

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. 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 Camilla Alexander-White

Who are you submitting on behalf of?

Royal Society of Chemistry

Are you a national focal point?

No

What is your country?

United Kingdom

What is your title?

Lead Policy Adviser – Chemicals Policy

What is your gender?

Female

What is your email address?

alexanderwhitec@rsc.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):**

There is an opportunity to use science diplomacy to build bi-directional cooperation between science and policymakers, to foster good relationships and trust between scientists and policymakers *via* the forums of a formalised science-policy interface, to share needs, perspectives and evidence in an ongoing manner. Science is by its very nature a global collaborative effort. It is anticipated that the needs are for the SPP to:

1) Act as a connecting force for good through science diplomacy – The panel should help to build connections with other institutions, multilateral agreements and connect up the global scientific work on chemicals, waste and pollution, as per the list on page 4 of the OEWG1 report. The panel can provide a focal point to collate a consistent scientific and technical evidence base and aim to reach consensus positions, or majority opinions on key agreed themes, respecting the boundaries of where science evidence synthesis ends and policy/politics and decision-making begins.

2) Provide peer-reviewed and authoritative assessments/evidence synthesis and collate global information and evidence on key priority themes. In order not to duplicate work, the themes within UNEA 5/7 work on Priority Issues of concern could be a starting point, although there may be others that are not currently included in this list, for example asbestos, silicates and polymers in liquid formulations. The SPP may be particularly insightful on themes where the scientific evidence is controversial, and a lack of clarity is hindering policy development or where there are different perspectives from around the world, even when based on the same evidence. Assessments should be written in such a way as can be understood by non-experts and policymakers in a credible and trustworthy way but technically sound and robust.

3) Organise dedicated world forums where scientists can meet regularly (e.g. annually) with policymakers and agree priorities using a ‘prioritisation framework’. The panel would develop independent assessments of the evidence and share each year or two where the evidence is strong and where there are evidence gaps, and review priorities.

4) Raise awareness of urgent issues as evidenced by science horizon scan for new issues to anticipate adverse consequences and inform preventative policy action. Reports and relevant communications can be prepared to show why the issue is urgent or impactful to society, and why the evidence says there is a problem on the horizon.

5) Develop risk-based frameworks based on the evidence that can inform policymakers to enable the most relevant action on priorities, where there is good evidence but also in the face of incomplete scientific evidence based on urgency, impacts and risk of adverse outcomes. Follow a source-pathway-receptor model to identify where the greatest risks and impacts are.

6) Develop strategies for capacity building – skills development and training of the next generation of scientists and policymakers in chemicals, waste and pollution. This needs to be both technical and regulatory in content.

7) Make assessments accessible to all - English is the international language of science, however, assessments should be produced in accessible languages and formats for all to be able to understand the key conclusions and options.

8) Act to exemplify diversity and inclusion in the make-up and multidisciplinary nature of the panel, recognising local contributors and indigenous population's evidence.

9) Maintain independence from political processes in the performance of the scientific assessments. Respond in a policy relevant but not prescriptive way to the priority issues of the day, as identified through a prioritisation framework.

10) Facilitate scientists in becoming more involved in policy relevant evidence synthesis to make the world a better place through work at the science-policy interface that can contribute to their own careers, to the organisation's success in which they work and of course to wider society.

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

The RSC has responded in detail to the consultation on UNEA 5/7 Priority Issues of Concern. This has been shared with the SPP bureau.

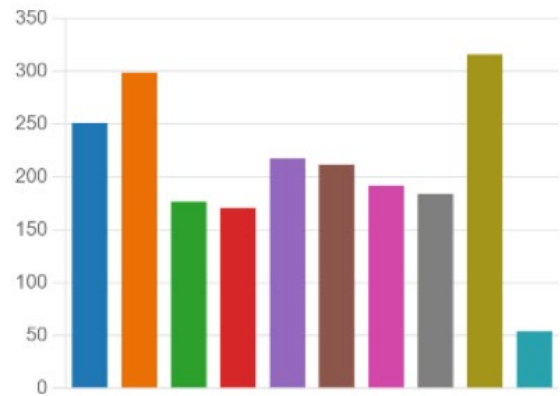
3. Please list, and if appropriate briefly describe, your preference for which questions the panel may handle. (If possible, please rank your responses, where 1 indicates your top preference):

Qu: How to attract the most relevant and experienced scientists to the work of the SPP?

As with all projects, the quality and relevance of the work depends on the skills and competencies of the people involved. A core of individuals will need to think about how to widen the net to include more scientists, particularly if the work is expected to be voluntary or in kind.

In the OEWG 1 stakeholder feedback report page 16 (*Qu10* In your view, which stakeholders should be represented in the work of the OEWG) the responses are as below:

business and industry	251
non-governmental organizations	299
Children and Youth	177
farmers	171
Indigenous peoples and their co...	218
local authorities	212
women	192
workers and trade unions	184
scientific and technological com...	316
Other	54



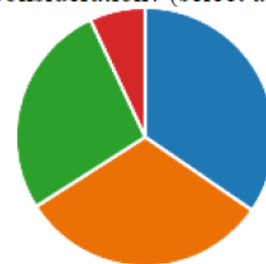
Is it possible to share the data about the actual attendants at OEWG 1. How many classed themselves as representing the scientific and technological community?

Qu: How can the work of the panel be prioritised to address the greatest and most impactful needs, where pollution is causing the greatest harm/impact, what should be the criteria?

In the OEWG 1 stakeholder feedback report page 16 (QU 11). The response was as below.

Who do you think should be able to submit potential issues for consideration? (select all that apply)

Member States	318
Relevant multilateral environme...	289
Accredited observers	249
Other	64



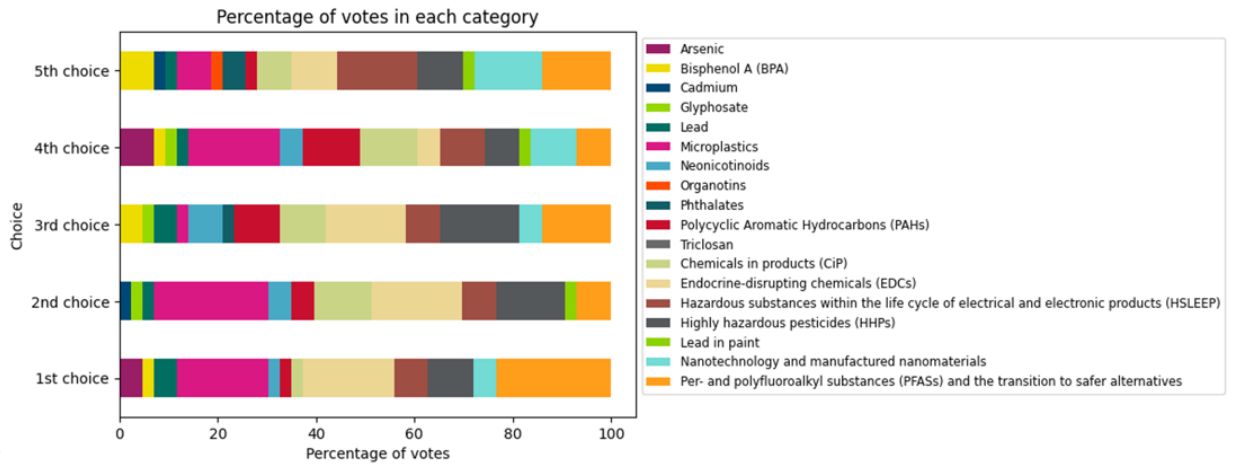
This indicates that the submission of issues could be input from a range of sources and hence **there is a need for a prioritisation framework**, to focus the work of the panel on the most urgent and impactful issues, based on a set of criteria.

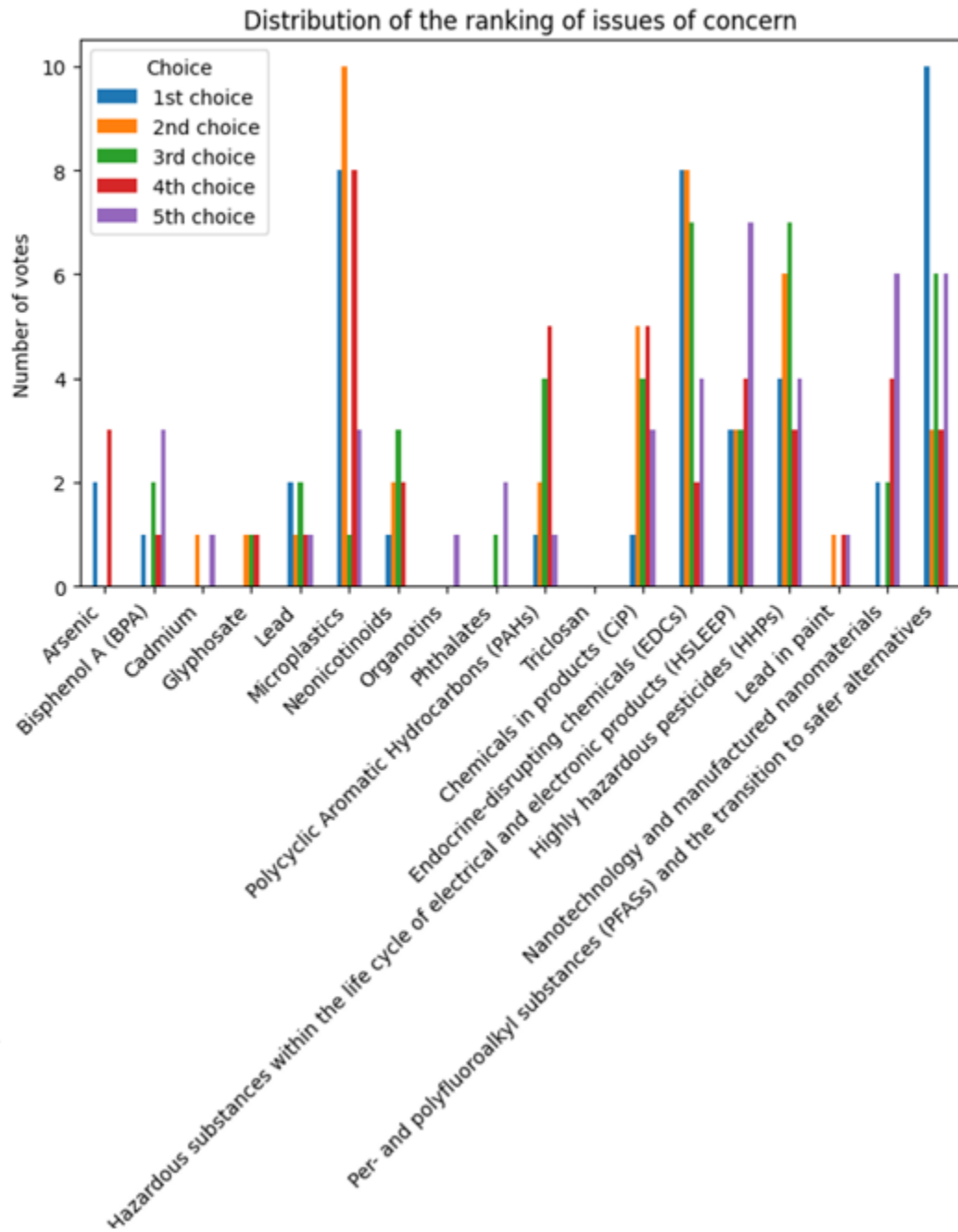
There is a natural collaboration between the SPP and the themes that emerge from the Beyond 2020 framework from ICCM5 in Bonn. There may be some specific but urgent issues that come from BRS Conventions e.g. Stockholm Convention and PFAS, where the SPP may bring together the state of the art evidence and data gaps.

Qu: What are the highest priority themes from the UNEA 5/7 work?

A survey response from members of the Royal Society of Chemistry Engagement Group on chemicals, waste and pollution suggested the following priority themes from the 19 Issues of Concern included in UNEA 5/7. This is an initial survey pulse of 40-50 members and is not definitive of the scientific community view, but is an indication.

Distribution of issues of concerns in each category in percentage





Top themes emerged as:

- Microplastics
- PFAS
- EDCs
- HSLEEP
- HHP
- Chemicals in Products

Qu: To policymakers - Are there areas where a current lack of global scientific consensus or a lack of evidence is making policy setting challenging?

Qu: How will conflicts of interest be managed on a multidisciplinary panel?

Qu: Are policy actions having a beneficial impact on the problem? What is the scientific evidence?

Qu: Are planetary boundaries being exceeded by certain pollutants? What is the evidence?

Qu: Are substances causing specific local/regional issues based on the evidence?

Qu: Are there technologies that can bring solutions to an issue to reduce pollution?

Qu: What are the most likely sources of pollution by a substance from chemical production and/or waste?

Qu: are there good examples of scientific and technological capacity building between nations/regions and are there more opportunities?

Qu: Once themes are agreed, types of more detailed technical questions might be for example:

What is the evidence that a substance is causing an adverse outcome in a place?

Can a safe guideline value be set for the substance in air, soil and water?

Can the substance technically be removed from water?

Is the substance vital to use or is there a technical alternative?

Can the substance be handled safely in the workplace?

What is the risk of adverse effects from exposure to this substance?

Does all of the evidence point to the same conclusion about a substance and if not why not?

Etc .

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

Depending on the theme, there are many different questions that could be posed to and by the panel that will need to be prioritized using a defensible framework based on agreed criteria. It could be the work of the science-policy interface to respond to agreed questions that are most policy relevant.