



**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
First session**

Nairobi, 6 October 2022 and Bangkok, 30 January–3 February 2023*

**Scenario note for the resumed first 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**

Note by the secretariat

Introduction

1. At its resumed fifth session, the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), by its resolution 5/8, decided that a science-policy panel should be established to contribute further to the sound management of chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution, with details to be further specified according to the provisions of paragraphs 4 and 5 of the resolution.
2. In addition, the Environment Assembly decided to convene, subject to the availability of resources, an ad hoc open-ended working group that would begin its work in 2022, with the ambition of completing it by the end of 2024. The Assembly requested the Executive Director of 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. The present note has been prepared by the secretariat in the light of the initial exchange of views held during the first part of the first session of the ad hoc open-ended working group, held on 6 October 2022, and in consultation with the Bureau members elected at that meeting. It sets out proposed plans and general expectations for the resumed first session of the ad hoc open-ended working group in order to assist participants in their preparations.

I. Organization of work

4. The first session of the ad hoc open-ended working group is being held in two parts. The first part was held in Nairobi and online on 6 October 2022. The report of that meeting is set out in

* The first 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 is being held in two parts. The first part of the session was held in Nairobi on 6 October 2022, while the second part, namely the resumed first session, will be held in person in Bangkok from 30 January to 3 February 2023.

document UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.1/3. The resumed first session will be held from Monday, 30 January to Friday, 3 February 2023 at the United Nations Conference Centre in Bangkok.¹

5. Facilities will be made available for the preparatory meetings of regional and other groups on Sunday, 29 January 2023 at the same venue, prior to the formal opening of the meeting. Furthermore, multi-stakeholder technical deep-dive sessions on the scope and functions of the science-policy panel will be held in the margins of the resumed session of the ad hoc open-ended working group to further inform discussions regarding the panel's scope and functions. A tentative schedule for the resumed session is annexed to the present note.

6. The resumed first session will be held as an in-person meeting and will be conducted in the six official languages of the United Nations. The meeting will also be live-streamed online. The session will be held fully in person to accommodate the need to finalize the election of the Bureau of the ad hoc open-ended working group, including the election of the Chair, potentially through a secret ballot. Future meetings of the open-ended working group may be held in hybrid format, subject to the availability of funding.

7. Pursuant to paragraph 7 of Environment Assembly resolution 5/8, the Executive Director extended invitations to attend the session to representatives of Governments and regional economic integration organizations. Invitations to attend the meeting as observers were also extended to representatives of United Nations entities, 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. Organizations of major groups and stakeholders accredited to the Environment Assembly, the World Health Organization and the International Labour Organization, as well as stakeholders admitted as observers to the meetings of relevant chemicals- and waste-related multilateral environmental agreements, as well as focal points representing non-governmental organizations under the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management, were also invited to attend as observers. At its resumed first session, the ad hoc open-ended working group may wish to decide that a similar approach regarding the participation of observers should be followed for its subsequent sessions.

II. Election of officers

8. During the first part of its first session, the ad hoc open-ended working group elected the following officers, in accordance with rule 18 of the Environment Assembly rules of procedure:

Vice-Chairs: Linroy Christian (Antigua and Barbuda)
Salma Qadoori Jabir (Iraq)
Oumar Diaouré Cisse (Mali)
Saqlain Syedah (Pakistan)
Michel Tschirren (Switzerland)
Valentina Sierra (Uruguay)

Rapporteur: Cyrus Mageria (Kenya)

At that meeting, the ad hoc open-ended working group also agreed that Ms. Syedah would chair the meetings of the session pending the election of a Chair at the resumed session.

9. In the lead-up to the resumed first session, Ms. Qadoori Jabir (Iraq) resigned and was replaced by Li Jinhui (China) through a silent procedure in accordance with rule 19 of the Environment Assembly rules of procedure.

10. The ad hoc open-ended working group will therefore be invited to consider the election of the remaining officers, including the Chair, possibly through a secret ballot. The ad hoc open-ended working group will be invited to ensure adequate regional representation in the composition of the Bureau, while taking into account the need to ensure gender balance. Guidance on the procedure for elections to fill vacancies in the Bureau is set out in document UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.1/INF/8, which will be introduced by the secretariat through an informal briefing at the meeting venue on Sunday, 29 January between 5 and 5.45 p.m.

¹ Practical information for participants may be found in the logistics note available on the webpage of the meeting at www.unep.org/events/conference/oewg1-science-policy-panel-contribute-further-sound-management-chemicals-and.

III. General statements

11. During the first part of the first session of the open-ended working group, Member States and observers shared general statements and initial views in order to ensure that the process for the establishment of the science-policy panel would be as efficient and streamlined as possible, and to provide guidance on the planning process for the resumed first session. These views are reflected in the report of that meeting. The delivery of additional general statements at the resumed first session is not encouraged. Should Member States and observers wish to provide any general observations, they are invited to do so in writing. All such submissions will be posted on the event webpage.

IV. Proposed objective and work at the resumed first session

12. The aim of the resumed first session is to begin the work of developing proposals for the establishment of the science-policy panel to contribute further to the sound management of chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution, as called for under resolution 5/8. In the light of the discussions during the first part of the first session, and following guidance received from the Bureau, it is proposed that discussions begin on the proposals related to the scope and principal functions of the panel.

13. To facilitate the discussions, the secretariat has prepared working and information documents, which the ad hoc open-ended working group may wish to use as a basis for its deliberations.

A. Scope of a science-policy panel

14. With respect to the scope of the panel, the secretariat has prepared for consideration by the open-ended working group document UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.1/4, which provides a summary of the relevant background information on the matter. The document presents approaches drawn from the elements laid out in resolution 5/8, as well as a review of relevant existing science-policy interfaces, taking into account interventions made during the first part of the first session of the ad hoc open-ended working group and information shared during the webinar series² convened by the secretariat. The document describes an integrative approach to chemicals, waste and pollution as a basis for establishing the scope of the panel, which might allow the adoption of perspectives in the context of global value chains – including sectoral and chemicals value chains – in the consideration of issues. It also sets out possible steps that the ad hoc open-ended working group may wish to follow in implementing such an integrative approach. Finally, the document includes as an annex a thought starter on the interlinkages and differences between chemicals and waste management and the prevention of pollution.

15. The open-ended working group may wish to agree on a process for the development of a proposal on the scope of the panel. In doing so, it may wish to consider the aforementioned document, including the way forward suggested therein, and, in particular, to:

- (a) Consider whether the proposal for an integrated approach is a suitable way forward for establishing the scope of the panel, and whether any additional elements should be taken into account;
- (b) Consider the steps proposed for the establishment of the scope, and whether any additional elements require consideration;
- (c) Recommend any further activities to be undertaken during the intersessional period to support the provision of additional information for consideration by the ad hoc open-ended working group at its second session, including the development of a draft conceptual framework.

B. Principal functions of a science-policy panel

16. With respect to the functions of the panel, the secretariat has prepared for consideration by the open-ended working group document UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.1/5, which explores options for further elaborating on the principal functions set out in paragraph 2 of resolution 5/8 and a potential function on capacity-building that was mentioned during the first part of the first session. For each potential function, the document provides common definition(s), followed by an overview of relevant mandates and activities by existing science-policy bodies. Building on this review, the document identifies a range of approaches to implementing each function. It provides a comparative analysis of

² <https://www.unep.org/events/conference/oewg1-science-policy-panel-contribute-further-sound-management-chemicals-and>.

the approaches and associated implications for consideration by the ad hoc open-ended working group during its deliberations on the proposals for the principal functions of the panel.

17. The open-ended working group may wish to agree on a process for the development of a proposal on the functions of the panel. In doing so, it may wish to consider the aforementioned document, including the way forward suggested therein, and particularly to:

(a) Consider the options for a way forward presented under each of the relevant sections of the document with a view to providing guidance on possible intersessional work and on documents that could be prepared for its second session;

(b) Consider the overview of existing science-policy interfaces relating to the sound management of chemicals and waste and the prevention of pollution, using as a basis document UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.1/INF/4;

(c) In the light of its discussions on the principal functions of the panel, undertake a preliminary consideration and development of guidance on institutional arrangements, rules of procedure and policies for the panel. While the ad hoc open-ended working group may only consider these points in greater detail at its future sessions, such initial consideration would facilitate the development of options, if such work were to be agreed on. To facilitate a preliminary discussion on these matters, the ad hoc open-ended working group will have before it document UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.1/INF/7, which provides an inventory of existing rules and procedures of selected science-policy bodies, and document UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.1/INF/5/Rev.1, which offers a comparative analysis of existing scientific assessment structures.

C. Timetable and budgetary considerations for the work of the ad hoc open-ended working group

18. The ad hoc open-ended working group may wish to consider the proposed timetable and budgetary considerations presented in document UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.1/6.

19. In particular, it may wish to consider the overall approach to the negotiation process with regard to the proposed sequencing and clustering of issues, the proposed provisional timetable and workplan for conducting its work, as well as any intersessional work to be undertaken, including the development of supporting information.

20. The ad hoc open-ended working group may also wish to consider the funding and resources needed to facilitate the fulfilment of its mandate. In doing so, it may wish to consider the current budgetary situation and the status of extra-budgetary contributions provided by Member States to date, which are complemented by an allocation from the UNEP Environment Fund and additional contributions to cover the staff costs of the secretariat thus far, noting that the resources secured to date are only sufficient for the period March 2022–February 2023. The ad hoc open-ended working group may also wish to propose elements of a possible resource mobilization strategy to support its work as called for in resolution 5/8.

D. Organization of work at the resumed first session

21. The open-ended working group may wish to establish one or more contact groups or informal groups to engage in informal consultations. These groups should be provided with clear and concise mandates – for example, to consider the panel’s scope and functions, as well as the timetable, budget and sequencing of the open-ended working group’s future work.

22. The open-ended working group may wish to appoint representatives of Member States to act as co-facilitators for such informal consultations.

23. The outcome of any informal consultations should be reported to plenary for consideration and for possible reflection in the report of the session.

24. To ensure transparency and inclusivity for all delegations, including small delegations, the ad hoc open-ended working group may wish to limit the number of informal contact groups meeting simultaneously to two.

25. Only plenary meetings will be provided with interpretation in the six official languages of the United Nations. Informal consultations will be conducted in English only.

V. Possible outcomes of the resumed first session of the ad hoc open-ended working group

26. In the lead-up to the resumed first session, participants may wish to reflect on the desired outcomes of the session. Reasonable expectations might include that, at the resumed session, the ad hoc open-ended working group will:

- (a) Elect its remaining officers, including its Chair, and establish its full Bureau;
- (b) Agree on a process for the development of a proposal for the scope of the panel, and recommend any further activities to be undertaken during the intersessional period, including with respect to the development by the secretariat of a possible draft conceptual framework;
- (c) Agree on a process for the development of proposals for the principal functions of the panel, and recommend any further activities to be undertaken during the intersessional period, including with respect to the development by the secretariat of draft proposals on the related operating principles, procedures and institutional arrangements;
- (d) Initiate consideration of institutional arrangements as they relate to the scope and principal functions of the panel, including with regard to the landscape of existing science-policy interfaces, as well as rules of procedures and processes for the panel, and recommend any further work to be undertaken, including additional information or options to be developed by the secretariat;
- (e) Agree on the sequencing and clustering of issues for the conduct of its work and its completion by 2024, including consideration of the resources required to do so and the need for any intersessional work to be undertaken by the secretariat;
- (f) Provide further guidance to the secretariat on the dates and venues of its subsequent sessions, particularly its second session;
- (g) Propose elements of a resource mobilization strategy that would enable the working group to complete its work by 2024;
- (h) Confirm any additional intersessional work to be carried out, subject to the availability of funds, during the period leading up to the second session, including with respect to any calls for information from Member States and relevant stakeholders and the possible convening of regional meetings and/or stakeholder consultations, to be held, as far as possible, back to back with other relevant meetings and processes.

Annex
Tentative schedule for the resumed first 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

Sunday, 29 January 2023		Monday, 30 January 2023	Tuesday, 31 January 2023	Wednesday, 1 February 2023	Thursday, 2 February 2023	Friday, 3 February 2023
Informal preparatory meetings Meetings of regional and political groups Meetings of major groups and stakeholders <i>(timing to be determined by each group)</i> 5–5.45 p.m. – Informal secretariat briefing on the election of officers	8–9 a.m.	<i>OEWG Bureau meeting</i>	<i>OEWG Bureau meeting</i>	<i>OEWG Bureau meeting</i>	<i>OEWG Bureau meeting</i>	<i>OEWG Bureau meeting</i>
	9–10 a.m.	<i>Meetings of regional and political groups</i>	<i>Meetings of regional and political groups</i>	<i>Meetings of regional and political groups</i>	<i>Meetings of regional and political groups</i>	<i>Meetings of regional and political groups</i>
	10 a.m.–1 p.m.	Opening plenary* 1. Opening of the session 2. Election of officers 3. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters	Plenary* Agenda item 6 (<i>cont'd</i>) <i>Possible establishment of informal contact groups and appointment of co-facilitators</i>	Informal consultations**	Informal consultations**	Plenary* Conclusion of agenda item 5 Conclusion of agenda item 6: Consideration of the outcome of the informal consultations
	1–3 p.m.	Lunch break Multi-stakeholder technical deep-dive session on scope of the panel	Lunch break Multi-stakeholder technical deep-dive session on functions of the panel	Lunch break	Lunch break	Lunch break
	3–6 p.m.	Plenary* [4. General statements***] 5. Options for the timetable and organization of the work of the OEWG 6. Preparation of proposals for the establishment of a science-policy panel	Informal consultations**	Informal consultations** Plenary* [5–6 p.m.] Agenda item 5 (<i>cont'd</i>) Agenda Item 6 (<i>cont'd</i>) <i>Stock-taking of informal consultations</i>	Informal consultations**	Closing plenary* 7. Other matters 8. Adoption of the report of the session 9. Closure of the session
6.15 p.m. – <i>OEWG Bureau meeting</i>	6–7 p.m.	6.30 p.m. – <i>Reception (hosted by the Government of Thailand)</i>	Break	Break	Break	
	7–9 p.m.		Informal consultations** – TBC	Informal consultations** – TBC	Informal consultations** – TBC	

* Plenary meetings take place in the main plenary hall of ESCAP and are interpreted into the six official languages of the United Nations.

** Informal consultations are conducted in English only.

*** Since general statements were delivered at the meeting of 6 October 2022, delegations are encouraged to refrain from delivering additional general statements at this meeting, so that more time can be devoted to substantive discussions under agenda items 5 and 6. Should Member States and observers wish to provide any general observations, they are invited to do so in writing.