

Asia Pacific Regional Meeting of the Second Ad hoc open-ended working group (OEWG 2) on a science-policy panel to contribute further to the sound management of chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution

Thursday, 7 September 2023

08:00 – 18:00 (Bangkok, Thailand; GMT + 7)

In-person / hybrid meeting

Proposed draft skeleton outline of proposals for the establishment of a science-policy panel

Note by the secretariat

The annex to the present note contains the proposed draft skeleton outline of proposals for the establishment of a science-policy panel. 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 has not been formally edited.



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**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

Dead Sea, 11 – 15 December 2023

Agenda item 4

**Preparations of proposals for the establishment of a science-policy
panel**

Proposed draft skeleton outline of proposals for the establishment of a science-policy panel

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 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. The Environment Assembly considered 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”.

2. By the same resolution, the Environment Assembly decided to convene, subject to the availability of resources, an ad hoc open-ended working group that would begin work in 2022 to prepare proposals on a set of issues for the science-policy panel to consider (UNEA resolution, paragraph 5), with the ambition of completing it by the end of 2024. The Assembly requested the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to provide a secretariat for the ad hoc open-ended working group and to prepare the analytical and summary reports necessary for its work.

3. Upon completion of proposals prepared by the ad hoc open-ended working group, the Assembly requested the Executive Director of UNEP to convene an intergovernmental meeting for the purpose of considering the establishment of a science-policy panel.

4. The present document has been developed to provide a skeleton outline for an outcome document including the proposals to be developed by the ad hoc open-ended working group for consideration at the intergovernmental meeting. The skeleton outline is based on the elements laid out in resolution 5/8 on the establishment of a science-policy panel and takes into account

meeting outcomes from the OEWG-1.1 and OEWG-1.2. It is envisaged that the ad hoc open-ended working group will work towards agreed text for the relevant sections of the skeleton outline.

5. The current skeleton outline suggests describing the scope and objective, functions and operating principles of the panel, and institutional arrangements for the panel in the main document. The rules of procedure, financial procedures and work-related processes and policies are proposed to be included in the annexes, which will allow flexibility for future updating of these rules, procedures, processes and policies when needs arise.

6. The ad hoc open-ended working group may wish to agree on which parts of the proposed skeleton need to be finalized by the ad hoc open-ended working group for establishing the science-policy panel at the intergovernmental meeting,¹ and which part(s) may be finalized by the science-policy panel itself, once established.

II. Proposed skeleton outline of proposals for the establishment of the Science-Policy Panel

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

7. This section of the skeleton corresponds to UNEA resolution, paragraph 5(b) “Name and scope of the panel” and 5(c) “Principal functions of the panel, while respecting the mandates of relevant multilateral agreements and other international instruments and intergovernmental bodies, avoiding overlap and duplication of work, and promoting coordination and cooperation.”

8. At the resumed first session, the ad hoc open-ended working group decided on the following outcomes (Annex II of UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.1/7):

9. [The objective of the panel is to strengthen the science-policy interface to contribute to the sound management of chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution for the protection of human health and the environment, with the following functions:]²

- a) Undertaking “horizon scanning” to identify issues of relevance to policymakers and, where possible, proposing evidence-based options to address them;
- b) Conducting assessment 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;

¹ As a reference, the following elements were agreed upon for the establishment of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services in 2012 in Panama City (UNEP/IPBES.MI/2/9): Functions, operating principles and institutional arrangements of the Platform, and Rules of procedure for the Plenary of the Platform.

² It is bracketed with the understanding that the ad hoc open-ended working group could update the wording based on future discussions.

- d) Facilitating information-sharing with countries, in particular developing countries seeking relevant scientific information;
- e) Capacity building.

10. It was agreed by the ad hoc open-ended working group that further discussions were needed to finalize the text of the function on capacity building. The ad hoc open-ended working group further decided that the following two texts will serve as the basis for further consideration to describe the capacity building function at the second session of the ad hoc open-ended working group:

- a) Provide capacity-building through all the functions of the panel and facilitate technology transfer, in particular to developing countries, to improve the science-policy interface at appropriate levels, including activities to ensure effective, geographically balanced and gender-responsive participation of scientists in the assessment of the panel, strengthen data generation capacity, enhance knowledge and skills that will support country infrastructure and human capacity, and facilitate connection and matchmaking of capacity-related needs and potential solutions.
- b) To build capacity to support the functions and work of the panel in order to strengthen the science-policy interface for sound management of chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution.

11. The following working and information documents have been prepared to inform the ad hoc open-ended working group for consideration on the matter at its second session: UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.2/3, UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.2/INF/2, UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.2/INF/3 and UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.2/INF/9.

B. Operating principles of the Panel

12. This section of the skeleton corresponds to UNEA resolution, paragraph 5(j) “Rules of procedure and the operating principles governing the work of the panel.” This section would describe the operating principles that would apply to the panel once established, while it is proposed that the rules of procedures be addressed as an annex.

13. The following working and information documents have been prepared to inform the ad hoc open-ended working group for consideration on the matter at its second session: UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.2/3 and UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.2/INF/2.

C. Institutional arrangements for the Panel

14. This section of the skeleton corresponds to UNEA resolution, paragraph 5(a) “Institutional design and governance of the panel” and 5(h) “Arrangements for secretariat support for the panel.” This section would describe the governance of the panel, including the plenary and its functions, membership, officers and function of the chair, subsidiary bodies (including their administrative or scientific functions), the secretariat and its role, partnership arrangements and financial arrangements.

15. The following working and information documents have been prepared to inform the ad hoc open-ended working group for consideration on the matter at its second session: UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.2/4 and UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.2/INF/4.

Annex 1. Rules of procedure

16. This section of the skeleton corresponds to UNEA resolution, paragraph 5(j) “Rules of procedure and the operating principles governing the work of the panel.”

17. The following working and information documents have been prepared to inform the ad hoc open-ended working group for consideration on the matter at its second session: UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.2/4 and UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.2/INF/4Z.

Annex 2. Financial arrangements

18. This section of the skeleton corresponds to UNEA resolution, paragraph 5(i) “Options for voluntary financing of the work of the panel.”

19. The following working documents has been prepared to inform the ad hoc open-ended working group for consideration on the matter at its second session: UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.2/4.

Annex 3. Relationship with relevant key stakeholders

20. This section of the skeleton corresponds to UNEA resolution, paragraph 5(d) “Relationships of the panel with relevant key stakeholders, including governmental and non-governmental organizations, and civil society.”

21. The following working and information documents have been prepared to inform the ad hoc open-ended working group for consideration on the matter at its second session: UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.2/5 and UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.2/INF/5.

Annex 4. Process for determining and executing the work programme, including the prioritization criteria

22. This section of the skeleton corresponds to UNEA resolution, paragraph 5(e) “Processes for determining and executing the work programme of the panel.”

23. The following working and information documents have been prepared to inform the ad hoc open-ended working group for consideration on the matter at its second session: UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.2/6, UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.2/INF/6 and UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.2/INF/9.

Annex 5. Procedures for the review and adoption of reports

24. This section of the skeleton corresponds to UNEA resolution, paragraph 5(g) “Procedures for the review and adoption of reports and assessments produced by the panel.”

25. The following working and information documents have been prepared to inform the ad hoc open-ended working group for consideration on the matter at its second session: UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.2/6 and UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.2/INF/7.

Annex 6. Arrangements for identifying and engaging with experts

26. This section of the skeleton corresponds to UNEA resolution, paragraph 5(f) “Arrangements for identifying and engaging with experts to contribute to the work of the panel.”

27. The following working and information documents have been prepared to inform the ad hoc open-ended working group for consideration on the matter at its second session: UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.2/6 and UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.2/INF/7.

Annex 7. Conflict of interest policy

28. This section of the skeleton corresponds to UNEA resolution, paragraph 5(l) “Any other matters that the ad hoc open-ended working group believes should be addressed” and paragraph 6(f) that the ad hoc open-ended working group should take into account “the need to ensure that the panel has the ability to address potential conflicts of interest and safeguard commercially sensitive information.”

29. The following working and information documents have been prepared to inform the ad hoc open-ended working group for consideration on the matter at its second session: UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.2/6 and UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.2/INF/8.