

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?

Jacqueline Alvarez

Who are you submitting on behalf of?

UNEP

Are you a national focal point?

No

What is your country?

Switzerland

What is your title?

Chemicals and Health Branch Chief

What is your gender?

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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):*
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

1) Science and Policy

- Bridge the gaps between scientific knowledge and policymakers with respect to the factors that impede a systemic change in the ways, chemicals, waste and pollution are managed – of economic, financial, regulatory, behavioral nature amongst others – and the strategies to overcome them in a preventive manner. The interdisciplinary and inclusive nature of the panel will be key strengths in doing so.
- Assist policymakers in the early uptake of emerging scientific insights into policy formulation, through proactive preventive approaches rather than reactive coping measures. This would be facilitated by a science policy interface that allows dialogue and access to information on potential risks and challenges at an early stage. In light of the explosion in the numbers and varieties of chemicals used and produced, large gaps exist in the ways chemicals are assessed and governed. This urgently calls for new strategies in assessments of chemicals, mixtures and their effects on human health and the environment. Provide a mechanism for rapid access to latest science on chemicals and waste related issues, increasing the visibility on the need to act, as well as opportunities for uptake by policymakers through information that is relevant to policy and accessible to policymakers.
- Provide guidance on shifting potential of the current policymaking process, where a chemical by chemical approach is often used, to a sector-specific one with the view of a value chain approach where the products and processes are looked at, including guiding principles to enable such transition. The assessments should include solutions, for example eco-innovation thinking, green and sustainable solutions and ways to fast-track uptake.
- Business as usual has been identified not to be the way forward anymore, and the shift to a sustainable, net-zero future, nature positive and pollution free is not an option anymore. This transition needs to happen fast, but it also has to happen in a fair and inclusive way, including social consideration, just transition and green jobs. The panel could then provide guidance, lessons and experience that are guiding decision makers and others in driving seats, so that opportunities can be embraced and systems change occur.
- Provide strategies to enhance the integration of science literacy into policymaking and ensure policy uptake.
- Define the most effective tools/instruments to support the integration of science literacy into policymaking.

2) Cost assessment

- Develop harmonised standards for assessing the impacts of chemicals, waste and pollution on health and on the environment, including an assessment of the cost of externalities related to chemicals and waste –current cost and estimated cost in case of inaction-, that need to be taken into consideration in financing and investment decision processes. True cost accounting (TCA) of chemicals and waste pollution involves considering the full economic, social, and environmental costs associated with the production, use, and disposal of chemicals. Traditional accounting systems often do not fully capture the externalities and long-term impacts of these activities. TCA seeks to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the true costs, including hidden or indirect costs that might be overlooked.
- Provide guiding principles of integrating True Cost Accounting (TCA) of chemicals and waste pollution into policymaking processes.

3) Assessment of alternatives

- Develop chemical alternatives assessment frameworks as tools designed to evaluate and compare the potential hazards and risks of alternative chemicals or processes to replace a specific chemical of concern. These frameworks aim to support informed decision-making by identifying safer alternatives that minimize environmental, health, and safety risks. While these frameworks are valuable, there are some challenges associated with their implementation. The absence of standardized methods for conducting alternatives assessments can indeed lead to

inconsistencies in decision-making. Standardization is crucial in ensuring that assessments are conducted systematically, consistently, and with a high level of transparency.

- Provide a common set of principles and procedures for conducting alternatives assessments, ensuring consistency and facilitating a more uniform approach.
- Define a framework that is scientifically rigorous, adaptable to different contexts, and widely accepted to promote consistency and reliability in decision-making related to chemical alternatives, beyond looking at specific hazards of individual chemicals and also considering alternatives at the level of material, product, technology and behaviour.

4) Financing

- Enhance Science-Finance interface and integration of science literacy into financing and investment processes, which is crucial for public and private finance actors to understand and effectively use scientific knowledge and methodologies and to develop evidence-based and informed financing and investment decisions and what are the policy options.
- Enhance availability of standardised and reliable information on chemicals in materials and products throughout the value chain, especially in the high impact sectors. This is essential for informed decision-making and risk assessment by public and private finance actors, and ensuring that financed activities align with sustainable and safe practices.
- Assess policy instruments available to enhance the mobilisation of financial resources towards sound management of chemicals and waste, as well as their efficiency, and provide policy recommendations to create the enabling environment to mobilise financial resources from public and private sources.
- Provide recommendations on solutions and instruments, including de-risking and blended finance mechanisms, to leverage private finance towards sound management of chemicals and waste.

5) Antimicrobial Resistance as a proxy

- Globally, there is a need to establish international standards for what are good microbiological indicators of AMR from environmental samples, which can be used to guide risk reduction decisions and create effective incentives to follow such guidance. Understand the relative importance (exact nature and magnitude) of each pollution source in causing global and regional exposure and the contribution to AMR in the environment and in local and specific ecosystem contexts.
- Recent evidence suggests sub-minimal inhibitory concentration of antimicrobials from pharmaceutical manufacturing, municipal and livestock wastewater discharges may influence AMR transmission. However, the relative importance of low concentrations of antimicrobials in driving AMR emergence versus more acute factors, such as faecal waste releases, is still debated. This is critical for establishing international standards and apply regulations.
- In general, emissions of Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients are not regulated globally and the global regulatory landscape for the control of pharmaceutical releases varies widely. A critical knowledge gap that needs to be addressed to effectively inform regulations is identifying reasonable and effective discharge limits.
- There is a need to characterize the type, quantity and dynamics of chemicals (e.g. with co-selection potential) to the environment that might differentially affect AMR development, transmission and spread under LIC, MIC or HIC conditions.
- There is a need to address knowledge gaps surrounding airborne AMR transmission and spread especially given its transient nature and association with relative levels of ventilation and weather and climatic conditions. The relative impact of airborne transmission and spread of AMR to humans, animals and plants is a 'One Health' issue that deserves more research focus.

6) Global Framework on Chemicals

- The 5th meeting of International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM5) that took place in Bonn, Germany, between 25 and 29 September 2023 adopted the Global Framework on Chemicals – For a Planet Free of Harm from Chemicals and Waste and marked a significant shift in how we tackle chemicals management. Alongside this pivotal framework, the Bonn

Declaration – For a Planet Free of Harm from Chemicals and Waste echoed the collective commitment, resonating with the shared goal of a planet devoid of the adverse impacts of chemicals and waste.

- The Global Framework on Chemicals – For a Planet free of Harm from Chemicals and Waste includes direct linkages to the future science-policy panel. The Conference under the framework will consider relevant outcomes of the work of the science-policy panel to contribute further to the sound management of chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution to be established under United Nations Environment Assembly resolution 5/8, and will invite, as appropriate, the panel to provide scientific information and assessments, and inputs on specific issues of concern adopted by the Conference. The conference will also determine processes for guiding appropriate science-based action on issues of concern. ICCM5 resolution on international cooperation and coordination stresses the importance of the relationship with a science-policy panel. The secretariat of the framework shall cooperate closely with the future science-policy panel with a view to identifying issues of relevance for supporting the implementation of the Global Framework on Chemicals – For a Planet Free of Harm from Chemicals and Waste and further options for fostering collaboration and cooperation to be considered by the Conference.
- The panel could be called upon to identify and recommend best ways to ensure smooth cooperation and outputs on areas where the expertise of the panel is needed and ensure joint approaches and mutual benefits. The panel could consider the best mode of cooperation with the GFC for instance through standing cooperation of the secretariat, joint Bureaux meetings, ad hoc working group, or back-to-back meetings?
- The panel could support assessments of financing needs from all sources, public and private, to achieve the objectives of the Global Framework on Chemicals
- The panel could submit for consideration of the Conference of the Global Framework issues where there are risks to the people or environment and could be addressed in this setting.
- The panel could support development and implementation of the measurability structure, by supporting follow up on how the international community is meeting its vision, developing, tracking and phasing out targets and indicators and supporting assessing effectiveness of the framework over the years.

7) Triple Planetary Crisis

- Define and address the trade-offs between chemicals, climate, and biodiversity clusters in policies involves navigating the complex interplay between these three important areas. Each cluster represents a distinct set of challenges and objectives, and policies must carefully balance the competing interests and potential conflicts that arise.
- Provide guidance on balancing economic development with social and environmental concerns relevant to the three clusters within the policy development process.