

Operating Principles Governing the Work of the Panel

Request for Written Submissions from Member States and Relevant Stakeholders

Member states, during the resumed first session of the Open-ended Working Group (OEWG1.2), requested the Secretariat of the OEWG to solicit written submissions from Member States and relevant stakeholders regarding the operating principles governing the work of the panel.

In support of this request, the Secretariat conducted a webinar (on 26 April 2023) dedicated to the issue of operating principles. In advance of the webinar, the Secretariat released a background document which provides a comparative overview of operating principles of relevant, existing science-policy panels (IPCC, IPBES, IRP and GEO). The recording of the webinar can be found on [this website](#), when available, and the background document is available at [this link](#).

A variety of potential operating principles are presented below, based on the analysis performed for this [background document](#). The following questions in no way attempt to rank or preclude consideration of the operating principles of the future SPP, rather, they draw from the agreed text of Resolution 5/8 and other existing, relevant science-policy bodies, as well as the discussions at the OEWG. You may also suggest relevant potential operating principles that have not been identified yet.

Member States are invited to provide submissions through their respective national focal points (list of focal points available [at this link](#)). Non-government stakeholders are invited to submit their submissions on behalf of their organization or group. You are invited to respond to all or some of the questions below. Once complete, please submit this filled document to SPP-CWP@un.org. All submissions will be uploaded online and will inform a working document to be considered at OEWG 2.

Contact information

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Who are you submitting on behalf of?

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The following elements are included in Resolution 5/8. Please indicate by clicking on the box(es) where you believe these elements should be included (i.e., operating principles, rules of procedure, guidelines, or other relevant documents, or if they are not relevant). Some key terms have been grouped together for the purpose of this tabular analysis, there is inevitably some overlap across principles.

	Operating Principle	Rules of Procedure	Guidelines	Other	Not relevant
CREDIBILITY					
Robustness/Rigour	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Integrity/Objectivity / Independence/Impartiality/ Lack of Bias (avoiding conflicts of interest)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Interdisciplinary / Multidisciplinary / Balance of disciplines	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
RELEVANCE/SALIENCE					
Policy-relevant (and not policy prescriptive)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
LEGITIMACY					
Inclusivity/Balance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
-- indigenous inclusivity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
-- geographic balance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
-- regional balance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
-- gender balance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
-- balance of disciplines (see also Credibility/Interdisciplinary...)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
CROSS-CUTTING THEMES					
Transparency	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Flexibility	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Coordination (without duplication) / Complementarity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cost-Effectiveness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please provide any relevant comments on your choices above:

The UK view is that Operating Principles should provide the high-level commitments which guide the Panel and its Member States in all aspects of its work. These may, in turn, be realised through the Rules of Procedure (the agreed ways of working adopted by the Panel and its governing bodies) and any further guidelines that are developed and updated to assist the Panel in completing its work.

We have shared further detail below on why we have suggested certain elements fall into these different categories.

Operating Principles: *Integrity/Objectivity / Independence/Impartiality/ Lack of Bias (avoiding conflicts of interest); Interdisciplinary / Multidisciplinary / Balance of disciplines; Policy-relevant (and not policy prescriptive); Inclusivity/Balance; Transparency; Coordination (without duplication)/Complementarity.*

We assess that independence, a multidisciplinary nature and policy-relevance are essential operating principles that were included in the UNEA 5 resolution and are prominent characteristics of other intergovernmental panels. The SPP should be independent be able to meet the needs of a broad range of Multi-lateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) without strong links to a specific MEA. Alongside that, coordination is a key element to integrate different sectors, prevent working in silos, and ensure applicability, whilst making the most of learning from others' experiences and processes.

Inclusivity is an important topic for both capacity building and policy relevance to enable the use of the panel's outputs by all regions, and ensure all consequences of a particular issue can be addressed. When considering assessment, this may be more nuanced due to the current imbalance in gender- or geographic-specific data-gathering and -sharing globally, and so the Panel may wish to discuss whether the creation of specific guidelines on this issue could be helpful. It is imperative that development of this panel includes a broad range of stakeholders with regular opportunity to contribute towards the SPP vision and implementation, either through review or sharing their expertise on assessment reports and other outputs to ensure balanced approaches. To assure that it will be important for the SPP to manage conflict of interest and maintain transparency on who is writing or affiliations. These have been included in Operating Principles with understanding that they could also be relevant within in rules of procedure and guidelines.

It's worth noting that "balance of disciplines" is included both in the Credibility and Legitimacy sections; we felt inclusion within the Credibility section was sufficient.

Rules of Procedure: *Indigenous inclusivity; regional balance; flexibility; cost-effectiveness*

More cross cutting elements, such as flexibility and cost effectiveness could be agreed to be embedded in ways of working and thus are relevant for rules of procedure. There are existing examples of Rules of Procedure for assuring gender balance and regional balance, as well as inclusiveness for indigenous groups in other international bodies and Multilateral Environmental Agreements. This is also felt appropriate for the SPP. This could also be included within the quality assurance or review stage of assessments quite easily.

Guidelines: *Robustness/Rigour; geographic balance; balance of disciplines*

Guidelines can then assist Member States or the Panel to implement other elements. They can be adapted and are therefore potentially more flexible than Rules of Procedure and Operating Principles. In particular, how assessments are made, interpreted for policy usage or how the Panel ensures that data reflects specific characteristics under the Operating Principle of Inclusivity / Balance (such as gender, balance of disciplines or geography) could benefit from having guidelines. For example, policy relevance could require a prioritisation based on a critical location for ecosystem/species impact or intervention on a specific pollution type or source, as ecosystem effects and sources of chemicals, waste and pollution can be biased toward a hotspot, sector or area of impact. This helps to ensure assessments are usable, relevant and adaptable for the global as well as national contexts.

The following table includes other elements that may be considered. Please indicate by clicking on the box(es) where you believe these elements should be included (i.e., operating principles, rules of procedure, guidelines, or other relevant documents, or if they are not relevant). It is also possible to add additional potential operating principles to be considered.

OTHER	Operating Principle	Rules of Procedure	Guidelines	Other	Not relevant
Promotion of innovation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comprehensive, holistic, or integrative approach	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Consensus based approach	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Providing accessible outputs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Others -	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please provide any relevant comments on your choices above:

Operating Principles: In particular a holistic, integrative approach was considered to be a fundamental aspect of the SPP that should be an Operating Principle to ensure its ability to take account of the complexity of global supply chains and how those interact with the natural environment and organisms.

Rules of Procedure: Accessible outputs and a consensus based approach were considered important to be Rules of Procedure as they are fundamental to a fully functioning panel that meets needs at a global scale and drives balance in operation as well as data sharing and assessment.

Guidelines: The UK suggested the addition of “Promotion of innovation” during the OEWG1.2 contact group discussion on the science-policy panel’s objective. We felt that the resources the panel produces, including assessment reports, should encourage innovation when highlighting an important issue and the knowledge gaps or options for policy makers available. This would not only increase the policy relevance of reports, but highlight the benefits of sustainable innovation alongside the risks of mismanagement. This approach would build towards the legacy and impact of the panel, but requires further thought by the panel about the scope of innovation and relevance to assessment. As such the UK considers it may initially be reflected in guidelines and in time could be included in the Rules of Procedure or Operating

Principles once the mechanism is established. This would ensure resources are not wasted and aid in achieving objectives of sustainable management of chemicals, waste and the prevention of pollution, encouraging the use of improved/alternative methods in countries that may not have begun a harmful process.

Please provide your written submission in the space below:

The UK has nothing further to add at this stage.