

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

What is your name/surname?

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What is your country?

[Saudi Arabia](#)

What is your title?

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Who are you submitting on behalf of?

Saudi Arabia Delegation

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	Relevant Rules of Procedure	Guidelines /	Other Relevant TORs	Not relevant
CREDIBILITY					
Robustness/Rigour	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Integrity/Objectivity / Independence/Impartiality/ Lack of Bias (avoiding conflicts of interest)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Interdisciplinary / Multidisciplinary / Balance of disciplines	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
RELEVANCE/SALIENCE					
Policy-relevant (and not policy prescriptive)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
LEGITIMACY					
Inclusivity/Balance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
-- indigenous inclusivity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
-- geographic balance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
-- regional balance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
-- gender balance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
-- balance of disciplines (see also Credibility/Interdisciplinary...)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
CROSS-CUTTING THEMES					
Transparency	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cost-Effectiveness	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please provide any relevant comments on your choices above:

1. Saudi Arabia submission refers to the Panel under consideration as "SPP".

2. The panel principle should provide the guiding elements of the role and work of the panel and its membership. In the table above, Saudi Arabia notes the key elements of the SPP principles. We also list additional elements in our text in the last page of our submission.

3. It is important to develop a set of procedures to address each of the different key processes such as assessment, horizon scanning, elections, and finance. Isolation of procedures by process allows better focus for each process and allows easier future reviews of procedures. Saudi Arabia notes the elements of the procedures in the table above depending on the relevant process. For example, “Policy relevant” is applicable to Assessment Reports Review procedure but might not be relevant to “finance” procedure. Therefore, we noted the column of “Rules of Procedure” as Relevant RoPs.

4. The SPP ‘Bureau’, ‘Panel’, and other committees or groups to be established under the SPP, should have clear and well-defined Terms of References including the membership and functions. In the table above, Saudi Arabia noted the key elements of the relevant TORs which might defer based on the subject of the TOR.

5. In addition, one word does not represent a principle or RoP, the element should include complete definition of what would constitute the principle. For example, flexibility can be an overarching theme and it is only meaningful depending on the context. Therefore, the applicability of the elements in the table above, are based on the context in which they will appear not as an abstract concept.

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	Relevant Rules of Procedure	Guidelines/	Other Relevant TORs	Not relevant
Promotion of innovation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comprehensive, holistic, or integrative approach	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Consensus based approach	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 [please add] please see our comments below.	<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:

1. Please see our comments on the previous table regarding the relevancy of the elements proposed. *Same comments are applicable here.*
2. According to Para 5 (j) of resolution 5/8, the ad hoc open-ended working group required to develop separate rules of procedure and operating principles for SPP. Saudi Arabia would like to highlight the importance of supporting consensus-based approach for operating principles, rules of procedure, and guidelines of SPP.

Please provide your written submission in the space below:

Operating principles of the panel should cover all the mandated elements as listed in UN Environment Assembly Resolution 5/8 (Science-policy panel to contribute further to the sound management of chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution), taking in consideration all the elements under para 6 of resolution. Furthermore, Saudi Arabia suggests that development of the Science Policy Panel Principals and Rules of Procedures can be structured as follows.

First: Principles governing the work of the Science Policy Panel. Principles set out the mandate and the membership of the body and describe how it works. Principles should include:

- 1) **The Role.**
 - a. Reflects the agreed mandate in the previous session.
 - b. Emphasis that the assessments and horizon scanning reports should be neutral with respect to policy and do not include any policy prescriptive elements.
 - c. Reviews of reports include both peer review by experts and review by governments.
- 2) **The Organization.**
 - a. Panel: To take major decisions in plenary meetings
 - b. Bureau: To provide scientific and technical expertise with a balanced geographic representation
 - c. Working Groups and Task Forces: With defined and approved mandates and work plans as established by the Panel.
- 3) **Participation.**
 - a. The panel should be open to all UNEP and UN Member countries.
 - b. Invitations to participate in all activities shall be extended to Governments and other bodies by the Chairman of the body.
 - c. Governments should be informed in advance of invitations extended to experts from their countries and they may nominate additional experts.

Second: Procedures for main processes. It is important to have well-defined operating principle to avoid any kind of misinterpretation, misunderstandings as well as misconduct. As isolation of procedures by process allows better focus for each process and allows easier future reviews of procedures, specially that the panel has distinct functions (assessment and horizon scanning) each requires separate procedure.

- A) Assessment Process

- B) Horizon Scanning Process
- C) Elections of the Bureau
- D) Finance
- E) Others as needed

Third: Terms of Reference of the SPP Bureau and any future committee. These will set out the membership and the roles and responsibilities of the bureau and any future committees. See the tables above for specific elements.

Additional important elements not included in the tables above:

1. The work of the panel should take into account the national circumstances and respective capabilities of countries.
2. Provide policy-relevant information, but not policy-prescriptive advice, without overlapping of the respective mandates of the multilateral environmental agreements.
3. Independence is critical for ensuring that the SPP is not unduly influenced by external pressures or interests. The SPP should be free to conduct its work without interference from stakeholders or other external parties.
4. Should have the necessary resources and support to carry out its mandate effectively. This can help ensure that the SPP's decisions are not influenced by political or other considerations.
5. Collaboration and consensus-building are important for ensuring that the SPP's decisions are informed and will gain the acceptance of all member countries. There policy relevant outcomes have to be negotiated fully and thoroughly by the parties.
6. Decision-making should be based on consensus in order to promote unity and coherence in its outcomes.
7. Capacity building through provisions of financial, technical, and technological support to developing countries.
8. Major decisions should be based on technical, scientific, and socioeconomics to ensure sustainable outcomes of sound management of chemicals and waste