

# 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](mailto: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?

Canada

What is your title?

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What is your email address?

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Who are you submitting on behalf of?

Canada

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             |
|--|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>CREDIBILITY</b>   |                                     |                                     |                                     |                                     |                          |
| Robustness/Rigour  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Interdisciplinary / Multidisciplinary / Balance of disciplines                                   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>RELEVANCE/SALIENCE</b>  |                                     |                                     |                                     |                                     |                          |
| Policy-relevant (and not policy prescriptive)  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>LEGITIMACY</b>  |                                     |                                     |                                     |                                     |                          |
| Inclusivity/Balance  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| -- indigenous inclusivity  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| -- geographic balance  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| -- regional balance  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| -- gender balance  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| -- balance of disciplines (see also Credibility/Interdisciplinary...)                            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Health sector engagement   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>CROSS-CUTTING THEMES</b>  |                                     |                                     |                                     |                                     |                          |
| Transparency   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Flexibility  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Coordination (without duplication) / Complementarity   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Cost-Effectiveness   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**Please provide any relevant comments on your choices above:**

- Canada supports the inclusion of the operating principles identified by the secretariat in the table above given that they are all included in UNEA resolution 5/8. In our view these are necessary elements to set a strong foundation upon which the panel can successfully produce credible, consensus-building, comprehensive, forward-looking and impactful outputs, and to build a positive reputation while doing so.
- While operating principles are necessary to shape the work and outputs of the panel, they are not sufficient to translate ideas and ambitions into concrete actions and results. Canada considers that their operationalization requires the development of more detailed rules and/or policies that assign responsibilities and that set out specific actions, requirements, and processes that must be undertaken in a specific way; or guidelines / policy documents when processes are more flexible or would necessitate a continuous update to improve the panel's processes and outputs. In the above table there is not a full list of what those other documents would constitute, nor is there a description or definition of those. In absence of these, and with a view to document the reasons for which all the boxes above are checked, we provide examples below of certain aspects that could be reflected in those types of documents to ensure the operating principles are operationalized through-out the organization.

**Credibility:**

- With regard to the operating principle on credibility, Canada is of the view that the credibility of the research and scientific information provided by the panel depends upon the integrity of the process by which such information is produced, collected, managed, shared, and communicated. It is expected that credibility of the panel would, in turn, translate in trust from member states, stakeholders, and the public in the outcomes and results of the work of the panel. Therefore, it is Canada's view that the operating principle on credibility and integrity is a priority, and certain aspects should be operationalized through rules of procedure and guidelines, etc. that set relevant, applicable, and recognized standards of scientific excellence and research ethics that all members contributing to the work of the panel need follow, such as:
  - Refraining from representing or advocating the views or interests of the bodies which nominated them and declare any real, potential or perceived conflicts of interest, financial and otherwise.
  - Mapping out processes to manage various situations of perceived or actual conflict of interest, as stated in the UNEA 5/8 Resolution.
  - Ensuring that the conduct of research and science, and their products, as well as any associated communications, are free from political, commercial, client and stakeholder interference.
  - Accurately representing and appropriately acknowledging the contributions of all experts to research or scientific work.
  - Safeguarding and managing responsibly information and knowledge, including commercially sensitive information, indigenous and traditional knowledge, and local knowledge, etc.

**Relevance/saliency**

- With regard to the operating principle on relevance/saliency, Canada is of the view that this is a key principle in importance underlying the success of the panel. It is our view that the Panel must be able to clearly differentiate its work from the work of other entities already contributing to addressing some issues related to chemicals and waste, and in this vein, more specifically it must have the ability to undertake foresight types of assessments. The panel should also be able to contribute in an effective and urgent manner, within its scope, to addressing the triple planetary crisis. The operationalization of this principle may require the development of procedures, guidelines or policies, etc. to ensure the

policy-relevance of research and assessments. This might be where aspects such as innovation and future-proofing could be explored.

Legitimacy:

- With regard to the operating principle on legitimacy, Canada is of the view that inclusivity and balance of views stemming from an inclusive structure and process for the panel will provide better outputs. Canada considers this principle as key on its own, but also as one supporting the principles of relevance and credibility. Canada views as necessary the establishment of mechanisms, , to allow for the selection and participation of experts with a broad range of expertise and academic backgrounds, beyond the natural sciences, including indigenous knowledge holders and local knowledge holders. These mechanisms should also ensure balanced and equitable gender, geographical, and regional representation and enable collaboration with organizations and stakeholders that promote social justice and the rights of underrepresented and disproportionately affected populations. Canada’s view is that broad and inclusive participation, consultations and reviews, not limited to member states, on draft reports are key for identifying ethnic, racial, and cultural biases, for ensuring the reports are accessible to non-scientists, for building broad support for the final outputs, and for ensuring that these address the needs and priorities of developing countries. Initial thoughts on mechanisms needed to operationalize the above could include:
  - Rules of procedures related to inclusiveness on how the panel will carry out its functions, including the development of assessments, to achieve balanced and equitable gender, geographical, and regional representation in the selection of the panel’s bureau, governance body, expert/technical groups, authors, and reviewers, etc.
  - Guidelines and policies, etc. to engage and work with indigenous peoples and knowledge and with local knowledge in order to facilitate their participation in the panel’s activities.
  - Guidelines and policies, etc to achieve gender mainstreaming and to integrate perspectives of underrepresented and disproportionately affected populations throughout the work of the panel.
- With regard to one of the operating principle, under the legitimacy section below, requiring the panel to meaningfully engage the health sector in its work, specifics may be established through rules of procedure, policies, etc. regarding the engagement of the World Health Organization or other experts within the health sector, in assessments that evaluate the impacts of chemicals, waste, and/or pollution on human health.

**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.**

| <b>OTHER</b>                                     | Operating Principle                 | Rules of Procedure                  | Guidelines                          | Other                    | Not relevant             |
|--|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Promotion of innovation                          | <input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Consensus based approach                         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Providing accessible outputs                     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Others [please add]                              |                                     |                                     |                                     |                          |                          |

|                                   |                                     |                                     |                                     |                                     |                          |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Urgency to act                    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Youth involvement                 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Precautionary principle/ approach | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Respect                           | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**Please provide any relevant comments on your choices above:**

- With regard to the operating principle on innovation, Canada would like to see more details to better understand what this concept entails. Canada welcomes promotion of innovation but we question how the panel would operationalize this as a principle while ensuring the outputs do not point to specific policies, technologies, approaches, and/or alternatives to address issues and challenges.
- While Canada views chemicals, waste, and pollution are closely interconnected and interrelated issues, we recognize that in some circumstances it may be more appropriate to consider and focus on chemicals, waste, and pollution issues separately. In our view, it would be beneficial to develop guidelines to help determine when this approach would be more suitable. Canada's view is that generally, when developing assessments or studies, or other outputs on any issues, the panel's work should consider chemicals management throughout the lifecycle--including waste, and assess challenges and opportunities associated with prevention of pollution.
- Canada is a strong supporter of the consensus-based approach. However, we recognize the need for an alternative decision-making mechanism if consensus cannot be achieved. The alternative decision-making mechanism must be clearly laid out in the rules of procedure in order to operationalize this principle.
- Canada recommends considering the ideas above such as the urgency to act now to address the triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution, as well as principles highlighting the importance to meaningfully engage young people, to recognize and promote the precautionary principle/approach, and to promote respectful relationships holistically in the panel's work. These are crucial elements given the complexity of the issues to be addressed by the panel and the need to inspire, prepare, and unlock the potential of future generations to undertake the panel's work. Some of these aspects are included in the proposed draft principles below while others are the subject of standalone principles in the last section below.
- Canada suggests consideration of a principle promoting respectful relationships for activities undertaken by the panel and in interactions with members, stakeholders, public, etc. Mechanisms related to complaints and dispute resolution could be developed in support of this principle.

**Please provide your written submission in the space below:**

**Potential Operating Principles for the Science-Policy Panel to Contribute Further to the Sound Management of Chemicals and Waste and to Prevent Pollution:**

- In its preamble, the UNEA resolution 5/8 recognizes the importance of science-based assessments and acknowledges "that of that improving the availability of scientific information and assessments can address capacity challenges, enable more effective and efficient action to minimize and prevent the adverse impact of the unsound management of chemicals and waste, and prevent pollution."

Canada's view is that is the essence of the work of the panel and a limited number of overarching operating principles should enable it to achieve this work soundly.

- Canada envisions a set of operating principles that are drafted in general terms to highlight the panel's overarching priorities, values, characteristics, that will guide its work. These principles would rarely need to be revised once the panel has been established.
- The text below provides potential wording for certain operating principles that constitute a priority for Canada.

### **Operating principles for the Panel:**

#### **Credibility**

- Uphold and conform to standards of excellence accepted by the wider research and scientific community and ensure integrity in the processes by which information is produced, collected, managed, shared, and communicated. This includes operating in a manner to maintain the integrity of the scientific processes by following robust, clear, credible, unbiased, representative, and defensible methodologies and peer review procedures, making decisions in a transparent, impartial, and independent manner, and averting any conflict of interest.

#### **Relevance/Salience**

- Deliver evidence-based policy options in an objective manner, that are relevant and timely to current and future needs of users, particularly developing countries, in their tackling of issues related to chemicals, waste and pollution prevention and that can contribute in an effective manner to addressing the triple planetary crisis; and provides flexibility to anticipate, respond, and adapt to the extent possible to the evolving issues and priorities identified by member states,
- Commit to considering and encouraging innovation in order to reach sustained, scalable, and practical policy relevant solutions to complex problems related to the unsound management of chemicals and waste and to pollution, while improving the lives of underrepresented and disproportionately affected populations, especially women, children, youth, workers, and indigenous peoples.
- Strive to ensure that outputs and underlying methodologies, knowledge base and environmental data are accessible by member states and stakeholders to support policy-making, decision-making and strengthening of the science-policy interface.

#### **Flexibility (included in the section on relevancy/saliency)**

#### **Legitimacy**

- Ensure interdisciplinarity and involvement of experts with a broad range of expertise, including social and natural scientists. Specifically strive to involve and collaborate with the health sector, and with the World Health Organization (WHO) in particular, to ensure its credibility with regards to its ability to cover health impacts related to chemicals, waste, and pollution.
- Ensure involvement and strive to collaborate with organizations and stakeholders that promote social justice and the rights of underrepresented and disproportionately affected populations, especially women, children, youth, workers, and indigenous peoples, given the disproportionate impacts that chemicals, waste, and pollution issues have on these groups.

- Strive to include the contribution of indigenous knowledge and local knowledge to the sound management of chemicals, waste, and pollution prevention in the work of the panel, particularly on matters that affect them.
- Ensure a balanced geographical and regional representation, and gender balance, equity and mainstreaming in its in its composition and in all aspects of its work.

### **Cross-cutting**

- Promote coordination, cooperation, and complementarity with relevant multilateral agreements and other international instruments and intergovernmental bodies addressing chemicals and waste and pollution prevention, and avoid duplication of work.
- Strive and use all best endeavours to reach consensus in taking decisions, and approving, adopting, and accepting reports and other outputs.
- Operate in an efficient and effective manner, including ensuring respectful relationships are established all-around in the work of the panel, in striving to achieve the highest impacts.

### **Other**

- Consider chemicals, waste, and pollution as closely interconnected and interrelated when addressing issues or undergoing assessments. The panel, however, must have the ability to consider and focus, if appropriate, on the three main elements of chemicals, waste, and pollution separately.
- Emphasizing the urgency to act now to address the triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution and promote the precautionary principle, which indicates that lack of scientific certainty shall not be used as a reason to postpone action to avoid potentially serious or irreversible harm to the environment.