

# Needs and Questions the Panel May Handle

## 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 input from Member States and relevant stakeholders regarding the **needs** and **questions** the panel may handle in order to inform negotiations through the OEWG process (OEWG2 and OEWG3).

In support of this request, 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. 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 be summarized in an INF document in order to inform the work undertaken at OEWG2 and OEWG3.

Please complete and submit this form by 5 September 2023.

Several documents prepared by the secretariat for OEWG1.2 are of relevance to this submission, including:

- The Mapping and Gap analysis that was presented at UNEA 4 ([UNEP/EA.4/INF.9](#))
- The UNEP report “Assessment of options for strengthening the science-policy interface at the international level for the sound management of chemicals and waste” <https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/33808/OSSP.pdf>
- UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.1/INF/1 - [UNEA Resolution 5/8 entitled “Science-policy panel to contribute further to the sound management of chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution”](#)
- The stakeholder survey conducted between OEWG 1.1 and OEWG 1.2, which was summarized in Information document “Stakeholder Engagement Feedback” ([UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.1/INF/6](#))
- Reports of OEWG1.1 and OEWG1.2, available with all other meeting documents on the [OEWG website](#)

### Contact information

What is your name/surname?

Sarah Douglass

Who are you submitting on behalf of?

The Australian Government

Are you a national focal point?

Yes

What is your country?

Australia

What is your title?

Assistant Director, Chemicals and Atmosphere Branch. Australian Government Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water

What is your gender?

Female

What is your email address?

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**1. Please list and if appropriate briefly describe, your preference for which needs the panel may handle. (If possible, please rank your responses, where 1 indicates your top preference):**

Australia's priority is to develop a body that embodies scientific quality and integrity, produces timely, policy-relevant, and concrete deliverables and recommendations, that draws its legitimacy from being fair, transparent and independent, and ensures appropriate representation.

A further priority for Australia is that the Panel supports the needs of our region, including Pacific Island Countries, and is respectful of, and responsive to, Indigenous and local knowledge.

- 1) For the Panel to ensure scientific quality, legitimacy, relevance and impact, it will need comprehensive and effective data collation, knowledge management and communications protocols and systems established as a matter of priority. To the extent possible and in accordance with requirements of individual data providers, data used should follow the FAIR principles (findable, accessible, interoperable, and reusable) for data management and stewardship. Integration of different fields of expertise such as data science and machine learning at an early stage could assist with challenges on accessibility and sharing to bring knowledge together.

In support of views raised through the [Multistakeholder Workshop](#) convened by International Panel on Chemical Pollution in 2018, the Australian Government supports the following additional needs identified in order of priority:

- 2) preparing and publishing rigorous, authoritative assessments and horizon-scanning products that collect, digest and process fragmented pieces of scientific information on specific issues into a comprehensive, yet easily accessible format for policy makers. These products should help to reduce the complexity and ambiguity of such scientific information for non-experts and to raise policy makers' confidence and trust in using such scientific evidence;
- 3) raising awareness of chemicals and waste issues, and the interrelationship between them, among policy makers and the general public;
- 4) increasing government and stakeholder understanding and utilization of final products (e.g. scientific assessments) through early involvement in the development process;
- 5) enabling scientists to better understand their roles, be aware of opportunities to be involved, and to understand the specific needs (e.g., timelines and key actors) to participate more effectively in policy processes;
- 6) providing a reference point for stakeholders/governments to source relevant information from a trusted source, and keeping them up-to-date with the rapidly developing, often cross-cutting chemical landscape in a timely manner;
- 7) raising the profile of, and demand for, related disciplines at universities to create incentives for scientists to participate in policy processes in addition to their research work; and
- 8) developing scientific consensus on certain issues, while ensuring that the work toward consensus does not preclude timely action on chemicals issues.

**2. Please provide any relevant comments on the needs you have listed above:**

Addressing the global pollution crisis requires concerted action, reliable funding, and effective global collaboration. With particular regard to funding, the financing mechanism for the Panel should enable integration with existing multilateral environmental programs to ensure efficiency and effectiveness. We would appreciate further consideration by the OEWG of the Global Environment Facility as the primary financing mechanism for the Science Policy Panel.

**3. Please list, and if appropriate briefly describe, your preference for which questions the panel may handle. (If possible, please rank your responses, where 1 indicates your top preference):**

- 1) Should priorities be set for individual chemicals or groups of chemicals?
- 2) How could a transparent nomination process for identifying emerging policy issues be designed, including use of clear criteria?
- 3) What regulatory and policy signals could be set to support global supply chain transparency and informed chemical substitution?
- 4) What is the role of science in identifying and agreeing on issues/priorities and how do other considerations weigh in (such as sociological factors, including intergenerational equity, and economic and technological aspects)?

**4. Please provide any relevant comments on the questions you have listed above:**

The questions that the panel handles should be determined by a clear and transparent prioritization process that is responsive to the needs of all stakeholders and respectful of different perspectives. This process needs to be transparent, scientifically robust, responsive to new and emerging science, and with multi-sector input.

The following factors are critical for a successful prioritisation framework:

- Incorporating risk-based scientific approaches which include exposure and effects assessments with the purpose of protecting human health and the environment;
- Holistic consideration of direct and indirect impacts to human (health, societies, food and water securities, economies) and environmental (biota, ecosystems, climate, biodiversity, services) systems;
- Developing scientifically defensible measures of progress on key global pollution issues;
- Recognition of spatial and temporal trends in chemicals, waste, sources, receptors, effects, and how they affect current and projected risk; and
- Developing effective approaches to communication of complex scientific information and conclusions which are accessible to all stakeholders.