

# 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?

**Dr Melissa Wang**

Who are you submitting on behalf of?

**Greenpeace International**

Are you a national focal point?

N/A

What is your country?

N/A

What is your title?

**Senior Scientist**

What is your gender?

**Female**

What is your email address?

**Melissa.wang@greenpeace.org**

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):

- UNEA resolution 4/8 stressed ‘the urgent need to **strengthen the science-policy interface** at all levels to support and promote science-based local, national, regional and global action on the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020’
- UNEA resolution 5/8 in OP6 spells out some of the needs that should be taken into account of, all of which are important for the panel to handle.
- Fundamentally, one key need the panel should handle is to **improve and facilitate credible, transparent, constructive and action-oriented two-way communication between science and policy, so as to encourage, enable, improve and empower:**
  - [Policy makers] to
    - own the output of the panel
    - **identify challenges, understand the scale and characteristics of the problems and their fundamental drivers** as well as their interlinkages with interconnected challenges that the world faces e.g. climate change (1)
    - increase awareness
    - reduce delays between early warnings & action
    - **make timely, precautionary, preventative, and action-oriented decisions (e.g. regulations and consistent market mechanisms, that are independent from vested interest)** based on the output and science, **to address the challenges** from chemicals, waste and pollution **and their fundamental drivers in a systemic and holistic way, rather than simply shifting the burden (1)**
    - **guide and foster a diversity of innovation and capture opportunities with smart regulation and precautionary principle, from micro (e.g. technical) to macro (e.g. systemic) level**, to benefit the wider interests of society
    - **make balanced and smart resource (e.g. public spending and research funding) allocation** between known and emerging issues, between products/technologies and their hazards, following the principle of zero-waste hierarchy, and for more holistic systems science (1)
    - **to protect scientist** especially those early warning scientists who are vulnerable to be harassed for their pioneering work (1)
    - to regain public confidence in policy making
  - [current and future generation of scientists and science/knowledge holders] to
    - **understand** their role, potentials, opportunities and needs on them towards addressing the challenges from chemicals, waste and pollution in a fundamental, systemic and holistic way, as well as to **contribute** accordingly
    - **further improve science** to better address the reality and dynamics of complex systems, to catalyze better inter- and trans-disciplinary work while be inclusive of all kinds of knowledge including local and indigenous knowledge
    - **be recognized and supported for their contribution**
  - [stakeholders] to
    - have public values and interest delivered and reflected
    - understand the outputs of the panel and their rationale as well as to act accordingly, following the signals and direction provided by the panel and science.

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):

The questions that the panel may handle will need to be decided partly by the scope and functions of the panel under negotiation. However, there are a few potential questions listed below for consideration, following the spirit of the answers provided above about the needs.

- What's the state of art understanding of the challenges on chemical, waste and prevention of pollution, including the stage of scientific understandings and policy actions for identified problems?
  - o **[problems with early warnings but limited science so far]** e.g. how should public research funding agency act accordingly?
  - o **[problems with early warnings and good science base but not picked by policy]** why this is the case and how to address that? What are the options to act?
  - o **[problems already picked up by policy]** are the policies adequate and effective in addressing the problems rather than simply shifting the burden? What are the barriers and gaps? What are the further actions needed?
  - o **[blind spot]** any? And if so how to identify them in the future work?
- For each of the categories above:
  - o What are the **scale and characteristics** of these identified problems, their **fundamental drivers (on environmental, social, economic and systemic levels)** as well as their interlinkages with interconnected challenges that the world faces e.g. climate change?
  - o What are the different levels of **effective options (e.g. policy, market mechanism, solutions** from micro (e.g. technological) to macro (e.g. business and economic model and systemic) level) **and opportunities available as well as actions needed**, based on the **precautionary principle and systemic approach**?
  - o What are the largely-unproven and inherently risky 'false solutions' distracting attention, effective action and valuable resource while risk technology lock-in?
  - o What is the **resource (e.g policy, economic, financial etc.) allocation** among the options comparing to the principle and priorities of the zero-waste hierarchy? If not matching, why so and how to bring the resource allocation among options consistent with the zero waste hierarchy?
  - o What are the **barriers** to action, to effective delivery of action and/or to effective outcome of action? What further actions can be done to address them?
  - o What **actions** are needed to fill the gap, reduce the delays between science and action, address the barrier while capturing opportunities to address the problems and their fundamental causes with precautionary actions, and avoid simply shifting the burden or technological lock-in?
- How can science be further improved to better account real world conditions and complexity, to reduce interdisciplinary obstacles and to catalyze inter- and trans-disciplinary work while be inclusive of all kinds of knowledge (including local and indigenous knowledge)?

All these questions need to take into consideration the mandate and work of existing mechanisms to avoid duplication while also aiming for synergy and identification of opportunities to fill the gaps.