cost category</i>	<i>Code</i>	<i>Subcategory</i>		<i>Expenditure</i>	<i>Budget</i>	<i>Expenditure^a</i>	<i>Budget</i>
Secretariat staff and travel							
Personnel	1100	Secretariat staff		214 458	636 881	265 992	668 745
	1200	Consultants		238 242	280 841	208 218	286 958
	1300	Secretariat support staff	—	—	—		
Travel	1600	Travel		116 538	167 000	100 249	158 000
	1999	Subtotal		569 238	1 084 722	574 458	1 113 703
Meetings and training events							
Meetings and conferences	3100	Virtual platforms			100 000		100 000
		Regional meetings (conference services and travel) ^b			242 351	88 610	242 351
		Bureau meetings			25 000		25 000
		Webinars			50 000		50 000
		OEWG 1-1 (Nairobi)		93 175	—	—	—

			2022	2023	2024		
Cost category	Code	Subcategory	Expenditure	Budget	Expenditure ^a	Budget	
		OEWG 1-2 (Bangkok)	89 359	1 123 000	907 185	–	
		OEWG 2 (Nairobi)	–	1 153 451	461 793	–	
		OEWG 3 (Geneva) ^c	–	–	–	1 620 000	
	3999	Subtotal	182 533	2 693 802	1 457 588	2 037 351	
Premises and other							
Fixed operating costs	4100	Operational costs for secretariat staff ^d	317	–	8 000	38 000	
	4999	Subtotal	371	–	8 000	38 000	
		Total	752 089	3 778 524	2 040 046	3 189 054	
	5999	Programme indirect support cost	61 517	456 440	233 849	414 577	
		Total general	813 606	4 234 965	2 273 896	3 603 631	

^a Expenditures as at 31 October 2023.

^b Placeholder in case stand-alone regional meetings are requested in 2024.

^c Subject to change, depending on the conference services requirements for the third session.

^d Full fair share of secretariat staff operational costs for 2024.

15. As can be seen from the information presented in tables 1 and 2, the level of financial support to the secretariat of the ad hoc open-ended working group received to date is not sufficient to ensure that the working group can finish its work. A review of the costs for the ad hoc open-ended working group process indicates that approximately \$3.43 million will need to be mobilized (table 3).

Table 3

Summary of income and expenditures/budget
(United States dollars)

	2021	2022	2023	2024
Income carry-over	–	809 234	1 767 332	(173 829)
Income secured during the year	809 234	1 771 704	2 641 460	?
Expenditures/budget	–	813 606	4 234,964	3 603 631
Income/expenditures	809 234	1 767 332	(173 829)	(3 429 802)

16. The cost of secretariat operations, consultations and future sessions will therefore require additional resources if the open-ended working group is to succeed in establishing proposals for the panel and fulfilling its mandate by the end of 2024.

17. Member States are invited to provide further contributions and suggestions for how the process can continue and to work with the secretariat to secure the additional funding needed to conclude the open-ended working group process within the ambitious time frame set out in Environment Assembly resolution 5/8.

IV. Provisional timetable and programme of work of the ad hoc open-ended working group

18. In its resolution 5/8, the Environment Assembly set out the ambition for the open-ended working group to complete its work by the end of 2024 (para. 4) and requested the Executive Director of UNEP, upon completion of proposals prepared by the working group, to convene an intergovernmental meeting for the purpose of considering the establishment of a science-policy panel (para. 10). The provisional timetable and programme of work for the establishment of the science-policy panel to contribute further to the sound management of chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution are presented in the annex to the present note.

19. **Proposal for a way forward.** The open-ended working group may wish to:

(a) Review the budget and expenditures of the open-ended working group process since its inception and welcome any pledges to support the remainder of the process;

(b) Discuss and agree on the preparation of proposals for the establishment of the panel, including the development of relevant resolutions/decisions.

Annex

Provisional timetable and programme of work for the establishment of the science-policy panel to contribute further to the sound management of chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution*

<i>Draft elements of a proposal to establish a science-policy panel to contribute further to the sound management of chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution</i>	<i>Proposal development process</i>	
	<i>OEWG 2</i>	<i>OEWG 3</i>
Objectives, principal functions and operating principles		
	Documents to be prepared for the meeting	Documents to be prepared for the meeting
<i>Resolution 5/8, para. 5 (b) Name and scope of the panel</i>	Continue scope discussion	Propose name
<i>Resolution 5/8, para. 5 (c) Principal functions of the panel</i>	Prepare mapping of capacity building in chemicals waste and pollution space	
<i>Resolution 5/8, para. 5 (j) Rules of procedure</i>	Working document on examples building on INF/7, including options of an outline of the rules of procedure	
<i>Resolution 5/8, para. 5 (j) Operating principles governing the work of the panel</i>	Working document on examples of operating principles Working document consolidated by the secretariat containing information from the relevant section of the meeting report Written submission from Member States and relevant stakeholders	Draft text → Final text
Member States and stakeholder input on needs and questions the panel may handle		
Institutional design and governance		
<i>Resolution 5/8, para 5 (a) Institutional design and governance of the panel</i>	Working document on examples building on INF/5, including proposals prepared by the secretariat on the institutional design and governance Webinars followed by informal consultations / brainstorming	Draft text → Final text
<i>Resolution 5/8, para 5 (h) Arrangements for secretariat support for the panel</i>	Working document on examples, including proposals prepared by the secretariat	Draft text → Final text
<i>Resolution 5/8, para 5 (k) An indicative budget for the panel</i>	Working document including examples on 5 (i)	Working document on 5 (k)
<i>Resolution 5/8, para. 5 (i) Options for voluntary financing of the work of the panel</i>		
Possible annexes		
<i>Resolution 5/8, para. 5 (d) Relationships of the panel with relevant key stakeholders, including governmental and non-governmental organizations, and civil society</i>	Working document on examples Webinars followed by informal consultations /brainstorming	Draft text → Final text

* Reproduced from [UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.1/7](#) (appendix to annex III).

<i>Draft elements of a proposal to establish a science-policy panel to contribute further to the sound management of chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution</i>	<i>Proposal development process</i>	
	<i>OEWG 2</i>	<i>OEWG 3</i>
Objectives, principal functions and operating principles		
	Documents to be prepared for the meeting	Documents to be prepared for the meeting
	This could include consideration of those organizations and entities listed in INF/4	
<i>Resolution 5/8, para. 5 (e) Processes for determining and executing the work programme of the panel</i>	Working document on examples	Draft text → Final text
<i>Resolution 5/8 para 5 (f) Arrangements for identifying and engaging with experts to contribute to the work of the panel</i>	Working document on examples	Draft text → Final text
<i>Resolution 5/8, para. 5 (g) Procedures for the review and adoption of reports and assessments produced by the panel</i>	Working document on examples	Draft text → Final text
<i>Resolution 5/8, para. 5 (l) Any other matters that the ad hoc open-ended working group believes should be addressed</i>		
Non-exhaustive list of items for future work		
Horizon scanning procedures		
Policy for safeguarding commercially sensitive information		
Communications strategy		
Indicative budget for the panel		
Gender policy and implementation plan		