



**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**

Third session

Geneva, 17–21 June 2024

Item 4 of the provisional agenda*

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

Draft rules of procedure

Note by the secretariat

I. Introduction

1. 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, at its second session, held from 11 to 15 December 2023 in Nairobi, requested the secretariat to prepare draft text for consideration by the ad hoc open-ended working group at its third session, including for the rules of procedure, taking into account existing rules and procedures of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services and the United Nations Environment Assembly.
2. The draft text for rules of procedure builds on the outcomes of the second session of the ad hoc open-ended working group, notably the options included in section C, “Institutional arrangements for the Panel”, of document UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/2.
3. At its third session, the ad hoc open-ended working group, in finalizing its proposals for the science-policy panel, may wish to consider the draft rules of procedure set out in the present document (and for which annex 1 of document UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/2 is a placeholder), for subsequent consideration by the intergovernmental meeting with a view to submitting the draft rules of procedure for consideration and possible adoption by the governing body of the panel, once established, at its first session.

* UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/1.

II. Rules of procedure for sessions of the governing body of the [insert full name of panel]

1. [Scope][Purpose]

Rule 1

1. The following rules of procedure apply to all sessions of the governing body of the [insert full name of panel] (hereafter “the Panel”) convened in accordance with a decision of the governing body and in compliance with the rules of procedure.

2. Definitions

Rule 2

2. For the purposes of the rules of procedure:

(a) “Bureau” means the body of elected members of the governing body of the Panel, comprising the Chair and the Vice-Chairs, who assist the Chair in the general conduct of business of the Panel, as set forth in the rules of procedure;

(b) “Bureau member” and “member of the Bureau” mean any person who holds one of the offices in the Bureau;

(c) “Chair” means the Chair of the Panel, with powers as set forth in the rules of procedure;

(d) “Co-Chair” means a co-chair of a subsidiary body of the Panel, including any co-chair of the Interdisciplinary Expert Committee;

(e) “Foundational document” means the text establishing the Panel, adopted in [insert location] on [insert date];

(f) “Governing body of the Panel” means the Panel’s decision-making body, comprising all the members of the Panel;

(g) “Meeting” means a single sitting at a session of the governing body of the Panel;

(h) “Member” means any State Member of the United Nations or member of a specialized agency having expressed its intent to be a member of the Panel;

(i) “Observer” means any State not a member of the Panel, any regional economic integration organization, any secretariat of a multilateral environmental agreement, or any other body, organization or agency, whether national or international, governmental, intergovernmental or non-governmental, including any organization or representative of Indigenous Peoples or of local communities, that has expertise in matters covered by the Panel and has informed the secretariat of its wish to be represented at sessions of the governing body of the Panel, subject to the provisions set out in the rules of procedure;

(j) “Panel” means the [insert full name of panel];

(k) “Secretariat” means the entity established under paragraphs [--] to [--] of the foundational document to perform functions that include providing administrative, technical and other support services to the Panel;

(l) “Session” means any ordinary or extraordinary session of the governing body of the Panel;

(m) “Subsidiary body” means a committee, subcommittee, working group, expert group or other entity established as part of the Panel structure pursuant to paragraphs [--] to [--] of the foundational document.

3. Venue, dates and notification of sessions

Rule 3

3. The venue and dates of each session are to be decided on by the governing body of the Panel at the preceding session. If this is not possible, they should be decided on by the Bureau.

Rule 4

4. Ordinary sessions of the governing body of the Panel will be held once every year.
5. Extraordinary sessions of the governing body of the Panel are to be held pursuant to a decision taken by the governing body at an ordinary session, or at the request of a majority of its members. In the event that the secretariat receives a request for an extraordinary session, it will immediately inform all members of the request, as well as of the approximate costs and relevant administrative considerations. If a majority of the members of the Panel explicitly agree with the request within 21 days of the secretariat's communication, the secretariat will convene an extraordinary session.
6. The secretariat will notify all members of the dates and venue of both ordinary and extraordinary sessions at least eight weeks before the session is due to begin.

4. Members and observers**Membership****Rule 5¹**

7. Membership of the governing body of the Panel is open to States Members of the United Nations and members of specialized agencies, who may become members of the governing body of the Panel by expressing their intent to do so.

Participation of States not members of the Panel, United Nations bodies and other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations²**Rule 6**

8. The governing body of the Panel is open to participation by observers as defined under rule 2.
9. The representatives of the European Union, in its capacity as an observer, may participate in the session and work of the governing body of the Panel under the same modalities as those applicable to its participation in the sessions and work of the United Nations General Assembly.³ Thus, the representatives of the European Union are allowed enhanced participation in sessions of the governing body of the Panel, including the right to speak in turn, the right of reply, the right to introduce proposals, the right to provide views and the ability to support the implementation of the work programme of the Panel through financial support. Such rights do not grant the right to vote, to co-sponsor draft resolutions or decisions or to put forward candidates.

5. Admission and participation of observers**Rule 7**

10. At its first session, the governing body of the Panel will adopt the Panel's policy and procedures on admission of observers, as set forth in the annex to the rules of procedure.
11. Any State Member of the United Nations or member of a specialized agency that is not a member of the Panel and any United Nations entity or secretariat of a multilateral environment agreement will be considered as admitted by the governing body of the Panel as an observer and need not submit an application or other documentation.
12. Bodies, organizations and agencies that already have observer status with any United Nations system entity or are accredited to the United Nations Environment Assembly or to any multilateral environment agreement are considered observers of the Panel if they so request, except as the governing body of the Panel otherwise decides.
13. Observers in a session of the governing body of the Panel will be considered admitted by the governing body of the Panel as observers in subsequent sessions of the governing body and need not submit subsequent applications or other documentation unless the governing body decides otherwise.

¹ This rule is adapted from the text in UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/2. The content of the rule is subject to further discussion and the outcome of the third meeting of the ad hoc open-ended working group.

² This rule is adapted from the text in UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/2. The content of the rule is subject to further discussion and the outcome of the third meeting of the ad hoc open-ended working group.

Rule 8

14. Observers may, at the invitation of the Chair, participate in the proceedings of any meeting, without the right to vote or to join or block consensus.

6. Agenda

Rule 9

15. The secretariat will, in consultation with and under the guidance of the Bureau, prepare a provisional agenda for each session in accordance with the guidance of the governing body of the Panel. Any member of the Panel may request the secretariat to include specific items on the provisional agenda.

16. After consultation with the Bureau, the secretariat will distribute the provisional agenda to the members and those entitled to be represented as observers, along with other official documents to be considered at the session, in the official languages of the Panel, at least six weeks before the session is due to begin.

17. Between the date of distribution of the provisional agenda and the adoption of the agenda by the governing body of the Panel, members of the Panel may propose supplementary items for inclusion on the agenda, provided they are of an important and urgent nature. The secretariat will, after consultation with the Bureau, include such items on a revised provisional agenda.

Rule 10

18. At the beginning of each session, the members of the Panel that are present will adopt the agenda for the session on the basis of the provisional agenda and any supplementary items proposed in accordance with rule [--].

19. The governing body of the Panel may add, delete, defer or amend items when adopting the agenda. Only items considered by the governing body to be urgent and important may be added to the agenda.

Rule 11

20. The provisional agenda for an extraordinary session of the governing body of the Panel will consist only of the items proposed for consideration in the request to convene the extraordinary session. It will be distributed to the members at the same time as the notification of the extraordinary session.

7. Representation, credentials and accreditation

Rule 12

21. Each member of the Panel participating in a session will be represented by a delegation consisting of a head of delegation and such other accredited representatives, alternate representatives and advisers as it may require.

22. The credentials of representatives of members of the Panel and the names of alternate representatives and advisers should be submitted to the secretariat before the first meeting that the representatives are to attend, and no later than 24 hours after the opening of the session. Information regarding any later change in the composition of a delegation, along with any necessary credentials, should be submitted to the secretariat.

23. The credentials of the representatives of any member are to be signed by, or on behalf of, an appropriate government authority of the member and will be regarded as appropriate credentials for the participation of the individuals named therein in all activities of the session.

24. The Bureau will examine the credentials and submit a report thereon to the governing body of the Panel.

25. Representatives of members are entitled to participate provisionally in sessions of the governing body of the Panel pending a decision by the governing body regarding acceptance of their credentials. Representatives do not have the right to participate in decision-making until their credentials have been accepted.

8. Membership and operation of the Bureau

Rule 13³

26. The Bureau comprises two members from each of the five United Nations regional groups, including one Chair and nine Vice-Chairs, one of whom acts as Rapporteur.
27. Members of the Bureau are nominated by their regional groups and elected by the governing body of the Panel, bearing in mind the need for the Bureau's membership to have disciplinary, geographical, regional and gender balance.
28. The Bureau may invite co-chairs of subsidiary bodies, representatives of the United Nations, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations and experts to attend its meetings as observers.
29. The term of office of a Bureau member is three years, with the opportunity for re-election for one consecutive term. Such term of office starts at the end of the session at which the member is elected and ends at the close of the session at which the member's successor is elected. The Chair will be rotated among the five United Nations regions every three years, without the possibility of re-election as Chair.
30. Each region may designate alternates, to be approved by the governing body of the Panel, to represent the region at a Bureau meeting if a Bureau member is unable to attend.

Rule 14

31. The Bureau meets as necessary, either in person or by electronic means, to advise the Chair and the secretariat on the conduct of business of the governing body of the Panel and its subsidiary bodies.

Rule 15

32. In addition to exercising the powers conferred on the Chair elsewhere in the rules, the Chair:
- (a) Represents the Panel;
 - (b) Declares the opening and closure of each session;
 - (c) Presides at sessions of the governing body of the Panel and meetings of the Bureau;
 - (d) Ensures the observance of the rules of procedure in accordance with the definitions, functions and operating principles of the Panel;
 - (e) Accords participants the right to speak during ordinary and extraordinary sessions;
 - (f) Applies the decision-making procedure;
 - (g) Rules on any points of order during ordinary and extraordinary sessions;
 - (h) Subject to the rules of procedure, exercises complete control over the proceedings and maintains order.
33. The Chair may also propose:
- (a) The closure of the list of speakers during debates;
 - (b) A limitation on the time to be allowed to speakers and the number of times a member or observer may speak on an issue;
 - (c) The adjournment or closure of debate on an issue;
 - (d) The suspension or adjournment of an ordinary or extraordinary session.
34. The Chair and the Bureau, in the exercise of their functions, remain at all times under the authority of the governing body of the Panel.

³ This rule is adapted from the text in UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/2. The content of the rule is subject to further discussion and the outcome of the third meeting of the ad hoc open-ended working group

Rule 16

35. The Chair participates in sessions in that capacity and may not at the same time exercise the rights of a representative of a member of the Panel.

Rule 17

36. The Chair, if absent from a session of the governing body of the Panel or a meeting of the Bureau, or any part thereof, should designate one of the Vice-Chairs to act as Chair.

37. A Vice-Chair acting as Chair has the same powers and duties as the Chair and may not at the same time exercise the rights of a representative of a member of the Panel.

Rule 18

38. If the Chair resigns or is otherwise unable to complete the assigned term of office or to perform the functions of that office, a new Chair is elected at the next session to serve the remainder of the term of office of the departing Chair. Until a new Chair is elected, one of the Vice-Chairs, as agreed by the Bureau, serves as the Acting Chair.

39. If a member of the Bureau, other than the Chair, resigns or is otherwise unable to complete the assigned term of office or to perform the functions of that office, that member is replaced by the alternate from the same region.

Nomination of members of the Bureau**Rule 19**

40. The secretariat will invite members of the Panel to submit to the secretariat, no less than four months before the election, written nominations and accompanying curricula vitae of nominees to the Bureau. The governing body of the Panel may accept late nominations at its discretion. The secretariat will post the nominees' names and curricula vitae, as well as the identity of the nominating region, on the website of the Panel within a time frame that facilitates consideration of the nominees by members of the Panel prior to the session of the governing body at which elections are to take place.

Election of members of the Bureau**Rule 20**

41. The members of the Bureau will be elected by the governing body of the Panel by consensus unless the governing body decides otherwise.

42. If the governing body of the Panel decides to elect members of the Bureau by vote, the vote will be held at an ordinary session of the governing body and in accordance with the rules of procedure.

9. Subsidiary bodies (membership, operation, election of members)**Interdisciplinary Expert Committee****Rule 21⁴**

43. The Interdisciplinary Expert Committee reports to the governing body of the Panel, will carry out the scientific, technical and policy functions as articulated in paragraphs [--] to [--] of the foundational document or as agreed by the governing body and will organize itself as it considers appropriate to fulfil its functions.

⁴ This rule is adapted from the text in UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/2. The content of the rule is subject to further discussion and the outcome of the third meeting of the ad hoc open-ended working group.

Rule 22⁵

44. The membership of the Interdisciplinary Expert Committee will be based on equal representation, with five members nominated by each of the five United Nations regions and five members nominated by observers of the governing body of the Panel.

45. The co-chairs of the Committee may invite the Bureau members to participate as observers of the Committee. The chairs of the scientific subsidiary bodies of the multilateral environmental agreements related to chemicals, waste and pollution prevention, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services and the Chair of the United Nations Environment Management Group will participate in Committee meetings as observers.

46. The Committee may also invite experts from United Nations system organizations and non-governmental representatives to participate as observers, as appropriate.

47. The members of the Committee are selected for their personal expertise and are not intended to represent any particular region.

48. The term of office of a member of the Committee is three years, with the opportunity for re-election for one consecutive term. The term of office starts at the end of the session at which the member is elected and ends at the close of the session at which the member's successor is elected.

49. In order to facilitate continuity of the Panel's work, members of the Committee will have staggered terms, with the aim of ensuring that no more than half of the Committee members are elected at a session of the governing body of the Panel.

50. The co-chairs of the Committee will be elected by the members of the Committee and the Committee should rotate the position of the co-chairs among the range of its members at regular intervals.

Rule 23

51. Candidates for the Interdisciplinary Expert Committee are to be proposed by members and observers of the governing body of the Panel.

52. Taking into account disciplinary, geographical, regional and gender balance, and in keeping with the operating principles in paragraphs [---] to [---] of the foundational document, each region will nominate five candidates for membership of the Committee. In the event that a region cannot agree on its nominations, the governing body will decide.

53. The following criteria could be taken into account in nominating and selecting members of the Committee:

- (a) Scientific, technical or policy expertise and knowledge regarding the sound management of chemicals and waste and the prevention of pollution; such expertise and knowledge can include knowledge from the natural and social sciences, as well as Indigenous knowledge and local knowledge;
- (b) Experience in communicating about and promoting science and incorporating it into policy development processes;
- (c) Demonstrated ability to work in international scientific and policy processes.

Rule 24

54. The secretariat will invite members and observers of the Panel to submit written nominations and accompanying curricula vitae of nominees for the Committee to the secretariat no less than four months before the scheduled election. Curricula vitae of all nominees are to be submitted to the secretariat and made available to members of the Panel on the website of the Panel, together with the names of persons nominated, as well as the identity of the nominating region or observer.

55. The governing body of the Panel can accept late nominations at its discretion.

⁵ This rule is adapted from the text in UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/2. The content of the rule is subject to further discussion and the outcome of the third meeting of the ad hoc open-ended working group.

Rule 25

56. The members of the Interdisciplinary Expert Committee will be elected by the governing body of the Panel by consensus unless the governing body decides otherwise.

57. If the governing body of the Panel decides to elect members of the Committee by vote, the elections will be held during ordinary sessions of the governing body and in accordance with the rules of procedure.

Rule 26

58. A co-chair, if absent from a session or any part thereof, should designate another member of the Committee to act as co-chair.

59. A member of the Interdisciplinary Expert Committee acting as co-chair has the same powers and duties as the co-chair.

Rule 27

60. If a co-chair resigns or is otherwise unable to complete the assigned term of office or to perform the functions of that office, a new co-chair is to be elected by the members of the Committee at the session where it is known that the co-chair will be unable to complete the assigned term of office, to serve the remainder of the term of office of the departing co-chair.

61. If a member of the Committee resigns or is otherwise unable to complete the assigned term of office or to perform the functions of that office, that member will be replaced by an alternate nominated by the same region.

Rule 28

62. Efforts will be made to hold meetings of the Bureau and sessions of the Committee concurrently or in association, where appropriate, to allow maximum complementarity and coordination of work and cost savings.

Rule 29

63. The co-chair of the Committee:

- (a) Declares the opening and closure of each session of the Committee;
- (b) Presides at sessions of the Committee;
- (c) Ensures the observance of the applicable rules of procedure in accordance with the foundational document;
- (d) Accords participants the right to speak in the sessions of the Committee.

Other subsidiary bodies**Rule 30⁶**

64. In addition to subsidiary bodies established in paragraphs [--] to [--] of the foundational document, including the Interdisciplinary Expert Committee, the governing body of the Panel may establish other subsidiary bodies to realize such objectives as may be agreed on during a session of the governing body.

65. The governing body of the Panel may determine the matters to be considered by, and establish the terms of reference of, any subsidiary body.

66. Where appropriate, sessions of subsidiary bodies will be held in conjunction with the sessions of the governing body of the Panel. The governing body may also decide that any such subsidiary bodies may meet in the period between ordinary sessions.

67. The governing body of the Panel will keep under review the composition and effectiveness of and the need for its subsidiary bodies, as part of the periodic review of the operation of the Panel.

⁶ This rule is adapted from the text in UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/2. The content of the rule is subject to further discussion and the outcome of the third meeting of the ad hoc open-ended working group.

68. Unless otherwise decided by the governing body of the Panel, the rules of procedure will apply mutatis mutandis to the proceedings of the subsidiary bodies.

Each subsidiary body will elect its own officers.

10. Conduct of business

Rule 31

69. Sessions of the governing body of the Panel and its subsidiary bodies will be held in public unless the body concerned decides otherwise.

70. Meetings of the Bureau will be held in private unless the Bureau decides otherwise.

71. Sessions of the governing body of the Panel and its subsidiary bodies and meetings of the Bureau may be held in person or by electronic means as necessary.

Rule 32

72. The Chair may not declare a meeting of any session open or permit discussion to proceed unless at least one third of the members of the Panel participating in the session are present.

73. The presence of a majority of the members of the Panel participating in the session is needed for any decision to be taken.

Rule 33

74. No one may speak at a session of the governing body of the Panel without the permission of the Chair. Subject to rule [--], the Chair will call on speakers in the order in which they signal their desire to speak. The secretariat will maintain a list of speakers. The Chair may call a speaker to order if the speaker's remarks are not relevant to the subject under discussion.

75. The governing body of the Panel may, on a proposal from the Chair or from any member, limit the time allowed to each speaker and the number of times each representative may speak on any question. With respect to a proposal from a member, before a decision is taken, two representatives may speak in favour of and two against a proposal to set such limits. When the debate is limited and a speaker exceeds the allotted time, the Chair will call the speaker to order without delay.

76. During the course of a debate, the Chair may announce the list of speakers and, with the consent of the governing body of the Panel, declare the list closed. The Chair may, however, accord the right of reply to any member if a speech delivered after the Chair has declared the list closed makes this desirable.

Rule 34

77. The co-chairs or rapporteur of a subsidiary body may be accorded precedence for the purpose of explaining the conclusions arrived at by that subsidiary body.

11. Decision-making

Matters of substance

Rule 35

78. The members of the Panel take decisions on matters of substance by consensus, unless otherwise provided for by the rules of procedure.

79. If all efforts by the members of the Panel to achieve consensus on a matter of substance have been exhausted and no consensus has been reached, the decision will, as a last resort, be taken by a vote.

Matters of procedure

Rule 36

80. On matters of procedure, the members of the Panel are to make every effort to achieve consensus. If all efforts by the members of the Panel to achieve consensus on a matter of procedure have been exhausted and no consensus has been reached, the decision will, as a last resort, be taken by

a two-thirds majority vote of the members of the Panel present and voting, unless otherwise provided for by the rules of procedure.

81. If the question of whether a matter is procedural or substantive arises, the Chair will rule on the question. Any appeal against the Chair's ruling will be put to a vote immediately, and the ruling will stand unless overruled by a majority of the members present and voting.

82. When deliverables of the Panel are being considered, differing views are to be explained and, on request, recorded. Differing views on matters of a scientific, technical or socioeconomic nature are to be represented in the scientific, technical or socioeconomic document concerned, as appropriate in a given context. Differences of views on matters of policy or procedure are to be recorded in the report of the session, as appropriate in a given context.

Voting

Rule 37

83. Each member of the Panel has one vote.

Rule 38

84. Except where the rules of procedure expressly provide otherwise, the decisions of the governing body of the Panel will be made by a majority of the members present and voting.

85. For the purposes of the rules, the phrase "members present and voting" means members present and casting an affirmative or negative vote. Members who abstain from voting are considered as not voting.

Rule 39

86. Subject to rules [--] and [-], the governing body of the Panel will normally vote by a show of hands, but any representative may request a roll call, which will then be taken in the English alphabetical order of the names of the members, beginning with the member whose name is drawn by lot by the Chair.

Rule 40

87. The vote of each member participating in a roll call will be recorded in the relevant documents of the governing body of the Panel.

Rule 41

88. After the Chair has announced the beginning of voting, no member is to interrupt the voting except on a point of order in connection with the actual conduct of the voting. The Chair may permit members to explain their votes, either before or after the voting, except when the vote is taken by secret ballot. The Chair may limit the time allowed for such explanations.

Elections

Rule 42

89. All elections will be held by secret ballot unless the governing body of the Panel decides otherwise.

90. After completion of the elections, the number of votes for each candidate and the number of abstentions will be recorded.

Rule 43

91. If, when one person or member only is to be elected, no candidate obtains, in the first ballot, the majority required, a second ballot will be taken, restricted to the two candidates obtaining the largest number of votes. If in the second ballot the votes are equally divided, the Chair will decide between the candidates by drawing lots.

92. In the case of a tie in the first ballot among the candidates obtaining the second largest number of votes, a special ballot will be held for the purpose of reducing the number of candidates to two. In the case of a tie among three or more candidates obtaining the largest number of votes, a second ballot

will be held. If a tie results among more than two candidates, the number will be reduced to two by lot and the balloting, restricted to them, will continue in accordance with the preceding paragraph.

Rule 44

93. When two or more elective places are to be filled at one time under the same conditions, those candidates obtaining the required majority on the first ballot will be elected.

94. If the number of candidates obtaining such majority is more than the number of places to be filled, those candidates obtaining the largest number of votes will be elected.

95. If the number of candidates obtaining such majority is less than the number of places to be filled, additional ballots will be held to fill the remaining places, the voting being restricted to the candidates having obtained the greatest number of votes in the previous ballot, who will number not more than twice the places remaining to be filled. In the case of a tie between a greater number of unsuccessful candidates, however, a special ballot will be held for the purpose of reducing the number of candidates to the required number.

96. If three restricted ballots are inconclusive, unrestricted ballots will follow in which votes may be cast for any eligible person or member. If three such unrestricted ballots are inconclusive, the next three ballots (subject to exception in the case similar to that of the tie mentioned at the end of the previous paragraph of this rule) will be restricted to the candidates obtaining the greatest number of votes in the third of the unrestricted ballots. The number of such candidates will not be more than twice the places remaining to be filled.

97. Subsequent ballots will be held in the same manner (unrestricted ballots in series of three) until all the places are filled.

Equally divided votes

Rule 45

98. If a vote is equally divided on matters other than elections, the proposal will be regarded as rejected.

12. Languages

Rule 46

99. The official languages of the sessions of the governing body of the Panel are Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish.

The official language of all meetings of subsidiary bodies and the Bureau is English.

Rule 47

100. Statements made in an official language of the session will be interpreted into the other official languages.

101. A member may speak in a language other than an official language if the member provides for interpretation into one of the official languages.

Rule 48

102. Official documents of the sessions will be drafted in one of the official languages, and will be translated into and made available in the other official languages.

13. Modifications to the rules of procedure

Rule 49

103. The present rules of procedure may be amended by a decision of the governing body of the Panel.

104. Unless the governing body of the Panel decides otherwise, any proposed modifications to the rules of procedure submitted by members of the Panel or the Bureau should be communicated to all members of the Panel at least eight weeks before they are submitted to the session at which the modifications are expected to be discussed.

105. A rule of procedure may be suspended by the governing body of the Panel provided that 24 hours' notice of the proposal for the suspension has been given. The notice may be waived if no member objects.

Annex to the rules of procedure

Draft policy and procedures for the admission of observers

I. Policy for admission of observers

1. The following policy for admitting observers to sessions of the governing body of the [insert Panel name] applies:

- (a) "Observer" means [definition from foundational document];
- (b) Any State Member of the United Nations or member of a specialized agency will be considered as admitted by the governing body of the Panel as an observer and need not submit an application or other documentation.
- (c) United Nations entities and secretariats of multilateral environmental agreements are considered observers of the Panel and need not submit an application or other documentation.
- (d) The decision as to whether an applicant for observer status is qualified in matters covered by the Panel should be guided by the documents submitted by the respective organization, as listed in paragraph 2 (a) of the present document, as well as by the functions and operating principles of the Panel.
- (e) Bodies, organizations and agencies that already have observer status with any United Nations system entity or are accredited to the United Nations Environment Assembly or to any multilateral environmental agreement are considered observers of the Panel if they so request, except as the governing body of the Panel otherwise decides.
- (f) Observers in a session of the governing body of the Panel will be considered admitted by the governing body of the Panel as observers in subsequent sessions of the governing body and need not submit an application or other documentation except if the governing body decides otherwise.
- (g) Only observers who have been admitted by the governing body of the Panel and have registered for specific sessions may designate representatives to attend sessions of the governing body. Observers must register their representatives in advance of each session.
- (h) The secretariat will notify observers of sessions of the governing body of the Panel.
- (i) United Nations organizations and other international and intergovernmental organizations, as well as other observers, will be provided with nameplates where such facilities exist at the meeting venue.

II. Procedures for admission of observers

2. The following admission process applies:

- (a) Applicants for observer status to sessions of the governing body of the Panel will, as appropriate, be asked to provide the secretariat with copies of, among other things:
 - (i) Documents describing the mandate, scope and governing structure of the organization, such as the charter/statutes/constitution/by-laws or articles of association;
 - (ii) Any other information that demonstrates the competence and interest of the organization in matters related to the Panel;
 - (iii) A completed form with the contact information and website address (if any) of the organization and of a designated focal point (to be updated when necessary);
 - (iv) Proof of accreditation to United Nations system entities or other intergovernmental processes as relevant.

(b) New requests for admission as an observer to sessions of the governing body of the Panel should be submitted to the secretariat at least three months before a session of the governing body. The secretariat will retain the information submitted.

(c) The secretariat will analyse the requests on the basis of the documents submitted, as listed in subparagraph (a) above, and of the functions and operating principles of the Panel, and will make such analyses available for consideration by the Bureau.

(d) The list of applicants for observer status as reviewed by the Bureau, including any applications not approved, will be presented for consideration by the governing body of the Panel at its next session.

3. The governing body of the Panel will decide on the admission and participation of all observers in accordance with its rules of procedure. Observers accepted by the Bureau on the basis of the review described in paragraph 2 (d) may be admitted to a session of the governing body of the Panel and participate in it unless at least one third of the members present at the session object.

4. Admission of new applicants as observers should be included as a regular agenda item of meetings of the Bureau and sessions of the governing body of the Panel, consistent with any applicable rules of procedure.

5. If observer status has to be withdrawn for any reason, the Chair may suspend the observer status of the observer in question, subject to approval by the governing body of the Panel.

6. Any observer may retain its status only as long as it satisfies the conditions set out for observer status in the present document and any relevant rule of procedure for sessions of the governing body of the Panel.

ADVANCED