



**UNITED
NATIONS**

UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.2/INF/6



**United Nations
Environment
Programme**

Distr.: General
30 August 2023
English only

**Ad hoc open-ended working group on a science-policy panel
to contribute further to the sound management of
chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution
Second session**

Nairobi, 11–15 December 2023
Item 4 of the provisional agenda*

**Preparation of proposals for the establishment of a science-policy
panel**

**Background document on the process for determining and
executing the work programme of the panel**

Note by the secretariat

The annex to the present note contains background information relating to the process for determining and executing the work programme of the science-policy panel, including prioritization. The ad hoc open-ended working group on a science-policy panel to contribute further to the sound management of chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution may wish to consider the information provided.

* UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.2/1.

Annex*

1. The following annex presents summaries of the work programme development process, and of the prioritization processes applied by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), International Resource Panel (IRP), Global Environment Outlook (GEO), and Montreal Protocol assessment panels. Table 1 provides an overview of key elements of the work programme development processes in these science-policy interfaces.

IPCC

2. The IPCC work programme consists of activities, milestones, and timelines for the development of the IPCC assessment reports during a specific assessment cycle. The planning process for the IPCC work programme begins at the start of the assessment cycle which concludes with the release of the Synthesis Report. During the first session of the cycle, the Panel determines the topics and number of Special and Methodology reports, in addition to the Assessment Reports prepared by the three IPCC Working Groups. IPCC has three working groups, and a Task Force on National Greenhouse Gas Inventories.

3. The development of reports undergoes a process of scoping, drafting, reviewing, and approval by IPCC member governments. Scoping is initiated by the Panel, scoped by nominated experts, reviewed and accepted/approved by the Panel.

4. The implementation of the IPCC work programme typically spans five to seven years, and any adjustments require approval by the Panel, following endorsement by the Bureau.

IPBES

5. The plenary sets the direction and priorities for the work programme with the intention to implement the overarching functions related to the work programme, and guided by the operating principles of the Platform, based on the needs and interests of member countries.

6. In the case of the first work programme, Decision UNEP/IPBES.MI/2/2 recalled the priorities, functions, principles, and draft elements of a work programme provided by governments and other stakeholders. It further described activities for inclusion in the work programme, which led to Decision IPBES/1/2, which requested the secretariat to prepare a document on draft work programme elements for the period 2014-2018 to support the preparation of the work programme. It further requested the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel (MEP) and the Bureau to develop a draft work programme for 2014-2018 with a sequenced and prioritized set of objectives, deliverables, actions and milestones for advancing the four functions of IPBES (assessment, knowledge generation, policy support and capacity-building) at relevant scales, taking into account requests made by governments and other stakeholders in response to a request by the secretariat. The work programme was also to take into account the comments received during the review phase and suggest options for institutional arrangements for the implementation of the work programme including any subsidiary bodies and their terms of reference.

7. Finally, the decision requested the secretariat to submit the draft work programme with indicative cost estimates prepared in consultation with the Bureau to members, observers and stakeholders for their comments through an open process, and to compile the comments received for consideration by the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and the Bureau prior to the second plenary. It further requested the secretariat in consultation with the Bureau, to provide cost estimates for implementation of the revised work programme 2014-2018, also taking into account the proposed institutional arrangements, and suggesting the related actions that need to be taken by the plenary at its second session. Through Decision 7/1, IPBES established a rolling work programme of the Platform up to 2030 which allows for the plenary to launch additional calls for requests, inputs and suggestions during the course of the work programme.

* The annex has not been formally edited.

8. The development of reports undergoes a process of scoping, drafting, reviewing, and approval by IPBES member governments. Scoping is initiated by the plenary, scoped by nominated experts, reviewed and accepted/approved by the plenary.

9. The work programme also includes measures for enabling the uptake of the findings and recommendations of IPBES assessments and utilizing the policy support tools, generally in the form of task specific and time-bound task forces. The work program is periodically reviewed and updated to address emerging challenges and incorporate new scientific insights.

IRP

10. The International Resource Panel (IRP) conducts a strategic planning exercise every four years to define its strategy and priority areas. Public consultations may be organized to gather input from external stakeholders.

11. Based on inputs from the Panel, Steering Committee, and public consultations, the IRP Secretariat develops a Work Programme that outlines the strategic direction, priority areas, and potential scientific studies and assessments for the corresponding cycle. The Work Programme is submitted to the Panel for input and recommendations and to the Steering Committee for approval.

12. Scientific studies or assessment reports are drafted by the Working Group and submitted to the Steering Committee for input and recommendations and to the Panel for approval before proceeding to external peer review. The second draft reports are then prepared based on the comments received and subsequently submitted to the Steering Committee for input and recommendations and to the Panel for approval. Approval of the final draft requires the agreement of two-third of the Panel members (excluding members involved in the preparation of the report).

GEO

13. The work plan for the seventh edition of the Global Environment Outlook (GEO-7) was developed based on the key outputs and outcomes mentioned in United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) resolution 5/3. The GEO Secretariat developed the theory of change and project document outcomes for GEO-7. The operational work plan was developed by working backward from the ultimate delivery date, including procedures and scoping meetings, face-to-face author meetings, drafting meetings for the Summary for Policymakers (SPM), advisory body meetings, scientific credibility assessment, and the review and approval of the SPM.

14. At the beginning of the process a procedures meeting guided the GEO process and defined its operational principles and procedures¹. [Intergovernmental and Expert-led Scientific Assessment Procedures](#) for UNEP's seventh GEO were approved at the GEO-7 inaugural meetings held on 19-22 September 2022.

15. The procedures meeting was followed by a scoping meeting whose main outcome was the scoping document, which clearly defines the scope and annotated outline of GEO-7, the agreed workplan and the expected budget, as per decision of Member States and Stakeholders. The Scoping process is overseen by UNEP's Executive Director, with advice from the assessment panel co-chairs and vice-chairs and the Multi-stakeholder Advisory Group (IMAG), reviewed and endorsed by an Ad-Hoc Open-Ended Meeting of Member States.

¹ Procedures are detailed relating to: Objective, functions and operational principles; Definitions and terminology; Governance and implementation structures; Overview of process for conducting comprehensive and thematic assessments; Requests, prioritization and planning of additional functions of the GEO process; Scoping and design of GEO comprehensive and thematic assessments; Nomination and selection of experts; Preparation of comprehensive and thematic assessments; Outreach and awareness raising; Assessment of confidence; Addressing possible errors following the publication of an assessment; and Conflict of interest.

Montreal Protocol Assessment Panels

16. There are three Assessment Panels under the Montreal Protocol: the Technology and Economic Assessment Panel ([TEAP](#)), Scientific Assessment Panel ([SAP](#)), and Environmental Effects Assessment Panel ([EEAP](#)). Scoping for the reports is decided by the Meeting of the Parties (MOP) after consideration by the Open-ended Working Group (OEWG).

17. The Panels prepare Quadrennial Assessment Reports as mandated by the Montreal Protocol. The terms of reference (i.e., the scope) for these assessments are adopted through decisions of the MOP.

18. The Panels also prepare additional reports in response to specific decisions, including annual progress reports, thematic reports, and periodic reports. The parties may request specific assessments from the Panels to address technical and scientific questions related to the Protocol's implementation.

19. For the Quadrennial Assessment Reports, the timeline is set out in the decision requesting the Panels to prepare them; see, for example, para. 1 of [Decision XXXI/2](#). For reports requested to be submitted for consideration by the OEWG or the MOP, corresponding decisions include relevant provisions, see for example para. 3 of [Decision XXXIV/6](#).

20. There is no prioritization framework at the Treaty level (for the Montreal Protocol), and it is up to the parties to determine their focus areas for meeting their commitments under the Protocol.

Prioritization Process

IPCC

21. The IPCC adopts a [framework](#) and a set of criteria for establishing priorities for Special Reports, Methodology Reports, and Technical Papers. The framework considers factors such as the availability of scientific literature, origin of the request (with higher priority given to requests from UN conventions addressing climate change), relevance to policy considerations, availability of experts and resources, and timeliness. The decisions on reports are made on a case-by-case basis.

IPBES

22. IPBES has a procedure (see [Decision IPBES/1/3](#)) for receiving and prioritizing requests. Requests can be submitted by governments, UN bodies, intergovernmental organizations, scientific organizations, NGOs, Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and the private sector. The requests are evaluated based on relevance to the objective and work programme of the Platform, urgency, relevance to specific policies or processes, geographic scope, complexity, availability of scientific literature and expertise, potential impacts, and resource requirements. The Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and the Bureau prioritize the requests in accordance with the considerations outlined in paragraph 7 of [IPBES/1/3](#) and prepare a report for consideration by the plenary.

IRP

23. The IRP conducts a strategic planning exercise every four years to define its strategy and priority areas. As part of this exercise, public consultations may be organized to capture views from external public or private stakeholders. The secretariat develops a Work Programme (see example of the [2022 – 2025 work programme](#)) based on inputs from the Panel, Steering Committee, and public consultations. The Work Programme is submitted to the Panel for input and recommendations and to the Steering Committee for approval. Requests for scientific studies and assessments can be made by intergovernmental bodies and other institutions, and the approval of these requests depends on the strategic direction, technical capability, and available resources.

GEO

24. The GEO process has a procedure (see Section 6 of the [procedure](#)) for receiving requests, prioritization, and planning of additional functions of the GEO, which can be initiated by the Executive Director of UNEP upon request from the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA). These may include submissions on requests for environmental issues to be assessed or undertaken as part of the GEO process. Submissions can be made by Member States, experts, and stakeholders. The secretariat then administers physical or virtual consultations overseen by the Executive Director, with advice from the IMAG, with Member States, experts and stakeholders to facilitate submissions and prioritisations. The Executive Director, with advice from the IMAG, will compile submissions and prepare a justified sequence for prioritisation of assessments in the form of a multi-year workplan.

Table 1. Overview of key elements of the work programme development processes in existing science-policy interfaces

	IPCC	IPBES	IRP	GEO	Montreal Protocol assessment panels
Duration of work programme	5-7 years (from beginning of assessment cycle, concluding with release of Synthesis report)	Current: Rolling (2019-2030) Initial: 2012-2018	4 years	5 years (beginning at adoption of UNEA resolution, and concluding at launch of report at a future UNEA)	Timeline is set out in parties' decisions requesting the Panels to prepare their quadrennial assessments or various progress, thematic or periodic reports (e.g., see the expected TEAP reports by 2030 here)
Who can submit topics/inputs?	Activities on the tasks allotted to it by the relevant WMO Executive Council and UNEP Governing Council resolutions and decisions as well as on actions in support of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change process	<i>Requests</i> from governments and “multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) related to biodiversity and ecosystem services, <i>inputs and suggestions</i> from United Nations bodies related to biodiversity and ecosystem services, by relevant stakeholders, such as other intergovernmental organizations, international and regional scientific organizations, environment trust funds, non-governmental organizations, Indigenous Peoples and local communities and the private sector	Steering Committee (representatives from governments), Panel members, external public or private stakeholders	Work plan is developed based on the key outputs and outcomes mentioned in the UNEA Resolution 5/3 , however at the request of UNEA, the Executive Director may at regular intervals initiate a process whereby submissions can be made by Member States, experts, and stakeholders for requests, prioritization, and planning of additional functions of the GEO. The secretariat administers physical or virtual consultations overseen by the Executive Director, with advice from the IMAG, with	Parties can submit topics for consideration through proposing agenda items and putting forward draft decisions prior to and during meetings of the parties.

				Member States, experts and stakeholders to facilitate submissions and prioritisations.	
How are topics/inputs prioritized?	A framework including a set of criteria for establishing priorities for Special Reports, Methodology Reports, and Technical Papers is used. The framework considers factors such as the availability of scientific literature, origin of the request (with higher priority given to requests from UN conventions addressing climate change), relevance to policy considerations, availability of experts and resources, and timeliness, among others.	In line with IPBES-1/3, taking into account the relevance to the objective and work programme of the Platform, urgency, relevance to specific policies or processes, geographic scope, complexity, previous work done, availability of scientific literature and expertise, scale of potential impacts, and resource requirements.	A strategic planning exercise – involving consultations with the Steering Committee, Panel members, Strategic Partners, and other stakeholders – is conducted every 4 years to define the priority areas of the IRP. Proposed topics tend to be grouped under broader high impact priority areas.	The Executive Director, with advice from the IMAG, will compile submissions and prepare a justified sequence for prioritisation of assessments in the form of a multi-year workplan and timebound budget, setting out a programme of activities, such as assessments and support services, according to the needs identified by the Environment Assembly in the present resolution.	There is no prioritization framework at the Treaty level, and it is up to the parties to determine their focus areas for meeting their commitments under the Montreal Protocol.
Who is developing the work programme?	Nominations for participation in scoping meeting are solicited from government Focal Points, observer organisations, and Bureau members and selected by the relevant respective Working Group Bureau/Task	Bureau and Multidisciplinary Expert Panel with support of the secretariat based on submissions. As part of the initial evaluation and prioritization process, the MEP and Bureau undertake an initial scoping of an assessment, including examining feasibility and	Secretariat, based on inputs from the Panel and Steering Committee and public consultations will develop a Work Programme with the strategic direction, priority areas and description of potential scientific studies and assessments of the IRP	The work plan is developed based on the key outputs and outcomes mentioned in the UNEA Resolution 5/3. The GEO Secretariat establishes the theory of change and project document outcomes for GEO-7. The scoping and	MOP after consideration by OEWG

	Force Bureau and, in case of the Synthesis Report, by the IPCC Chair in consultation with the Working Group Co-Chairs.	estimated cost. The plenary then either agree to proceed with an assessment or request detailed scoping, which involves nominated experts in addition to the Bureau and MEP.		design process is overseen by the Executive Director, with advice from the IMAG for policy relevance issues as well as the co-chairs and vice-chairs of the assessment, for overall feasibility.	
Decision making body of the work programme	plenary	plenary	First submitted to the Panel for input and recommendations, and approved by the Steering Committee	An Open-ended Meeting of Member States reviews and adopts procedures for conducting the GEO process, scoping document of GEO assessments, and reviewing and approving the summary for policy makers of GEO assessments	The Meeting of the Parties (MOP)
Who is implementing the work programme?	Experts, Working Groups, Technical Support Units (TSUs), Task Force, secretariat, plenary, Bureau, Executive Committee	Experts, Expert Groups, Task forces, MEP, Bureau, secretariat, plenary	Panel Member Experts, Working Groups, Panel Co-Chairs, Steering Committee, secretariat	Experts, Co-chairs, Vice-chairs, Multidisciplinary Expert Scientific Advisory Group (MESAG), IMAG, OEWG, UNEP Executive Director, secretariat	The Technology and Economic Assessment Panel (TEAP) along with its Technical Options Committees (TOCs) and Temporary Subsidiary Bodies (TSBs)