

# 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?

Nichols

Who are you submitting on behalf of?

United States of America

Are you a national focal point?

yes

What is your country?

United States of America

What is your title?

Click or tap here to enter text.

What is your gender?

Click or tap here to enter text.

What is your email address?

nicholses@state.gov

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

The United States appreciates the opportunity to submit its views regarding the types of needs countries may have regarding the sound management of chemicals and waste and prevention of pollution within their national territories, and the subsequent questions the Panel may handle in order to support those needs.

The United States believes that the primary purpose of the Panel should be to address the needs of developing countries. Through this survey, we look forward to learning more about such needs and the opportunities for the Panel to help support those needs. We view this survey as a first step that can inform a more structured and detailed dialogue or process to identify needs, opportunities, and priorities. What the United States can contribute to this process at this point are views about the types of information from countries that could be useful to the Panel in designing products and activities, identifying priorities, and developing a specific work plan.

In the U.S. view, the Science Policy Panel should be a cost-effective and country-driven panel that provides best available data and practical information to put forward science-based policy and regulatory actions that advance the sound management of chemicals and waste at national and regional levels and contributes to the prevention of all forms of pollution, including pollution related to chemicals, waste, and releases to air, water, soil, and the oceans.

For example, we envision that developing countries may wish for scientific support to determine which chemicals and waste are the greatest priority for improved management, and to identify the barriers to improved chemicals management at their national level. This information will help countries identify which issues of priority concerns are not addressed under existing chemicals and waste multilateral agreements and begin to identify sources and sound management techniques. Such information may be applicable across the full scope of chemical and waste management and pollution prevention issues, including pollution released to air, water, soil, and the oceans. The Panel could provide this information through facilitating information-sharing, or through assessments of best practices.

We also envision that developing countries may wish for scientific information on the best methods and practices associated with pollution source apportionment studies, as well as scientific models for assessing the impact ex ante of potential control measure policies. This

information will help countries design cost-effective strategies for associated control measures and policies, contribute to necessary citizen 'source awareness', generate political will necessary for greater mitigation implementation and find associated sources of funding. Such information may be applicable across the full scope of chemical and waste management and pollution prevention issues, including pollution released to air, water, soil, and the oceans. The Panel could provide this information through facilitating information-sharing, or through assessments of best practices.

In addition, developing countries may have other very specific needs, focused on specific chemicals, pollutants, sources, sectors, or areas of science or policy expertise. The current survey's open-ended questions are a useful starting point for such a dialogue and may elicit a wide range of responses. However, the responses are also likely to vary in the level of specificity and the amount of context provided. Thus, it may be difficult to translate such responses into specific activities and products that would successfully address the needs and questions of the countries.

To guide the development of a work plan for the Panel, it will likely be necessary to gather additional information from developing countries that more systematically assesses the specific areas of need, the opportunities for the Panel to contribute to addressing those needs, and the potential value of different types of specific Panel activities or products.

For example, countries have differing access to science-policy advice within their countries and differing levels of participation in MEAs and multilateral regional institutions. Where countries get their information and the institutions in which they cooperate are potential audiences for the Panel's products or participants in its activities. Thus, it would be useful to ask countries:

- In your country, what organizations provide scientific input to public policy (governmental) decisions about the sound management of chemicals and waste and prevention of pollution? Such organizations may include government agencies, industry and industrial associations, academic institutions, or civil society and advocacy groups.
- Does your country cooperate with neighboring countries to address issues related to the sound management of chemicals and waste and prevention of pollution? If yes, is there a bilateral or multilateral agreement or organization under which this cooperation takes place? Please explain.
- Is your country a signatory to the following MEAs?
  - Minamata
  - Stockholm
  - Basel
  - Rotterdam
  - Other:

As mentioned above, countries may want assistance regarding specific issues or problems, or assistance developing a specific type of expertise or capacity. Their needs may be related to problems that are of greatest concern in their country, or their needs may be related to identifying priorities across problems or identifying emerging issues that have not yet been recognized as problems. It would be useful to ask countries:

- What are the chemicals/waste/pollution issues or sources that are of greatest concern in your country?
- In your country, what are the most important challenges associated with the sound management of chemicals and waste and prevention of pollution?
- What additional type of scientific information or technical capacities would be most useful for the Panel to provide to your country to strengthen the sound management of chemicals and waste and prevention of pollution?
  - Are there particular pollutants or sources for which additional information is needed?
  - Are there specific types of expertise or capacity this is needed?

Even if countries agree on what needs or questions are the most important for the Panel to address, there may be a wide variety of ways in which the Panel could address the need or question, including but not limited to assessment reports, guidance documents, training programs, workshops, information clearinghouses, etc. Some of types of Panel products or activities will be useful for some countries, and not for others, given differences in their country circumstances. it would be useful to ask countries:

- What types of products that could be produced by the Panel would be useful to inform the sound management of chemicals and waste and the prevention of pollution in your country:
  - Global scale assessments of specific pollutants, sectors, or practices
  - Compilation and comparison of best practices from different countries
  - Training Webinars and/or Recorded Training Videos
  - In Person Training and Conferences
  - Online Information Libraries
- What types of technical capacity or expertise are most needed in your country to strengthen the sound management of chemicals and waste and the prevention of pollution?
  - Emissions and Release Quantification
  - Environmental and Human Exposure Monitoring
  - Health or Ecosystem Impact Analysis
  - Source Attribution Analysis
  - Control or Mitigation Measure Evaluation
  - Cost Effectiveness or Cost-Benefit Analysis
  - Policy Development and Legal Analysis
  - Public Communication and Stakeholder Engagement

The questions presented above are not intended to be comprehensive but are examples of the kinds of structured information gathering that should be undertaken by the Panel as an initial part of their work, to better understand the needs and opportunities around the world and to inform the development of an impactful work plan. The resources required to establish and operate a global science policy panel are significant and represent an opportunity to have meaningful benefits for public health and the environment globally. We think that continued dialogue between countries and thoughtful, structured planning will enable us to maximize the potential benefits of the Panel for all.