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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

Compilation of written submissions on the documentation for the third session of the ad hoc open-ended working group

Note by the secretariat

The annex to the present note contains a compilation of written submissions from Governments and stakeholders on meeting documents prepared for the third session of the ad hoc open-ended working group on a science-policy panel to contribute further to the sound management of chemicals and waste and prevent pollution. The ad hoc open-ended working group may wish to consider the information provided.

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

Annex*

1. At its resumed fifth session, held in Nairobi from 28 February to 2 March 2022, the United Nations Environment Assembly decided, by its resolution 5/8, that a science-policy panel should be established to contribute further to the sound management of chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution. By the same resolution, the Environment Assembly decided to convene an ad hoc open-ended working group (OEWG) to prepare proposals for the science-policy panel. The working group would commence its work in 2022, with the ambition of completing it by the end of 2024.

2. A call for submissions on the working documents prepared for the third session of the open-ended working group was issued on 25 April 2024, with a deadline of 31 May 2024. The submissions from governments[1] and non-government stakeholders[2] are compiled below, as received, for possible consideration by the working group at its third session.

* The annex has not been formally edited.

[1] Submissions were received from the European Union and its Member States, Norway and Switzerland.

[2] Submissions were received from the All Africa Conferences of Churches Kenya (AACC), Chemichemi Foundation, Children and Youth Major Group (CYMG), Global Alliance on Health and Pollution (GAHP), International Centre for Environmental Education and Community Development (ICENECDEV), International Pollutants Elimination Network (IPEN), Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC), Science & Technology Major Group (S&TMG), Society of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry (SETAC) and the World Health Organization (WHO).

Written submission from the European Union and Its Members States

on the working documents for OEWG 3

The EU and its Members States would like to stress the importance of the establishment of the Science-Policy Panel for chemicals, waste and pollution prevention, with a wide scope and in accordance with the timeline indicated in UNEA resolution 5/8. With the existing science-policy panels covering Climate Change by IPCC and Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services by IPBES, the creation of this new panel will close a significant knowledge gap, enabling a comprehensive approach to addressing the Triple Planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution.

We extend our gratitude for the invaluable work carried out by the secretariat of the OEWG thus far. We particularly appreciate the timely release of the documentation, the clear and concise briefings provided, and the opportunity to engage in regional consultations. Additionally, we commend the Secretariat for their efforts in providing new and revised text in the addenda to the working documents, drawing from the best practices of existing initiatives, including other science-policy panels such as IPBES.

The EU and its Member States would like to stress the importance of finalizing the foundational elements for the future Panel during OEWG3, as outlined in UNEA-resolution 5/8, in order to conclude the negotiations and have proposals for the establishment of the Panel ready in 2024.

Given the extensive remaining workload for the OEWG, the success of the meeting relies largely on an efficient organization of the work. We expect the Scenario Note to prioritize the elements necessary for establishing the Panel and outline how this will be integrated within the negotiation timeframe at OEWG3. We advocate for the most effective use of meeting time from day one, emphasizing the establishment of necessary contact groups early in the process and avoiding lengthy opening statements.

As regards the Conflict of Interest Policy, the EU and its Member States strongly support an efficient mechanism that ensures identification and management of all forms of conflicts of interest, including past interests and covering also financial interests. The mechanism should ensure that all experts who participate in the work of the panel are subject to the Conflict of interest Policy with a focus on those experts who have leading roles in the preparation of the products of the panel. The evaluation of potential conflicts of interest should be carried out by a specific committee mandated by the plenary to undertake the evaluations. The committee should also decide on which actions should be taken following the result of the evaluation.

In terms of outcomes, we envision the new Panel becoming an authoritative global scientific body to deliver policy-relevant knowledge to countries and international agreements and other international instruments and frameworks to enable evidence informed policy in the area of chemicals, waste and pollution prevention. The Panel will provide scientific information and assessments to strengthen existing MEAs and other international instruments and frameworks in the field of chemicals, waste and pollution prevention. This includes responding to requests and complementing their work.

We foresee the future Panel working in close collaboration with MEAs, and other international instruments and frameworks, existing panels and other UN bodies to share best practices and avoid duplication of work, while seeking synergies. It is crucial that within the proposed text, elements are built for these collaborations to happen, while ensuring sufficient independence. By leveraging the expertise and resources of existing initiatives, the new Panel can optimize its resources and maximize its impact. EU and its Member States will therefore support secretariat services from more Intergovernmental Organizations.

In terms of membership in the Plenary (Governing body) of the Panel, we strongly advocate for the inclusion of REIOs (Regional Economic Integration Organizations)/the European Union. The European Union is a specific Regional Economic Integration Organization with legal personality, constituted by 27 sovereign UN Member States. These Member States have, in some areas, transferred their competencies to the European Union to act on their behalf. Therefore, the European Union can make a significant contribution to the work of the plenary, including by enhancing the scientific foundation of policymaking.

To make the most efficient use of the time we support that the discussions in OEWG3 build on what was agreed in OEWG 1.2 and OEWG 2. In this regard, we support the current text of the scope, objectives, and functions as it is, except for function e) for which there are two proposals which need further discussion. We will also suggest aligning OP a) with IPBES and deleting OP g), j) to m).

The EU and its Member States look forward to the future Panel delivering the necessary knowledge in a timely manner and adhering to the principle of being policy relevant but not prescriptive, but we do not see the benefits of establishing a policy committee. During OEWG3, it will be important to ensure that all the necessary elements (including the process for determining and prioritization of the work programme) are included in the text to establish a well-functioning interface between the policy and scientific communities. This will enable the Science-Policy Panel for chemicals, waste and pollution prevention to fulfill its mandate, develop a work program with balanced inputs from relevant communities and make significant contributions to environmental and health challenges.

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ROYAL NORWEGIAN MINISTRY OF
CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENT

Written submission from the Government of Norway on views on the SPP OEWG 3 meeting documents

The Government of Norway would like to express appreciation for the important work UNEP is doing in support of the process to establish the new Science-Policy Panel for chemicals, waste and pollution prevention.

A strong and comprehensive science-policy interface to tackle the pollution pillar of the triple planetary crisis is needed, in line with the decision by UNEA-5 in 2022 to establish the Panel. The new Panel will play an essential role by agreeing on a global knowledge base for the sound management of chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution. Once operational, it will complete the similar scientific bodies designed to counter climate change and nature and biodiversity loss. We now have the full text proposals for the founding of the Panel and for the Panel's processes and procedures. There is a need for simplification to produce a clear and concise text. Furthermore, it will be highly beneficial with a process during OEWG 3 that ensures that a more processed text will be available early at this session, so that we will be able to finalise the necessary documents for the establishing of the Panel. Norway reiterates the importance of building upon already existing text from IPBES and IPCC, with the necessary adaptations. The documents we finish at OEWG 3 must be in line with the requests by UNEA in Resolution 5/8. The Secretariat's proposal for the processes and procedures is a good starting point and gives the direction for the content of the foundational documents.

Norway observes that the meeting documents give clear guidance on which elements to be adopted by the Intergovernmental Meeting (Part A to D) and what could or must be left to the Panel itself to decide. We believe it would be beneficial to also finalise the Rules of Procedure at OEWG, to facilitate the first session of the Panel to be organised back-to-back with the Intergovernmental Meeting. Norway further notes that the discussions on rules of procedure is closely tied to the discussion on institutional arrangements. Norway therefore suggests discussing the Rules of Procedure in the same contact group as the foundational documents. It is also important that this contact group is given enough time to discuss these important subjects during OEWG3.

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Further, Norway would like the OEWG 3 to consider whether issues proposed to be included in the Operating Principles during OEWG 2 (UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/2 Section B) that are more related to the background, context or justification for establishing the panel, should rather be covered by the preambular paragraphs to the decision to establish the Panel (Annex I to document UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/3), and that this would be an issue for contact group 1 to discuss.

Regarding the OEWG 3 outcome, we see the need to communicate clearly that we must come to an agreement at that session. We believe that common understanding of the road leading to the SPP OEWG negotiations, from the establishment of SAICM to UNEA 5, will help to facilitate this. We therefore appreciate that the Secretariat is preparing INF/6 *Towards a science-policy panel to contribute further to the sound management of chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution: an overview*.

Additionally, as a practical consideration, we would appreciate if word-versions of the documents could be made available to participants, especially the in-session versions that are published during the session.

Norway also takes the opportunity to share our views on the organisation of OEWG 3 and the Intergovernmental Meeting. We support the proposed timetable and the priority given to contact group discussions and to ensure sufficient time for informal consultations. Further that the contact group discussions on text proposals that have to be adopted by the Intergovernmental Meeting will be given priority. The timing of the Intergovernmental Meeting (February 2025) and to organise the first session of the Panel back-to-back with this meeting, will be crucial for the starting up and progress of the Panel's work. The same applies to organising the second session of the Panel in February 2026, and the importance of adopting the first work programme at that meeting.

Switzerland's written comments on the working documents for OEWG3 on a science-policy panel to contribute further to the sound management of chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution

Switzerland welcomes the working documents presented by the Secretariat, including the draft texts for the 4 annexes. They are a good basis to complete the negotiations on the establishment of a science-policy panel on chemicals, waste and pollution prevention at the third session of the open-ended working group (OEWG3).

Scope, objective and functions (working document UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/2)
UNEA resolution 5/8 specified several features of the panel: it should be independent and intergovernmental. It also specified that the panel should have as its principal functions horizon scanning, assessments, identification of research gaps, and information sharing, among others. Switzerland is of the view that the functions of the panel are not reopened during OEWG3, with the exception of the capacity building function for which a bridge-building solution should be found. Switzerland is convinced that it is possible to combine elements of the two proposals. Current proposal 2 indeed foresees a capacity-building function that serves the other functions of the panel, and the other proposal addresses the capacity-building needs in line with the panel outlining specific activities. A bridge-building text would address both by noting the essence of the function would be to serve the other functions of the panel and adding some specific activities from proposal 2.

Operating principles (working document UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/2)
At OEWG2, all possible operating principles were listed in order to ensure a holistic view. This list should not become any longer. On the contrary, now that the secretariat has prepared draft texts to complete all necessary text to establish the panel, it is important to streamline this list of operating principles by striking out the aspects that are now addressed in other parts of the text.

Rules of procedures (working document UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/2/Add.1)
We support the draft text proposed by the secretariat (UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/2/Add.1). Two particularly important points that we would like to emphasize are: (1) consensus would be the general practice and voting should be possible as a last resort (2) at OEWG3 we will have to make sure that the Rules of procedures and the institutional arrangements are consistent.
Agreement on the Rules of procedure will determine when the panel can realistically initiate its work. It is therefore Switzerland's view that the OEWG3 should finalize the text of this annex, so that it can be forwarded by the intergovernmental meeting to the Plenary for adoption at its first meeting.

Financial arrangement and procedures (working documents UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/2 and UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG3/2/Add.2)
The financial arrangement and procedures are also particularly relevant to enable the realization of the panel's full potential. We support the draft text proposed by the secretariat (UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG3/2/Add.2), which proposes a voluntary trust fund. The voluntary Trust Fund established with the panel should finance its activities as well as the secretariat. The adoption of the Panel's budget is the responsibility of the Plenary. The furnishment of the voluntary Trust Fund will be an important challenge to tackle as sufficient financing will determine the capacity of the panel to meet its objectives. Switzerland believes that the use of the UN voluntary indicative scale of assessments would be an important basis for that.

Process for determining the work programmed, including prioritization (working document UNEP/SPP/cwp/OEWG.3/2/Add.3)

This process determines who will be able to submit requests for potential activities to be undertaken by the panel and how these requests may be treated prioritized. The working document UNEP/SPP-

CWP/OEWG.3/2/Add.3 by the secretariat proposes a sensible approach that has already been proven as successful for IPBES:

1. Calls for inputs made by the Secretariat are broad and open to all stakeholders.
2. Inputs are analysed and prioritized under the leadership of the Interdisciplinary Expert Committee.
3. Building upon the prioritization, the draft work programme is developed and forwarded to the Plenary for decision.

This process allows a wide range of proposals to be made, then clustered and sorted according to policy relevance and priority, thus ensuring that the work of the panel stays focused and relevant.

Agreement on this process will determine when the panel can realistically initiate its work. It is therefore Switzerland's view that the OEWG3 should finalize the text of this annex, so that it can be forwarded by the intergovernmental meeting to the Plenary for adoption at its first meeting. This way the panel may start developing its work programme in the intersessional period between the 1st and 2nd plenary meeting.

Process for the preparation and clearance of panel deliverables (working document UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/2/Add.4)

The process for preparing and clearing panel deliverables is a crucial aspect that sets the foundation for the effective and credible functioning of the panel. This should therefore include defining procedures for tasks, responsibilities, expert selection, error handling, source usage, data management, digital tools utilization, and safeguarding commercially sensitive information. As the working document UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/2/Add.4 by the secretariat addresses appropriately all these aspects, it is a good basis for discussion. It is important to ensure clarity with regards to the term's "validation", "acceptance", and "approval" and their use.

Conflict of interest policy (working documents UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/2 and UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/2/Add.5)

Switzerland welcomes the good progresses made on the conflict-of-interest policy during OEWG2 and believes that the text can be finalized at the OEWG3. The conflict-of-interest policy should apply to everyone active within any body of the panel, while reflecting one's specific responsibilities.

Secretariat hosting arrangements (working document UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/4)

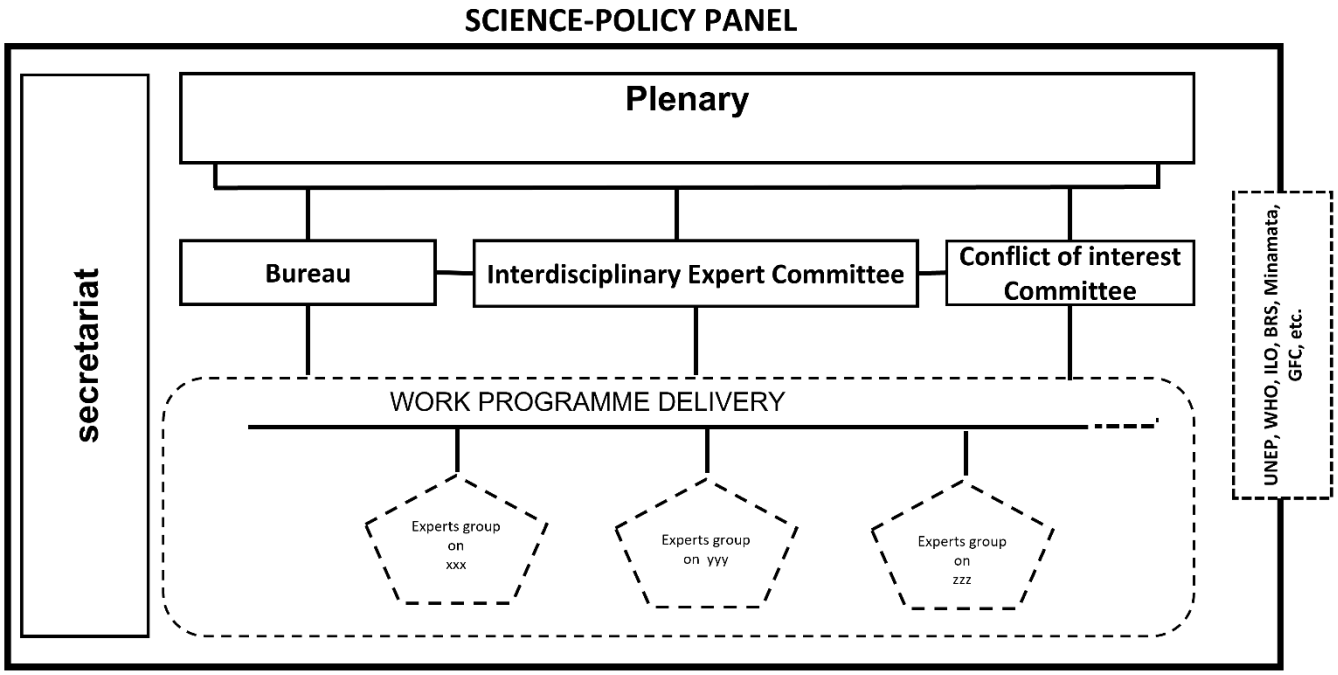
Switzerland favors a joint Secretariat by UNEP and WHO for the Science-Policy Panel to benefit from the expertise and networks of both organizations. The draft decision for the intergovernmental meeting to give effect to arrangements in the foundational documents as proposed by the secretariat in document UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/4 should therefore be amended in order to reflect the option of a UNEP-WHO joint secretariat.

Institutional arrangements (working document UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/2)

Regarding the institutional arrangements, Switzerland is convinced that IPBES offers an efficient and modern example to follow. The Plenary is the governing body of the panel. The Bureau's main function should be to provide administrative and policy oversight of and guidance to the Plenary's work during the intersessional period. The Bureau is to be composed of government representatives from the 5 UN regions. The main functions of the Interdisciplinary Expert Committee should be to provide policy-relevant scientific and technical advice to the Plenary on aspects of the Panel's programme of work and on scientific matters. Together with the Bureau, IEC should manage and oversee the processes linked to the programme of work and the deliverables in a transparent manner. Members of the Interdisciplinary Expert Committee should be nominated by government officials. A Committee on Conflict of interest should ensure that everyone involved in the panel and panel's work do it free of conflicts of interest. The Secretariat should not only provide administrative support, but also take up scientific and technical work, in consultation with the IEC and in support of all functions of the Panel. All other subsidiaries bodies, including technical support unites and experts' groups, are not permanent and should be established by the Plenary as appropriate. With such institutional arrangements, a Policy Committee is not necessary as the Plenary ensures the policy relevance of

the panel's work with its decisions. It is Switzerland's view that a policy committee would create overlap and interfere with the Bureau's work and with the Plenary's responsibilities.

Switzerland's view of institutional arrangements:



Caption: Regular line = permanent body; dashed line = non-permanent body

MY DOCUMENT

Dr. Frank Wesonga from All African Conferences of Churches Kenya.

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The general principles underpinning sustainable management include promoting the right to a clean and healthy environment; the precautionary principle; the polluter pays principle; zero waste principle and achieving sustainable waste management goals.

Let's for instance consider the zero-waste principle in the context of beating plastic pollution. Under this principal, products and processes are designed and managed to reduce the volume and toxicity of waste and materials, and to conserve and recover all resources, and to prevent the burning or burying of resources. Waste is treated as a resource that can be harnessed for wealth creation, employment and the reduction of pollution.

The Act also mandates private entities and accounting officers of public entities to provide waste segregation receptacles at their premises for organic, plastic and general dry waste. Waste segregation facilitates the process of reuse, recycling, and recovery of plastic waste contributing to the circular economy plastic waste can be accounted for.

The devolved units have not been left behind in the solid waste management. They have a mandate to implement the devolved function of waste management, establish financial and operation conditions for the effective performance of waste management.

Chemichemi Foundation

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May 29, 2024

Secretariat of the ad hoc Open Ended Working Group
United Nations Environment Programme
UN Avenue, Gigiri, Nairobi
P.O. Box 30552 – 00100 Nairobi

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/2 - Compilation of proposals for establishing a science-policy panel

In reference to the email dated April 25, 2024, tabulated below are observations from Chemichemi Foundation on the UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/2 - Compilation of proposals for establishing a science-policy panel for your review and consideration.

No	Page	Item	Recommendation
1.	2	Scope, objective and functions of the panel:	
		(d) Facilitating information-sharing with countries, in particular developing countries seeking relevant scientific information.	Define clearly the platforms that will be used for information sharing.
2.	2	(e) Capacity-building	Define who will carry out the capacity building: Eg: professionals from universities, institutions of learning.
3.	7	20 (g) bis [to prepare periodic reports]	Within which given timeframe? Quarterly or biannually.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Nancy Marangu

Nancy Marangu
Policy and Strategy Expert
Chemichemi Foundation

CHILDREN AND YOUTH MAJOR GROUP TO UNEP

Proposals & Recommendations on the Current Documentations for OEWG-3

The third session of the ad hoc open-ended working group to prepare proposals for a science-policy panel to contribute further to the sound management of chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution (OEWG-3)

This document is submitted on behalf of the Children and Youth Major Group to UNEP. The CYMG is the formal children and youth engagement mechanism to the UN Environment Programme and a movement of children, youth and youth organizations from different parts of the world working for environmental conservation.

This document is a compilation of inputs gathered from the constituency as a result of multiple rounds of consultations held by the Chemicals and Waste Working Group of CYMG that entailed several months of consultations, written inputs complemented by online consultations sessions took place between January and May 2024. Thus, this document reflects the perspectives and priorities of children and youth from different regions, communities and backgrounds.

This submission contains three sections:

- The first section elaborates on the constituency's perspectives on the text proposed, along with our **agreed textual proposals.**
- The second section contains a **policy brief** for the promotion of the inclusion of youth in the panel.
- The third section condenses the main **priorities** of the constituency in heading towards SPP-OEWG 3.

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UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/2

(Compilation of proposals for establishing a science-policy panel)

A. Scope, objective and functions of the panel

(e) Capacity-building

Proposal 1: Provide capacity-building through all the functions of the panel and facilitate technology transfer, in particular to developing countries, to improve the science-policy interface at appropriate levels, including activities to ensure effective, geographically balanced and gender-responsive participation of scientists in the assessments of the panel, strengthen data generation capacity, enhance knowledge and skills that will support country infrastructure and human capacity, and facilitate connection and matchmaking of capacity-related needs and potential solutions

Proposal 2 : Build capacity to support the functions and work of the panel in order to strengthen the science-policy interface for sound management of chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution.

CYMG Proposal:

[Facilitate capacity-building to support the panel's functions, particularly in developing countries, through collaborative activities including technology transfer, skill development, strategic planning and financial support, innovative solutions, and stronger science-backed policy formation, analysis and implementation for the sound management of chemicals and waste and prevention of pollution.]

The effective implementation of the future panel can only be achieved when it incorporates effective Capacity Building included under the scope, objective and functions of the panel. At the previous OEWG sessions, several GAPs were identified in the IPBES and the IPCC inclusive of a lack of comprehensive capacity building for its members. Furthermore, the mandate of improving the capacity of the Member States and stakeholders at all levels in the decision-making process of the current environmental and health issues through strengthening the science-policy interface is also highlighted in the UNEA-6 Ministerial Declaration Paragraph 16. This underscores the importance of ensuring the capacity-building is guaranteed and accessible to all related parties.

Therefore, CYMG reiterates that this core aspect will help build the human capital of our regions to address several issues related to science and the availability of data and/or information to help support the need that needs to be done.

UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/2

B. Operating principles of the panel

(i) [Incorporating [a human rights-based approach],[the respect and protection of human rights as a cross-cutting principle,] including [prevention-based approach] by recognizing [that the implementation of the sound management of chemicals and waste and prevention of pollution contributes to the full enjoyment of human rights and human well-being and dignity.] [the right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment, the right to science, **[intergenerational equity,]** the importance of informed participation, and](del) the need to give special attention to [those

populations](del) [groups and communities] most vulnerable to adverse impacts from chemicals, waste and pollution[, including from the perspective of racial and social equality];](del)

[(i) alt Incorporating the need to give special attention to those populations most vulnerable to adverse impacts from chemicals, waste and pollution.]

[(i) alt bis Incorporating a human rights-based approach, including by recognizing that the implementation of the sound management of chemicals and waste and prevention of pollution contributes to the full enjoyment of human rights and human well-being and dignity.]

[(i) alt ter Incorporating [a human rights-based approach](del), [the respect and protection of human rights as a cross-cutting principle] including by recognizing the right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment, the right to science, **[intergenerational equity]** the importance of informed participation, and the need to give special attention to [those populations](del) [groups and communities] most vulnerable to adverse impacts from chemicals, waste and pollution [including from the perspective of racial and social equality];]

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(o) Integrating gender equality [and equity](del) in all relevant aspects of its work;

CYMG Proposals:

[(i) alt Incorporating the need to give special attention to those populations most vulnerable to adverse impacts from chemicals, waste and pollution***(, taking into account the principle of intergenerational equity.)***]

[(i) alt bis Incorporating a human rights-based approach, including by recognizing that the implementation of the sound management of chemicals and waste and prevention of pollution contributes to the full enjoyment of human rights and human well-being and dignity***(, and intergenerational equity.)***]

(o) Integrating gender equality [and equity](del) ***(and intergenerational equity)*** in all relevant aspects of its work;

Recognizing the importance of ensuring fairness in the developmental and environmental needs of the current and future generations i.e the unborn, the children, the youth and the elderly, our position demands that the principle of an intergenerational equity lens should be integrated into the Operating principles of the panel. It aims to ensure the panel's structure and work reflect intergenerational perspectives and foster active engagement of children and youth in sound management of chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution. Furthermore, it guides the panel’s decisions to address the needs and rights of both current and future generations fairly, by considering the long-term impacts on future generations, leading to more sustainable and equitable outcomes.

Intergenerational equity is a cornerstone of sustainable development, emphasizing our responsibility to bequeath a healthy environment for future generations. It underpins our collective commitment to policies that not only address current environmental challenges but also safeguard the long-term stability of our planet for current and future generations.

To uphold the rights of those who will inherit the Earth, we must prioritise sustainable practices and integrate them into the core of our governance structures. This includes adopting comprehensive environmental protection policies, and enforcing regulations that prevent pollution and further the sound management of chemicals and waste.

UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/2

(Compilation of proposals for establishing a science-policy panel)

C. Institutional arrangements for the Panel

III. Committees and subsidiary bodies
Interdisciplinary Expert Committee

18. [Representatives of non-governmental participants as well as the Chair of the United Nations Environment Management Group may participate as ex officio members in Interdisciplinary Expert Committee meetings. The representatives of non-governmental participants are elected by and from non-governmental participants engaged in the work of the Panel.(6)]

(6) Guidelines covering the nomination process and length of service of these representatives will be provided for in the rules of procedure. The ad hoc open-ended working group may wish to consider electing five representatives to serve in this role, one each from health, environment, industry, trade union and public interest groups.

UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/2/Add.1 *(Draft rules of procedure)*

9. Subsidiary bodies (membership, operation, election of members)
Interdisciplinary Expert Committee: Rule 22
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.

CYMG Proposals:

UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/2 *(Compilation of proposals for establishing a science-policy panel)*

18. [Representatives of ***(Major Groups and Stakeholders)*** as well as the Chair of the United Nations Environment Management Group may participate as ex officio members in Interdisciplinary Expert Committee meetings. The representatives of non-governmental participants are elected by and from non-governmental participants engaged in the work of the Panel.(6)]

(6) Guidelines covering the nomination process and length of service of these representatives will be provided for in the rules of procedure. The ad hoc open-ended working group may wish to consider electing ***(nine representatives to serve in this role one each from the major groups with relevant expertise to the work programme)*** five representatives to serve in this role, one each from health, environment, industry, trade union and public interest groups.

UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/2/Add.1 *(Draft rules of procedure)*

9. Subsidiary bodies (membership, operation, election of members)
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 ***(nine)*** members nominated by observers of the governing body of the Panel.

Establishment of a Youth Expert Advisory Group to function as a sub-committee of the Interdisciplinary Expert Committee.

It is imperative to ensure that the panel's functions including the Interdisciplinary Expert Committee reflect inclusivity by referencing Major Groups and other Stakeholders from Agenda 21 of the Rio 1992 Summit, enhancing the scope of expertise and perspectives in the work of the committee. This approach ultimately leads to more comprehensive, robust, and sustainable outcomes that consider the perspectives and needs of all stakeholders, including both current and future generations.

The establishment of the panel can only be effective through the recognition that different expert groups are needed to address both policy-relevant and scientific issues. As such, we welcome and appreciate the recognition of the role of subsidiary bodies and expert teams in the procedures. CYMG as one of the Major Groups recalls and affirms the proposal of establishing the interdisciplinary expert committee engaging youth experts in our previous engagement in OEWG2; pursuant to which we request that a *Youth Expert Advisory Group to function as a sub-committee of the Interdisciplinary Expert Committee.*

Establishment of the Youth Expert Advisory Group [CYMG Proposal] :

Mandate:

- The Youth Expert Advisory Group will function as a sub-committee of the Interdisciplinary Expert Committee.
- The Youth representative in the Interdisciplinary Expert Committee will represent the Youth Expert Advisory Group and communicate the group's outcomes.
- The Youth Expert Advisory Group shall provide insights into the concerns, priorities, and perspectives of the younger generation.
- The group will ensure that the voices and needs of youth are integrated into the panel's work programs, supporting the governing body and other subsidiary bodies.

Composition:

- The Youth Expert Advisory Group shall consist of youth experts from diverse disciplines relevant to the panel's mandate.
- The Youth Expert Advisory Group shall operate with a focus on inclusion from vulnerable and marginalised communities, ensuring equal representation across regions, geographies, and genders.
- Members shall be selected to ensure balanced representation in terms of geographical distribution, gender equality, and inclusion of vulnerable and marginalised communities.

Tasks:

Contribution to the Work Programme:

- Contribute to the work programme and assessments by supporting research, assessments, horizon scanning, and other related functions.
- Provide insights and recommendations on issues that particularly affect the younger generations, contributing to policy development and decision-making processes.
- Offer perspectives on emerging trends, innovations, and challenges relevant to the field.
- Assist in monitoring, evaluation and reassessment of policies and priorities based on implementation of the work programme

Engagement and Outreach:

- Facilitate engagement with youth networks and communities to gather broad input and feedback on the panel's initiatives.
- Promote awareness and understanding of the panel's work among young people and encourage their active participation.

Capacity Building:

- Support the production of deliverables tailored to younger generations to ensure accessible language and build capacity.
- Develop and implement capacity-building programs to enhance the skills and knowledge of young experts and early career professionals in relevant areas.
- Organise workshops, seminars, and training sessions to foster knowledge exchange and professional development.

By demanding the institutionalisation of the Youth Expert Advisory Group, we aim to ensure that the perspectives of younger and future generations are effectively incorporated into the work of the panel, contributing to more inclusive, forward-looking, and sustainable outcomes.

UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/2/Add.4

(Draft procedures for the preparation and clearance of panel deliverables)

Annex I (Roles and responsibilities for the preparation of assessments)

In addition to the roles described in the annex I *(*including *Co-chairs, coordinating lead authors, Lead authors, contributing authors, Review editors, expert, and government reviewers)* CYMG proposes the inclusion of the ***Fellows*** role to provide an avenue for early career professionals, young researchers, and youth experts to actively engage with the assessment process.

- ***Fellows:*** Introducing Fellows to the Roles and responsibilities for the preparation of assessments brings a dynamic and innovative edge to the assessment process. These young experts, (under 35 years old), provide vital support to authors through assisting research, managing citations and references, visual development, and among other tasks. Their inclusion offers a dual advantage: Fellows gain invaluable learning and networking opportunities, enhancing their professional growth and preparing them to carry out future cycles of assessments, while the panel benefits from their fresh perspectives and contemporary insights. By interacting with experts from all over the world, Fellows ensure that the viewpoints and concerns of younger generations are integrated into the assessment, enriching the panel's work with diverse and forward-thinking contributions.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH MAJOR GROUP TO UNEP

POLICY BRIEF:

PROMOTING YOUTH ENGAGEMENT IN SCIENCE-POLICY INTERFACES

INTRODUCTION

Science-policy interfaces are social processes that encompass relations between scientists and other actors in the policy process, enabling the exchange, coevolution, and collaborative construction of knowledge to enhance decision-making.[1] In this context, youth are critical stakeholders and partners, bringing their unique knowledge, competencies, and lived experiences to strengthen environmental science and policy. Young people, with their unique dispositions, perceptions, ingenuity, and creativity, bring innovations, new energy, and perspectives that, when combined with existing knowledge and tools, make significant and transformative contributions toward addressing complex global challenges.[2] Harnessing youth voices as a force for change can lead to a more holistic understanding of science-policy issues, thereby increasing the policy and societal relevance of science-policy interfaces.[3]

The ongoing negotiations on the Science-Policy Panel to contribute further to the sound management of chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution present a unique opportunity to redesign the narrative around youth engagement. The new panel has the potential to overcome the limitations of existing science-policy interfaces by enabling meaningful youth engagement and fostering intergenerational partnerships.

KEY MESSAGES

1. Youth, who comprise nearly half of the global population, remain significantly underrepresented in the science-policy interface. Young people possess a diverse range of knowledge, skills, and lived experiences that can greatly benefit policy design, implementation, and evaluation. Establishing a Youth Experts Advisory Group can make the new panel more inclusive, responsive, and impactful, bridging the gap between the scientific community and the lived realities of young people.

2. The new panel should learn from the best practices of youth engagement adopted by existing interfaces while being innovative in its approach to addressing the persistent barriers, including limited knowledge, awareness, accessibility, inclusivity and participation.

3. The stakeholder engagement strategy for the new panel should be developed through a public consultation process that actively engages young people. By involving youth as equal partners in designing the engagement strategy, the panel can better understand and address their specific needs and expertise while also fostering trust, ownership, and commitment among young people as key stakeholders.

BEST PRACTICES

This policy brief identifies and highlights best practices of youth engagement from existing science-policy interfaces that the new panel should adopt. The combination of these practices can ensure that the panel leverages the unique knowledge, skills, and lived experiences that youth bring to the table, ultimately strengthening the credibility, relevance, and impact of its global assessments.

1 https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/38115/UNEP%4050_report_ENGLISH_FINAL.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

2 https://iucncongress2020.org/sites/www.iucncongress2020.org/files/page/files/intergens_-_report_-_review_youth_engagement_and_intergenerational_partnership_across_iucn_-_06042021.pdf

3 https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/26395916.2022.2085807

CASE 1: INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON CLIMATE CHANGE (IPCC)

1. ***Broadened access through existing networks*:** Organisations with observer status at WMO, UNEP, and UNFCCC are automatically considered IPCC observers upon request, without the need to submit additional documentation. This simplifies the process for youth organisations to participate in IPCC activities.

2. ***Scholarship Programme for Early-Career Researchers*:** The Programme supports early-career scientists from developing countries in pursuing doctoral studies on climate adaptation and mitigation. This fosters their academic and professional growth while empowering them to contribute to global efforts to address climate change.

3. ***Chapter Scientists*:** Early-career research scientists provide technical and logistical support to author teams with technical aspects of chapter development, with opportunities to advance to roles as Contributing and Lead Authors in subsequent assessments. This helps gain state-of-the-art knowledge in the field, unique insights into the IPCC assessment process and valuable networks that could assist in future career development.

CASE 2: INTERGOVERNMENTAL SCIENCE-POLICY PLATFORM ON BIODIVERSITY AND ECOSYSTEM SERVICES (IPBES)

1. ***Recognition of self-organised networks of stakeholders***: IPBES recognises self-organised networks of stakeholders, including youth groups, which can co-lead preparations for the IPBES Stakeholder Day(s). This inclusion ensures that youth voices are integral to the discussions, elevating their role as key stakeholders in biodiversity and ecosystem conservation efforts.

2. ***Youth Workshop*:** Youth and early-career individuals from universities, NGOs, and policy organisations can participate in the annual workshop. This facilitates youth engagement with IPBES and builds their capacity to contribute effectively to its processes and products.

3. ***Fellowship Programme for Early-Career Individuals*:** Early-career researchers working on biodiversity and ecosystem services can participate in IPBES assessments. Fellows gain valuable experience and mentorship from leading experts, enhancing their capacity to contribute to future assessments and promoting IPBES work in their home countries.

CASE 3: GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT OUTLOOK (GEO)

1. ***Advisory Groups***: The Children and Youth Major Group to UNEP can nominate representatives to the Intergovernmental and Multi-stakeholder Advisory Group and Multidisciplinary Expert Scientific Advisory Group, contributing their policy and scientific expertise to the process. This ensures youth perspectives are included in the GEO process.

2. ***Fellows Programme for Youth*:** Young experts support the GEO authors with research, citations, references and visual development, bringing forward-looking perspectives, community realities, and technological literacy. Alumni from past assessment cycles can become leading authors for new assessments, showcasing the programme's impact on developing future leaders.

3. ***GEO for Youth*:** A one-stop-shop for young people to understand the state of the environment, written by youth for youth. It aims to inform, engage and educate young people, empowering them to take informed environmental action.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

While best practices exist that facilitate youth engagement, there are still a number of barriers that limit youth participation and representation in science-policy interfaces. The new panel should address these challenges by consulting with youth during the design of the stakeholder engagement strategy. This approach will better address the specific needs and expertise of young people, fostering trust, ownership, and commitment among them as key stakeholders.

Barriers to youth engagement	Policy recommendations
Knowledge and awareness	
Limited understanding of the science-policy interface	• Provide educational resources and training to enhance youth understanding of the science-policy interface and empower youth to engage • Replicate models like GEO for Youth to educate young people about the science-policy interface, environmental issues and informed actions
Lack of awareness of engagement opportunities	• Amplify outreach and disseminate information about engagement opportunities through youth-focused channels and networks • Build partnerships with existing youth-led organisations, universities, and other networks to effectively reach and engage young people
Access, inclusion and participation	
Complex formal accreditation requirements	• Recognise Major Group modalities for stakeholder engagement. • Grant observer status to organisations already accredited by UNEA
Limited youth representation, especially those from marginalised backgrounds or with non-traditional scientific expertise	• Conduct active outreach to ensure the representation of diverse voices in science policy discussions. • Recognise the value of all ages by allowing observer organisations to nominate minors (anyone below 18 years of age) to participate in the panel's activities. • Establish a Youth Experts Advisory Group to amplify the voices of youth experts and early-career professionals
Focus on established expertise, leaving less room for fresh perspectives and innovative solutions proposed by young people	• Revise selection criteria for youth participation in advisory groups and fellowship programmes to embrace alternative forms of experience or expertise, such as lived experiences, community knowledge, or citizen science contributions. • Allow self-nominations to broaden access and ensure representation from a wider spectrum of youth voices
Lack of funding for youth engagement	• Allocate dedicated funding and provide financial support to facilitate youth participation in the panel's activities
Lack of capacity-building support	• Develop and offer comprehensive capacity-building programmes specifically designed for young people to equip them with the necessary skills for meaningful participation in the panel's activities and beyond. These programmes should include: - Youth workshops and training that focus on scientific communication, policy analysis, advocacy, and public engagement. - Fellowship programmes that enable youth to contribute to assessment reports and gain hands-on experience. - Mentorship programmes that connect experienced professionals with young individuals for guidance, support, and skill development - Scholarship programmes that allow outstanding young individuals to pursue doctoral studies on issues of chemicals, waste and pollution.

CYMG Priorities for OEWG3: Science-Policy Panel to contribute further to the sound management of chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution

Derived from the Children and Youth Major Group (CYMG)'s intersessional work ahead of OEWG3, these priorities reflect a collective effort to address the challenges of establishing a Science-Policy Panel on Chemicals, Waste, and Pollution. The insights presented here distil the essence of the Demands of children and youth, outlining clear and concise priorities that emphasise inclusivity, innovation, meaningful participation, and adaptability in navigating the complexities of our global environmental landscape.

1. **Prioritise Intergenerational Equity**: Integrate intergenerational equity into the existing operating principles, ensuring that the Panel's structure and work incorporate intergenerational perspectives and foster active engagement of children and youth.

2. **Inclusive Plenary Functions to ensure multi-stakeholder collaboration**: Ensure that the functions of the plenary reflect inclusivity by referencing Major Groups and other Stakeholders recognized by the agenda 21 of the Rio 1992 Summit, ensuring a broad representation of expertise and perspectives in the panel. The recognition of these well-established stakeholder groups shall also address the aspect of multistakeholderism by seeking collaboration partnerships, coordination and synergies with the major groups which comprises of people from academia, industries and businesses, major groups, intergovernmental bodies, and other stakeholders to enhance knowledge sharing and cooperation, foster innovation, and strengthen collective action.

3. **Establish a Youth Expert Advisory Group**: Institutionalise the Youth Expert Advisory Group as a sub-committee of the Interdisciplinary Expert Committee to integrate the voices of youth experts and early career professionals in the panel's work programme, to facilitate engagement and outreach with youth communities, and to ensure the production of inclusive, forward-looking, and sustainable outcomes. This group should have equal representation across regions, and genders, with a specific focus on inclusion from vulnerable and marginalised communities.

4. **Embed Human Rights-Based Approach**: Adopt a human rights-based approach to the management of chemicals and waste and preventing pollution by recognizing, respecting, and meaningfully documenting and incorporating the knowledge and practices of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, while addressing existing and mitigating the intersectional vulnerabilities faced by communities in health, conflicts, and economic factors.

5. **Flexible and Iterative Approach**: Emphasise the need for a flexible approach, allowing continuous learning and adaptation to new evidence, rapid technological advancements, shifts in information consumption trends, and changing circumstances to address the evolving nature of global challenges.

6. **Complementarity with Specific Principles**: Support specific principles on transparency, gender equality, accountability, and capacity building while ensuring that they complement and reinforce each other in the overall framework.

7. **Incorporation of the principle of Conflict of Interest:** Ensure that the scientific evidence presented in this panel, the policy outcomes of this panel, and the implementation of such policies are not guided by entities, organisations or groups that stand to gain from the unsound management of chemicals and waste, or from poor implementation of sustainable policies.

8. **Capacity Building and Awareness**: Ensure active outreach and awareness raising to inform and educate broader audiences about the Panel's work and the impact of its findings. This would foster a deeper understanding of the issues among diverse communities and build capacity for meaningful participation by tailoring information communication approaches to the specific needs of each audience and targeted community.

9. **Flexible Outreach Mechanism**: Develop a flexible outreach mechanism, leveraging sustainable and ethical technological advancements and learning from successful science policy platforms and panels, such as GEO. This includes producing different forms of final outputs with accessible language to cater to the diverse perspectives of stakeholders, informed by the assessments, and dissemination of the same to all stakeholders affected by them through effective capacity-building.

10. **Focus on Vulnerable Communities**: Prioritise finding solutions and capacity-building efforts for communities in vulnerable situations, with a specific focus on considering intersectional factors that contribute to vulnerability, ensuring that these communities receive the necessary support and resources, including financial and technical assistance, to effectively address and manage challenges associated with unsound management of chemicals, waste, and pollution.

Find out more about CYMG's engagement with the SPP OEWG:
https://www.cymgenv.net/youth-oewg-spp

For additional information, the following thematic facilitators from CYMG could be contacted:

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International Centre for Environmental Education and Community Development (ICENECDEV)

Road to OEWG 3 | Towards a Science-Policy Panel to Contribute Further to the Sound Management of Chemicals and Waste and to Prevent Pollution

Role of Civil Society Organisation:Farmers in the Science-Policy Panel

Aim

The objective of the panel is to strengthen the science-policy interface to contribute to the sound management of chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution for the protection of human health and the environment in line with UNEA Resolution 5/8/. Prioritizing Agricultural Science and Food system Science Within the Panel will support the realization of healthy environment for healthy People.

The Contribution of stakeholders; Member states ,Businesses and Major groups including the farmers and indigenous communities is relevant in the lead-up to the establishment of a science-policy panel (SPP) to contribute further to the sound management of chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution,Chemicals and waste pollution remain global threat that warrants global action. As indicated in the Global Chemicals Outlook II. The Consumption and production of chemicals are rapidly increasing in emerging economies. Global supply chains, and the trade of chemicals and products, in developing countries largely dependent in Agriculture, Forestry and fishing and are becoming increasingly complex.

We welcome the continuation of discussion on the scope of the Panel at the second session and recommend that the scope of the Panel should be shaped by its objectives, functions and territorial influence, needs of the panel to contribute effectively to the sound management of chemicals and waste and prevent pollution and the realities of stakeholder and member states.

The participation of civil society in the panel is relevant and The Science Policy Panel will need an elaborate and inclusive engagement procedure for civil society organisations to contribute systematically its work programme and shaping priorities. Prioritization procedures of the World Health Assembly, United Nations Environment Assembly, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) stand as good examples.

The inclusive nature of panel ensures on regional and gender balance and balanced expertise of the selected scientists Meeting needs and request of developing countries,member states and relevant stakeholders ,political blocs including Women and farmers as part of the Panel.

Gender norms, women's greater time constraints and other structural constraints continue to prevent women the same opportunities as men to decision-making related to the management and sustainable use of many Panels and Networks. Addressing gender gaps related to participation and leadership in decision-making processes, from the local to global levels, can help making Science Policy Panel more effective , as well as helping women better engage in decisions to shape the work programme and functioning of the Science Policy Panel and strengthening the science-policy interface through enhanced collaboration of scientists and decision-makers.

Civil society, indigenous communities and relevant stakeholders will promote Knowledge Exchange and Best Practices in the Panel . This will support the Panel Facilitating dynamic and diverse knowledge exchange and expertise among governments and organizations, showcasing innovative projects and best practices in chemicals, waste, and pollution prevention. By sharing experiences and lessons learned, Striving to foster collaboration and inspire collective action towards a more sustainable future.

We request that further consideration of the issue of capacity building in the Third Sessions of the open work group can facilitate transition and sustainability within and beyond Science Policy Panel and should include scientific research capacity, role of civil society organisations,, technological, organizational matters, institutional and governance of Natural Resources.

We Continue to support the inclusion of Civil Society Organisations in the Panel for capacity building in its function and acknowledge its relevance to in UNEA Resolution 5/8 , Resolutions of World Health Assembly and Multilateral Environmental Agreement based on the principle of universality and integration as driving forces of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

In the future, The Science Policy Panel need to continues capacity building training and guidance for panelists to enhance their operating principles, functions and technical level; at the same time, the Government, Partners and other AMultilateral organisations should provide more support and assistance to the Science Policy Panel to promote better participation in chemical, Waste and prevention of pollution. Through joint efforts, we believe that Civil Society organisations, farmers and indigenous communities will play a vital role in Science Policy Interface on chemical waste and prevention of pollution and making greater contributions to the improvement of the global ecological environment and 2030 Agenda sustainable development And Sustainable Development Goals

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Submission to the secretariat for 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.

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Date: 31st May 2024

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IPEN Quick Views on working documents prepared for OEWG 3

Overall comment

Access to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment, including a safe and healthy working environment, is a universal human right. This includes the right of access to information and requires science-based policies to protect the human rights of individuals and communities exposed to hazardous substances and wastes. In addition, the Rights of the Child states that the dangers and risks of environmental pollution must be taken into account in the right to health. The work of the Science Policy Panel must contribute to upholding the enjoyment of these rights, and should be based on precaution, prevention, the polluter pays principle, and the industries' duty to disclose information.

To be credible and trustworthy, the Panel and its work must be:

- **Inclusive and Participatory:** The Panel must effectively integrate views, information, and data from consumers, stakeholders, and communities impacted by chemicals, waste, and pollution, including groups in especially vulnerable situations, Indigenous Peoples, and workers. Gender, regional, and sectorial balance must be ensured. There must be participation of civil society representatives in all work of the Panel and its subsidiary bodies. Knowledge must be broadly defined to include traditional and Indigenous Knowledge systems, as well as citizen science.

- **Transparent:** Work processes, prioritization of issues, sources of information, and decision-making must be traceable, and documentation must be publicly available and accessible. No information or data submitted to the Panel and its subsidiary bodies, or used by the Panel and its subsidiary bodies, should be treated as confidential, to safeguard the integrity of the Panel and align with other science-policy panels.

- **Free from conflicts of interest**: The development and implementation of a strong conflict-of-interest policy will be crucial to ensure that the Panel provides independent, scientifically sound data, suitable to inform policy work. The policy should take both current and previous engagements into account and apply to all involved experts and participants. The policy must apply to the decision-making body, subsidiary bodies, committees, and other processes. The policy should require disclosure of all real, potential, and apparent conflicts of interest, and the Panel should have procedures to actively prevent conflicts of interest throughout all its work and decision-making processes. All information related to conflicts of interest disclosures should be made publicly available online, including evaluations of conflicts of interest.

OEWG 3/2 Compilation of proposals for establishing a Science-Policy Panel.

Section A. Scope, objective and functions of the panel

Overall, IPEN supports the proposed objective and functions. The function (e) on capacity building is important, for example to provide support and create enabling environment to ensure that outputs from the Panel can be implemented in all countries, particularly developing countries and countries in transition. Function (d) should address the problem that most scientific publications on chemical hazards are not publicly available but only accessible to those who have the financial resources to pay for them.

Section B. Operating principles of the panel
For the text in brackets, the language options should be kept that ensures that the work of the Panel will provide reliable and independent science-based information to protect human and environmental health. This means keeping language around prevention, precaution, and the protection of human rights and communities in vulnerable situations.

It is important to take into account that data on emerging issues may be limited. This means that in order for the Panel to fulfill its aim to "prevent pollution" and its horizon scanning function, the work of the Panel must be based on precaution and prevention.

In operating principle (a), consensus is suggested within brackets. This suggested language should not be included since it would be inappropriate for a Science-Policy Panel. Science and scientific assessments should be driven by evidence and sound methodology rather than the need to achieve unanimous agreement and this suggestion would jeopardize the scientific integrity.

Section C. Institutional arrangements for the panel
Subsection I – IV
IPEN supports the overall set-up of the Panel. Noting the importance of ensuring the integrity of the work of the Panel, the inclusion of a Conflict-of-Interest Committee is strongly supported. However, subsidiary bodies that are outside the scope of the mandate of UNEA resolution 5/8, or could delay or limit the outputs of the Panel should not be included. Therefore, the proposed Policy Committee, Socioeconomic Subsidiary body and Prospective Error Analysis Committee are not supported.

In addition, the decision-making body and all subsidiary bodies must be open to participation and contributions from Civil Society, to ensure transparency, credibility and trustworthiness of the work of the Panel and its outputs. This is already established practice in all chemicals and waste related Conventions (Stockholm, Rotterdam, Basel and Minamata) and their subsidiary bodies (the POPs Review Committee, the Chemicals Review Committee, Basel Convention Working Groups, and the Implementation and Compliance Committee).

Subsection V
New, robust independent financing is urgently needed for addressing chemicals, waste and pollution, as a part of the triple planetary crisis. The significant lack of adequate, predictable, and sustainable funding is a key obstacle to moving forward towards sound management of chemicals and waste in developing countries and countries in transition. This includes new and additional resources to finance the work of the SPP.

New funding initiatives should be built on the polluter-pays principle. As noted by the UNEP report on the cost of inaction on the sound management of chemicals, "The emerging data on the economic consequences of harmful chemicals related to negative health, environment, and development planning effects, clearly point to very high effects and associated costs." These effects and costs are borne by the public, while the profits are enjoyed by the chemicals industry. So far, the dedicated external funding to the integrated approach to financing has been insufficient, and industry involvement in financing the sound management of chemicals has been marginal at best.

The proposed new trust fund will be a suitable way forward, since it is suggested to also accept contributions from the private sector. However, noting concerns around Conflicts of Interest, it

needs to be guarded by strict transparency measures and ensure that contributions do not influence the work, deliberations and decision-making of the panel in any way.

Subsection VI
It is vital for the credibility of the Panel that stakeholder engagement and any Partnership are transparent and with clear boundaries preventing influence from stakeholders with conflict of interests. Any partnerships must be based on agreed criteria, including measures preventing partnerships with entities that have conflict of interests.

Section D. Evaluation of the operational effectiveness and impact of the panel
Periodical, independent evaluation of the work of the Panel will be very important to verify that it is functioning as intended. Evaluation criteria should include transparency, inclusiveness, conflict of interest, and relevance of outputs. An evaluation can be helpful in identifying obstacles, weaknesses and limiting factors, and propose ways to strengthening the Panel.

Annex 1. Rules of procedure
IPEN notes that these overall contain similar language as in other chemicals and waste frameworks and can be adopted more or less as is, but that there are some instances where there is a lack of clarity that needs to be addressed.

Annex 2. Financial procedures
IPEN supports the draft financial procedures, and notes that both financial and in-kind contributions should also be published on the SPP website to ensure transparency. This would also help show the importance of the engagement by non-governmental organizations, developing countries, and countries in transition, which are often able to provide only in-kind contributions.

Annex 3. Process for determining the work programme, including prioritization
Transparent decision-making and prioritization processes, free from conflicts of interest, will ensure credibility and trust in the work of the Panel. Therefore, provisions on Conflicts of Interest need to be added to Annex 3.

Annex 4. Procedures for the preparation and clearance of panel deliverables
IPEN supports the general outline of the draft procedures in the Annex. However, specific revisions are needed:

- Care must be taken to include conflict-of-interest provisions at all stages, including the review stage. Therefore, paragraph 25 should be deleted. In addition, “industry” should be removed from paragraph 37. Instead, a separate paragraph should describe what specific review process information from industry should undergo.
- All stages of this processes must be transparent, including access to data and sources. Therefore, review comments and the final draft of the deliverable should be made publicly available online. Also, Section E should include the same language as IPBES: the secretariat “should provide access to these materials on request.”
- The processes should be science focused. Therefore, paragraph 28 should be deleted, as well as the word “socioeconomic” in paragraph 29.
- As indicated in paragraph 51.a), similar to Stockholm Convention Article 9.5., information on the health and safety of humans and the environment cannot be regarded as confidential. Also, neither IPBES nor IPCC has procedures for safeguarding commercially sensitive

information.[1] Therefore, this section should be deleted or significantly edited, to only include a statement that information on the health and safety of humans and the environment cannot be regarded as confidential. See detailed comments below (p.6).

Annex 5. Conflict of Interest policy

To ensure that the future panel is viewed as credible and trustworthy and able to provide independent, scientifically sound data, suitable to inform policy work, the development and implementation of a strong Conflict of Interest (COI) policy will be crucial.

It is important to compare best-practices from existing COI approaches intended to ensure scientific integrity and credibility. These should include best practices from other panels working in the science-policy interphase on chemicals, for example POPRC under the Stockholm convention, from other UN Agencies such as WHO, but also from other science-based organizations such as the Endocrine Society.

The COI policy needs to ensure:

1. That the evaluation of potential conflicts of interest accounts for current potential conflicts of interest **and also potential conflicts of interest resulting from recent engagements.** Therefore, "from the past four years" should be retained in paragraph 12 and "current" should be deleted from paragraph 15.
2. **That information on potential conflicts of interest for all participants is made public, including outcomes of COI investigations,** to ensure transparency of work and secure public confidence in, and legitimacy of the work of the panel.
3. That the **scope of the COI policy applies to all involved experts and partnerships** that are engaged in the work of the panel. Therefore, all roles mentioned in Part B, paragraph 7, should be retained, and "partnerships" should be added.
4. That the COI policies **require disclosure of all real, potential and apparent conflicts of interest**. This should be specified in Annex 5 as well as in the draft form.
5. That **procedures for implementation are developed** and **that identified COI are acted upon** to prevent undue influence on the Panel's work and functioning rather than merely "identified"

See detailed comments below (p.10).

[1] See UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.1/INF/7 https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/41496/overview_rules_procedures.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y

Comments on procedures for safeguarding commercially sensitive information

Draft text for Annex I, not previously reviewed by the OEWG, can be found in document UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/2/Add.4. Section II, subsection G includes a draft procedure for safeguarding commercially sensitive information. We believe that such a procedure is not compatible with the functions of the science-policy panel and are concerned that adopting such a procedure would undermine the purpose, credibility, and transparency of the panel.

In order to provide policy relevant outputs in a credible and transparent manner, it is crucial that there is full transparency about data and sources used to derive the outputs. Without the ability to access the sources used, outputs of the Panel may be questioned.

There are several reasons that procedures to safeguard commercially sensitive information are unsuitable for a science-policy panel, including:

- There is no commonly agreed definition of "commercially sensitive" information, which makes the term vague and subjective.
- Other science-policy panels do not have such procedures (details for other panels can be found in document (UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.1/INF/7).
- Keeping commercially sensitive information secret would open up the panel to potential conflicts of interest
- It would harm the credibility of the panel, especially since the panel may have to publish outputs without providing the full justification for the content and results
- It would obstruct transparency of decision-making processes, which has been suggested as one of the operating principles of the future panel, as well as data transparency.

See further details and recommendations below.

What is commercially sensitive information?

As noted by Rosenblum and Maples in the publication Contracts Confidential:
"There is no technical definition of commercially sensitive information. […] Given how open the definition of "commercially sensitive information" can be, a potentially limitless amount of information could fall within it. " (Rosenblum and Maples 2010).

Do other science policy panels have this?

No. Neither IPBES nor IPCC has procedures to safeguard commercially sensitive information (UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.1/INF/7).

IPBES procedure on the use of literature in the reports of the platform states that the secretariat should provide access to sources which are not publicly available on request (IPBES/3/18):

"*The Platform secretariat will store sources that are not publicly available. The secretariat should archive the location where material available in electronic format only may be accessed and a soft copy of such material.* ***It should provide access to these materials on request."*** (emphasis added).

What consequences would procedures to safeguard commercially sensitive information have under a Science-Policy Panel on chemicals, waste and to prevent pollution?

Today over 350 000 different chemicals and chemical mixtures are used (Persson et al. 2022), but the knowledge gaps on these chemicals are vast. Only an estimated 1% of these chemicals have been adequately assessed for safety (Brander 2022). Still, more than 2000 new chemicals, of which we know even less, enter the market every year (Brander 2022) and production is expected to continue to increase (IEA 2018). In the EU It is estimated that there is only "empirical data on persistence available for 0.2%, bioconcentration data for 1% and aquatic toxicity for 11% of chemicals registered in the EU (*11, 12*) and there is a similar message from the US (*9*)."(Johnson et al. 2020)

The protection of business interests has been a driving force for the consequences we are seeing today, as noted by the Special Rapporteur on the implications for human rights of the environmentally sound management and disposal of hazardous substances and wastes:

"Excessive and unjustified claims of confidentiality have kept information about the risks of hazardous substances secret...." (A/HRC/30/40)

Moreover, it has been shown in multiple studies (e.g., Oreskes and Conway 2011; Salojee and Dagli 2000; Moodie 2017) how industry has systematically suppressed information and hidden behind trade secrets and confidential business information. Recent research notes the growing evidence that "…the economic power of corporations, particularly that of large transnationals, has led to the defeat, delay and weakening of public health policies around the world." Further, a published review of Conflict of Interest (COI) in scientific research related to regulation and litigation showed that industry manipulates research through funding, research design, data falsification or fabrication, data analysis and interpretation, and suppression of results. It also showed that conflicts of interest damage the public trust in research (Resnik 2007).

If a Science-Policy Panel on chemicals, waste and the prevention of pollution is governed by procedures to protect commercially sensitive information, it would introduce conflicts of interest, undermine credibility, and erode transparency.

It would create a system where industry can submit information but label it as commercially sensitive information, which means the experts can draw conclusions from it but in a completely non-transparent manner. This would introduce a new avenue for industry to employ methods that have been well documented in other contexts, such as attacking legitimate science, for example through exaggerating uncertainty and manufacturing doubt and using information in misleading ways.

These and many other underhanded industry strategies have been well documented (e.g., Oreskes and Conway 2011; Salojee and Dagli 2000; Moodie 2017) and can only be prevented with transparency in work and decision-making processes and through the adoption and implementation of robust COI policies.

In the mandate in resolution 5/8, under paragraph 6 c), it states that that the OEWG should take into account the need to ensure that the panel "Has procedures that seek to ensure that the work of the

panel is transparent and impartial and that it can produce reports and assessments that are credible and scientifically robust."

If industry is allowed to submit what they label as commercially sensitive data, which cannot, contrary to publicly available data, be scrutinized or assessed by independent scientists, the industry data would be under significantly lower demands than data that is publicly available and/or published in peer-reviewed journals. This lack of transparency would undermine the credibility of the future panel and its outputs.

Does the mandate in Resolution 5/8 require the development of these procedures?

No, this is not one of the items specified in paragraph 4 and 5 of the resolution as proposals to be developed. The text of the resolution states that

"6. Further decides that the ad hoc open ended working group should take into account the need to ensure that the panel "

"f) has the ability to address potential conflicts of interest and safeguard commercially sensitive information. "

It is up to the OEWG how they take the need to "safeguard commercially sensitive information" into account, it does not need to be through the recommendation of a procedure. It is important to see this in the context of the full text of the resolution:

For example, the preamble of the mandate calls for "improving the availability of scientific information" to enhance pollution prevention and the sound management of chemicals and waste. But procedures to safeguard commercially sensitive information would decrease the availability of scientific information.

Another example is Paragraph 1, which clarifies which details that are to be further specified

"Decides that a science-policy panel should be established to contribute further to the sound management of chemicals and waste and prevent pollution, with details to be further specified according to the provisions in paragraphs 4 and 5 of the present resolution; "

Procedures to safeguard are not included in these provisions, but instead they are written in 6, which, as seen above, notes that the OEWG should take this into account. Contrary to paragraphs 4 and 5, there is no specified instruction to further specify any details on this.

The draft procedure should also be seen in the context of the text that is being negotiated at OEWG, including the objective which states:

"[The objective of the Panel is to strengthen the science-policy interface to contribute to the sound management of chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution for the protection of human health and the environment, with the following functions:] "

Procedures to safeguard commercially sensitive interests would not be in line with the objective of protecting human health and the environment. It would also go against the proposed function of capacity building since it would limit information-sharing.

Recommendations

Based on the resolution the OEWG need to "take into account the need to ensure that the panel […] 6. f "has the ability to address potential conflict of interest and safeguard commercially sensitive information". There is no requirement to develop procedures, only to take this into account.

For the conflict-of-interest procedure, the OEWG has discussed the need for conflict-of-interest policies and found that they are common practice under similar panels and would be needed under a future Science-Policy Panel on chemicals, waste and the prevention of pollution.

The OEWG has not yet discussed the need for procedures to safeguard commercially sensitive information, but earlier INF docs (source) have shown that this type of procedure does not exist under similar panels. Given that this procedure would undermine the purpose, transparency, COI policy, and the credibility of the panel, and given that information on the health and safety of humans and the environment cannot be regarded as confidential, it is therefore recommended that:

- ➔ The OEWG should delete the draft procedure and replace it with the statement that information on the health and safety of humans and the environment cannot be considered confidential and that other science-policy panels do not have such procedures, wherefore such a procedure should not be adopted under this Science-Policy Panel.

Comments on the conflicts of interest policy

Why are strong Conflict of Interest Policies important for the Science Policy Panel?

The success of the Science Policy Panel (SPP) will be dependent on its ability to effectively deliver on its Functions and meet its Objective to contribute further to the sound management of chemicals and waste and prevent pollution. This will be impossible if there is Conflict of Interest (COI), or even the perception of Conflict of Interest, in the work of the Science Policy Panel (SPP), including members of its subsidiary bodies.

Evidence of corporate capture, industry withholding information, and other means of influencing policies aimed at protecting human health and the environment is mounting both through investigative journalism and scientific studies.

Recent research has shown that there is growing evidence that the economic power of corporations "has lead to the defeat, delay and weakening of public health policies around the world" (Mialon et al 2020). Also, a review of Conflict of Interest (COI) in scientific research related to regulation and litigation showed that companies (or others) can manipulate research through funding, research design, data falsification or fabrication, data analysis and interpretation and suppression of results. It also showed that COI damage the public trust in research (Resnik 2007).

Therefore, to ensure that the future panel is viewed as credible and trustworthy and able to provide independent, scientifically sound data, suitable to inform policy work, the development of strong COI policies will be crucial.

How can strong Conflict of Interest Policies be ensured?

Research on COI policies have developed a lot over the past decades, and new COI policies must be based on up-to-date knowledge and experience of best practices and not rely on outdated business as usual or convenience.

It is important to compare best-practices from existing COI approaches intended to ensure scientific integrity and credibility. These could include best practices from other panels working in the science-policy interphase on chemicals, for example POPRC under the Stockholm convention, from other UN Agencies such as WHO, but also from other science-based organizations such as the Endocrine Society.

During the second session of the open-ended working group (OEWG2) members discussed different approaches to the COI policies and the secretariat was tasked to further develop the proposed draft form. In the further development of the draft form, as well as finalizing the OEWG recommendations these things need to be ensured:

The COI policy needs to ensure:

1. That the evaluation of potential conflicts of interest accounts for current potential conflicts of interest **and also potential conflicts of interest resulting from recent engagements.**

Therefore, “from the past four years” should be retained in paragraph 12 and “current” should be deleted from paragraph 15.

2. **That information on potential conflicts of interest for all participants is made public, including outcomes of COI investigations,** to ensure transparency of work and secure public confidence in, and legitimacy of the work of the panel.
3. That the **scope of the COI policy applies to all involved experts and partnerships** that are engaged in the work of the panel. Therefore, all roles mentioned in Part B, paragraph 7, should be retained, and “partnerships” should be added.
4. That the COI policies **require disclosure of all real, potential and apparent conflicts of interest**. This should be specified in Annex 5 as well as in the draft form.

Furthermore, it is important that the panel not only be informed about potential conflicts of interests but that it has means to implement the policy to prevent conflicts of interest throughout all its work and decision making processes.

Lastly, we note that research on COI policies have developed a lot over the past decades. It would therefore be suitable to develop the COI policies with the intention of improving existing COI policies under for example POPRC, IPBES and IPCC, through 1) taking into account lessons learnt under those workstreams and 2) reflecting on recent research on COI, to ensure that the adopted COI policies are fit for purpose.

How can these be integrated into the current Proposals for the establishment of a science-policy panel?

1. Potential conflicts of interest resulting from previous engagements
COI policies should apply also to potential conflict of interest from the past four years since they could affect the credibility of the experts unless reported and evaluated.

The current draft text reads

“A “conflict of interest” refers to a[ny current, or previous](del) professional, financial or other interest [from the past four years](del) which could:”

The POPs review committee (POPRC) under the Stockholm convention has four years as a cut-off and can be used as a best practice example.

2. Publicly available information on potential conflicts of interest
Making information on potential conflicts of interest publicly available is common practice and should be seen as best practice. Also, public disclosure practices will increase the credibility and transparency of the panel The future panel should therefore adopt approaches that include public disclosure of potential COIs of the involved experts, partners and others involved in the work of the panel as well as the outcomes of the evaluation of potential conflicts of interest.

Scientific experts are used to publicly reporting their potential conflicts of interest since it increases their credibility. High-impact scientific journals, such as Science and Nature require that authors, editors and reviewers report potential conflicts of interrest and that COIs of authors are made public together with the published article.

Similarly, under review committees such as the POPRC, all the CVs of the members are published online.

3. Scope of the conflicts of interest policy

It is important that the COI policy applies to all experts and leadership involved in the panel, as well as any partnerships that the panel may enter. This would be similar to how it works when publishing in high impact scientific journals, which often require both authors, editors and reviewers to disclose potential conflict of interest.

The current draft text states that:

"This policy applies to [the senior leadership of the Panel, [namely,]](del) members of the Bureau of the Panel, [committees] and any subsidiary bodies contributing to the development of deliverables, [to experts contributing to the activities of the Panel such as](del) authors with responsibility for report content (including report co-chairs, coordinating lead authors and lead authors), [and review editors](del); and to professional non-United Nations staff supporting the Panel's work"

The COI policy should apply to all persons mentioned in the paragraph.

4. Disclosure of potential conflicts of interest.

All real, potential and apparent conflicts of interest must be disclosed and the text within the brackets should be deleted.

The current text draft includes bracketed text related to what information should be disclosed.

"Financial interests need to be disclosed [only if they are significant and relevant](del) ."

The SPP should follow the model of other COI policies, such as for POPRC, where experts are required to disclose both real, potential and apparent conflict of interrest (SC-1/8).

"Each expert is therefore asked to declare any interests that could constitute a real, potential or apparent conflict of interest"

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UNEP (2017) Code of practice for the treatment of confidential information in the POPs Review Committee. Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants

The Royal Society of Chemistry's Written Statement to OEWG3, as it relates to the establishment of a science-policy panel for chemicals, waste and the prevention of pollution (SPP-CWP).

About the RSC

With about 50,000 members in over 100 countries and a knowledge provider that spans the globe, the Royal Society of Chemistry is an international not-for-profit professional body for chemical scientists, supporting and representing our members and bringing together chemical scientists from all over the world. Our members include those working in academia, large multinational companies and small to medium enterprises (SMEs), students, teachers, retirees, NGOs and government scientists and regulators. Surplus generated from membership fees and publishing revenues are used for the RSC's charitable purpose activities.

Contact

The Royal Society of Chemistry would be happy to discuss any of the issues raised in our statement in more detail. Any questions should be directed to the RSC Policy & Evidence Team at policy@rsc.org. This document was prepared by Dr Camilla Alexander-White FRSC CChem ERT (Lead Policy Adviser – International Chemicals Policy, RSC) and Professor Tom Welton OBE (the RSC's ambassador for Sustainable Chemicals Policy, Professor of Sustainable Chemistry at Imperial College, London), drawing upon discussion and inputs from the RSC SPP Engagement Group. The RSC SPP Engagement Group comprises of approximately 50 senior level scientists from the RSC membership and members from other global national chemical societies. It is led by Dr Alexander-White and Professor Welton.

This document presents the RSC positions on the following themes:

1. **Institutional Arrangements**
2. **Managing Conflicts of Interest**
3. **Capacity Building**
4. **Work Programme Prioritisation**
5. **Facilitating open data/open science**

1. Institutional Arrangements

Referring to pre-sessional paper UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/2 – Compilation of proposals for establishing a science-policy panel

The UNEP Major Group system works well for civil society representation and is gaining trust. Major Group Categories | UNEP - UN Environment Programme

UNEP accredited stakeholder organisations, such as the RSC, have appropriate access to mechanisms to provide input to inform the OEWG process, and have active and efficient participation as observers. We call for this to be able to continue in all aspects of the SPP.

Scientists from accredited organisations are working well together as part of the S&T Major Group. Mohamed Abdelraouf (UNEP Major Groups Lead) and Camilla Alexander-White from the RSC have provided joint leadership and facilitation for the S&T MG in relation to the SPP work, and facilitated consensus inputs from the wider community of major group representatives at OEWG1 and OEWG2.

The RSC advocates for the continued involvement of civil society representatives in all aspects of the SPP when it is established, as observers with a voice that is respected by governments in their deliberations.

Governing Body/Plenary: The RSC fully respects the decision-making powers of governments and member states and the role that the Governing Body/Plenary will perform in the SPP-CWP, in deciding its composition and work programme.

***Interdisciplinary Expert Committee (IEC)*:**

As we understand it from page 6 para 14 'An Interdisciplinary Expert Committee is established [to provide scientific advice to the Panel.]'. The RSC acknowledges the inclusion of 5 members for each of the 5 UN regional groups, as elected by the Governing Body/Plenary. Referring to page 7, para 18 and footnote 6: The current proposal in footnote 6 is '*The ad hoc open-ended working group may wish to consider electing five representatives to serve in this role, one each from health, environment, industry, trade union and public interest groups*'. This position could be improved upon to reflect the acknowledged importance of the Major Group & Stakeholders system in UN activities, the special role of science here in this panel and the formal inclusion of civil society voices.

The RSC proposes that there are *7 civil society ex officio members on the IEC*, as elected via the Major Groups & Stakeholder community, and comprising:

Three Science and Technology Major Group representatives – in principle covering the areas of i) human health, ii) environment and iii) social sciences. Independent expertise in these science and technology areas is crucial for chemicals, waste and pollution prevention discussions ***to strengthen the science-policy interface***.

One Children and Youth Major Group Representative: as key next-generation stakeholders of future policies. It is their generation that is greatly affected by legacy pollution from chemicals and wastes.

Three Open Major Group representatives – i.e. three as elected from the other 7 UNEP major groups participating in the SPP – women, indigenous peoples & their communities, NGOs, business and industry, farmers, workers & trade unions, and local authorities.

Given the specific science-policy nature of the SPP, we propose that **there is sufficient justification for three science & technology seats on the IEC** to ensure coverage of the key major disciplines of human health science, environmental science and social sciences. Ideally human health and environment experts would be best coming from the natural chemical sciences (complementing any medical, engineering and social sciences disciplines on the SPP) who can share and draw upon knowledge of future directions in innovative science and technology approaches and solutions, green and sustainable chemistry opportunities and the chemicals and waste regulatory landscape.

We expect nominated government scientists to represent regions on the IEC. The work of the IEC will comprise the review of nominated scientist's CV's for working group/assessment work, providing technical advice and review of the work programme and its technical nature etc. To provide independent non-governmental insights and perspectives, that could help to balance extreme or highly political agendas, it is important that objective technical evidence and review can also inform the process. For this reason, we propose three independent S&T seats on the IEC as elected by the Civil Society Major Group process.

Policy Committee: at OEWG2 in Nairobi, a 'policy committee' was proposed by one member state. ***It is the position of the RSC that a 'Policy Committee' is not necessary*** for efficient functioning of the SPP.

Such a separate policy 'committee' could in principle **weaken the science-policy interface**, when the intent of the whole process is to strengthen the science-policy interface. It is possible that the work of a policy committee could constrain the topics the interdisciplinary expert committee can discuss, if the policy relevance is defined by the policy committee. The themes for discussion and work programme prioritisation should be the role of the Governing Body/Plenary, as informed by the science-policy IEC.

The 'policy committee' it appears from para 26 'Functions of the Policy Committee' would have the main contribution to prioritising the work-programme to be presented to the Governing Body. This would seem to give *an imbalanced amount of power to a separate policy committee with no involvement of civil society mentioned and minimal involvement from the IEC?*

It is the view of the RSC that a 'policy' working group/task force, subsidiary to the IEC, would suffice in considering advice on policy options etc.

We recognise that it is good and common practice to keep risk assessment and risk management separate, i.e. the science that is used to underpin risk assessment should not be unduly influenced by any policy ambitions. The science and evidence should speak to the truth of the outcome of a risk assessment. Risk management and policy actions are separate as informed by the science and risk assessment.

However, there is a practical interface between the two that makes for effective policy, where risk communication is needed between scientists performing a risk assessment/evidence review and the policymakers. Policy options can be developed separately as informed by the evidence. This can be done equally as effectively by having a risk assessment working group, evidence review groups, policy working group etc. within the IEC. The strong science-policy interface that will be the IEC can take the science and the policy as equal inputs, working together, with all of the other legitimate factors that are non-scientific to be able then make recommendations clearly from a science-policy body to the Governing Body/Plenary.

If the Member states remain convinced that a 'Policy Committee' is needed, it is imperative that civil society is sufficiently represented on this Committee, with a sufficiently representative number of ex officio seats from the Major Groups & Stakeholder community elected to it.

A separate Policy Committee will in principle weaken the concept of the SPP, lead to lengthening of processes and increase costs of delivery by having an additional committee.

Aspects considering the prioritisation of the work-programme should be delivered by the IEC where there is a combination of science and policy expertise, thereby strengthening the science-policy interface

Working Groups/Assessment Task Forces: when it comes to the technical work of the SPP, the RSC stands ready to assist national and regional governments in connecting to the best scientists.
We expect governments to nominate scientists for delivering the work of the SPP, but *we advocate for professional bodies such as the RSC, as a UNEP accredited stakeholder organisation, to also be able to nominate expert scientists for the SPP*.

The Concept of an SPP Science Alliance – this concept emerged at OEWG2 via discussions at the Science & Technology Major Group, as a possible means of providing a formalised mechanism for interested individual scientists anywhere in the world to provide input on the work of the SPP. This would be for scientists from any sectorial background who are not members of a UNEP accredited organisation and therefore do not have a means of interacting with the process. We are aware this concept is still under discussion, it will require funding for administration and a concept note has been prepared by members of the S&T Major Group for further discussion in Geneva.
Generally, the RSC supports the concept of having an 'SPP Science Alliance', to complement the role of UNEP accredited organisations such that any interested individual scientist can share their views into the process via a recognised and formalised mechanism.

The RSC would advocate however, that the SPP Science Alliance would not have a position on the IEC, but its reports or evidence could be fed directly to the SPP secretariat for information that could be shared with the SPP. An SPP Science Alliance network may provide another mechanism to connect with scientists who could possess relevant expertise for future technical work of the SPP. It would be important to manage inputs of individuals to the work of the Science Alliance, via a Conflicts of Interest procedure (similar to that being discussed for the work of the SPP) that a clear distinction be made between individual scientist membership of the SPP Science Alliance and representation of UNEP accredited organisations.

2. Managing Conflicts of Interest

We refer the reader to our pre-session and in-session submissions to OEWG2, Nairobi.

The Royal Society of Chemistry takes conflicts of interest very seriously, and we are pleased to see the OEWG addressing this in practical terms for the SPP ahead of its establishment.

All participants in the SPP must be asked to record and declare their interests and those of close family members or connected individuals who could benefit from the work of the SPP.

To ensure high standards in this respect, members of the RSC SPP Engagement Group, ahead of its first year of operation in March 2023, were asked to complete an RSC declaration of interest form, to ensure members had no conflicts when advising the RSC. Members are asked to declare their interests annually. As output from OEWG2, the secretariat produced a template of a proposed form Appendix B. The RSC is now trialling the SPP Conflict of Interest Form (UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/2/Add.5) with members of the RSC SPP Engagement Group. RSC representatives will be happy to feedback, in Geneva, as to the views of the group with regards to the workability, fit-for-purposeness and comprehensiveness of the new form. It remains to be discussed and explained *how* declarations of interest will be reviewed in practice. We understand there will be a conflicts of interest committee, which we assume will be closely linked to the Interdisciplinary Expert Committee, the Bureau and Secretariat. We also expect that there will be a way of working, culture of transparency and expectation that participants declare their interests in every meeting where advice is being generated and technical reviews performed.

All interests must be declared, not just interests that individuals themselves may view as a potential or real conflict of interest. A COI committee should review whether interests present a conflict of interest with the work being performed.

As a first observation, we note that interests of family members such as spouse or civil partners are not included in the form. Benefits to spouse/civil partners should also be explicitly mentioned in section 13 of the form.

Current section 13 text states:

'To your knowledge, could the outcome of your work for the Panel adversely affect the interests of any other persons or entities with whom you have substantial common personal, professional, financial or business interests (such as your adult children or siblings, close professional colleagues, administrative unit or department)?'
Suggest editing to:

'Could the outcome of your work for the Panel adversely or positively affect the interests of any other persons or entities with whom you have substantial common personal, professional, financial or business interests (such as your spouse/civil partner, adult children or siblings, close professional colleagues, administrative unit or department)?

Also, from our members' experience with other bodies such as the OPCW, situations can arise where scientists feel they are not able to speak freely either due to cultural, government or pressures from organisations. Does UNEP have any experience or guidance to offer for when such situations arise? Developing a culture that is open to new ideas and based on freedom of expression must be developed in the SPP.

3. Capacity Building

The SPP should:
i) **Fund science-policy networks and events to develop skills and competencies in science-policy interface work**. Core funding from the SPP for 'capacity building' should be focused on improving the science-policy interface in nations and regions, through the establishment of new networks, events and training sessions. These should be for the sharing of knowledge and connecting people together, such that opportunities for further projects and training can be fostered.

RSC focus groups identified the need to improve scientists' ability to inform and engage with government/policymakers. This is a foreseeable need in all nation states.

1. *Scientists need training on how to engage with politicians and the policy process*, including knowledge of what data is useful and how to better communicate evidence.

2. *Governments should provide formal structures for scientific involvement in national and regional policy processes*, such as departmental science advisory committees that can gather and evaluate technical evidence, and then present the evidence to policymakers in a meaningful way.

3. There is also a need to *strengthen networks across scientific multi-disciplines* and across other disciplines such as the social sciences.

4. *It is crucial that all interested scientists have access to input into the work of the new SPP* and are facilitated to participate via whichever available mechanism is best. This could be via *Civil Society Major Groups & Stakeholder processes* (for those in accredited organisations) or *via an 'SPP Science Alliance'* as mentioned above. Voluntary participation of scientists may not be a sustainable model for ensuring adequate representation and opportunities for involvement from knowledgeable scientists. It is necessary for funding to be provided for administrative and secretariat funding, but we urge the SPP to also consider the provision of grants for travel and expenses funding to attend meetings and having a process to enable due recognition for individual's participation in national research evaluation frameworks. Grants would be especially important to ensure participation of early-mid career scientists and those from less wealthy regions of the world.

5. *The scientific community respects the knowledge that indigenous populations can bring* to the SPP, through observational and experiential learnings. Improved connections between scientists and indigenous people should be made in the regard.

6. In the highly regulatory areas of chemicals, waste and pollution, *scientists who advise governments should develop working knowledge of relevant regulatory frameworks*, nationally, regionally and globally.

ii) **Collate a 'capacity building' database** of the identified capacity building needs/gaps for different nations, which are expected to be different in different parts of the world. The SPP can highlight areas that require capacity building and work with developing nations to define the needs.

iii) **Seek to connect nations and experts together**; if organisations/governments have experience to share and similar ambitions, new funded projects could meet the needs of capacity building, through research institute funding, government funding or industry funded projects. It is considered unlikely that budgets from governments alone will be available from

the SPP to deliver capital infrastructure, equipment, paid internships/placements, data sharing, in person training courses etc. The role of the SPP could be to highlight the needs while industry, professional organisations, entrepreneurs, national governments etc. can seek to fund and develop new project ideas where there are shared interests, possibly via a blind trust fund.

Work Programme Prioritisation

Referring to pre-session document UNEP/SPP-CWP/oewg.3/2/Add.3#

The RSC supports the process as described in the Add.3 document, as it reflects the prioritisation process that would be needed. It is good that all governments and all stakeholders can propose 'issues'.

'5. Submissions should, if possible, be accompanied by information on:
(a) The nature of the proposed issue, including a description of the issue and its associated problems and opportunities and an indication of whether it is cross-cutting or multisectoral;
(b) The relevance to the Panel's objective and to relevant multilateral agreements, instruments and intergovernmental processes, including the rationale for why the Panel is thought to be best suited to consider the proposed issue;
(c) The urgency for action by the Panel in the light of the imminence of the problems and opportunities associated with the proposed issue;
(d) The availability of existing knowledge, data and expertise on the proposed issue.'

'7. The Interdisciplinary Expert Committee, supported by the secretariat and additional experts where relevant, will consider and prioritize the submissions on the basis of an analysis of the **scientific, technical and policy** relevance of the submissions, taking into account the considerations outlined in paragraph 5 above.'

This text in the Add3 document indicates that ***the main role of prioritisation of proposals should rest with the Interdisciplinary Expert Committee. In the view of the RSC, there is no need for a separate policy committee to 'contribute to prioritisation'***. The IEC should be a strong and direct science-policy interface. The IEC could form a specific policy task group to take a deeper dive into policy aspects if needed.

The Royal Society of Chemistry's written statement to OEWG3 on Facilitating Information-sharing

The RSC is committed to an Open Access policy in relation to its publishing activities. Details can be found at https://www.rsc.org/journals-books-databases/open-access-publishing/ . Some general points on this approach to science publishing are provided below:

A world that works for everyone

It's our mission to help you make the world a better place. Open access is crucial to achieving this. We believe that it is the key to building a fairer, more equitable society. One where everyone can access and benefit from discoveries – including researchers, funders, policymakers, civil society and the general public.

What are the benefits of open access?

Multidisciplinary collaboration

Scientists in all disciplines and subjects can access and inspire each other

Available outside academia

Funders, policymakers and the general public all have access to new research

Boost citation potential

Readily available work can be read and cited easily by more people

High quality peer review

You can expect a simple process and fair and rigorous peer review

Keep copyright as standard

You (or your employer) retain the copyright to your article when you publish open access

Compliant with OA mandates

We make it fast and easy to meet the requirements of your funding body

Our vision for open access

This is just the beginning. Open access to scientific publications and open data (wherever possible) can lead us to a fairer society by making impactful research available to everyone. No matter who you are or where you live, you deserve to access and benefit from new discoveries. And we partner with the best people to make this a reality:

Other useful information

Royal Society of Chemistry Burlington Consensus events 2022 and science-policy work on chemicals, waste and pollution prevention to date

https://www.rsc.org/policy-evidence-campaigns/chemical-waste-and-pollution/#SPP

Peer review journal article – 'An actionable definition and criteria for "sustainable chemistry" based on literature review and a global multisectoral stakeholder working group'
Cannon et al. (2023) RSC Sustainability, **1**, 2092-2106 **– Open access publication**
https://pubs.rsc.org/en/content/articlelanding/2023/su/d3su00217a

RSC Chemicals Strategy for a Sustainable Chemicals Revolution

https://www.rsc.org/globalassets/22-new-perspectives/sustainability/rsc-chemicals-strategy-policy-2020.pdf

RSC Principles for the Management of Chemicals in the Environment

https://www.rsc.org/globalassets/04-campaigning-outreach/tackling-the-worlds-challenges/environment/rsc_principles_for_chemicals_in_the_environment.pdf

RSC Workshop report: When the science is uncertain, what is the role of risk-based approaches and precautionary control in chemicals policy?

https://www.rsc.org/globalassets/22-new-perspectives/sustainability/a-chemicals-strategy-for-a-sustainable-chemicals-revolution/rsc-risk-workshop-report.pdf

RSC Missing Elements: Racial and ethnic inequalities in the chemical sciences

https://www.rsc.org/policy-evidence-campaigns/inclusion-diversity/surveys-reports-campaigns/racial-and-ethnic-inequalities-in-the-chemical-sciences/

RSC A Vision for Science Culture

https://www.rsc.org/policy-evidence-campaigns/inclusion-diversity/surveys-reports-campaigns/a-vision-for-science-culture/

Final 30th May 2024

Written Submission from the Science & Technology Major Group (S&TMG) to OEWG3, as it relates to the establishment of a science-policy panel for chemicals, waste and the prevention of pollution (SPP-CWP).

Contacts on behalf of the S&T MG working on the SPP

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This document presents a position from the Science & Technology Major Group on 'Institutional Arrangements'

1. Institutional Arrangements

Governing Body/Plenary: The S&T MG fully respects the decision-making powers of governments and member states and the role that the Governing Body/Plenary will perform in the SPP-CWP, in deciding its composition, processes and work programme.

The S&T MG advocates for the continued involvement of civil society representatives and non-government scientists, in all aspects of the SPP when it is established, mainly as *observers* on the Governing Body/Plenary with voices that are heard and respected by governments in their decision-making processes. With the precedence of the involvement of civil society roles in GEO, we propose the following regarding the Interdisciplinary Expert Committee.

***Interdisciplinary Expert Committee (IEC)*:**

The S&T MG proposes that the Major Groups & Stakeholder community are offered 9 ex officio positions on the Interdisciplinary Expert Committee, allowing the role of civil society to be fully represented from the 9 UNEP Major Groups.

The S&T MG acknowledges and supports the current suggested inclusion of 5 members for each of the 5 UN regional groups on the IEC, elected and as endorsed by the Governing Body/Plenary. These will all be government representatives, and we expect these individuals will join as 'government experts' with appropriate technical and policy backgrounds.

It is also important for success of the SPP to have civil society representatives on this group to provide expertise and evidence that is non-governmental and independent of political processes.

Referring to UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/2 page 7, paras 17 and 18 and footnote 6:
17. Interdisciplinary Expert Committee members are selected for their scientific, technical [, socioeconomic] or [policy] expertise and knowledge of the main elements of the work of the Panel.

The inclusion of 'socioeconomic' and 'policy' in this paragraph is a good addition and serves to strengthen the science-policy interface in the IEC.

18. [Representatives of non-governmental participants as well as the Chair of the United Nations Environment Management Group may participate as ex officio members in Interdisciplinary Expert Committee meetings. The representatives of non-governmental participants are elected by and from non-governmental participants engaged in the work of the Panel.[6]]

The current proposal in footnote 6 is '*The ad hoc open-ended working group may wish to consider electing five [civil society] representatives to serve in this role, one each from health, environment, industry, trade union and public interest groups*'. This proposal has been grandfathered over from previous bodies; today this proposal could be improved upon to reflect the special role of Science & Technology here and reflect the current Major Groups & Stakeholders systems better.

Therefore, the S&T MG respectfully requests of member states, that instead of the 5 civil society representatives as mentioned in footnote 6, resources include for *9 civil society ex officio members on the IEC*, as aligned to and elected by the UNEP Major Groups & Stakeholder community.

As with government representatives, nominees would be included on the basis of their relevant scientific and technical expertise in a policy relevant context. Examples of the types of scientific and technical expertise that would ideally need to be covered by civil society in the context of chemicals, waste and pollution prevention include science areas such as i) human health, ii) environment, iii) social sciences, iv) evidence from indigenous peoples and their communities, and v) an understanding of green and sustainable innovations. Independent chemical sciences expertise in these science and technology areas is crucial for chemicals, waste and pollution prevention discussions ***to strengthen the science-policy interface***.

Such inclusion of trusted civil society voices in the IEC with relevant technical backgrounds can provide valuable insights and perspectives, that could help lead to successful, objective and technically achievable outcomes for the functions of the IEC (para 20). For example, voices to counter-balance extreme or highly political or conflicting agendas, with evidence and independent insights that could help the IEC in reaching impactful consensus positions that are workable.
It is especially important for the IEC to include the voices of indigenous peoples and their communities as are impacted in real-life by chemicals, waste and pollution. We support providing a strong voice to the Children and Youth community, whose future is threatened by growing pollution.

Policy Committee

Referring to UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/2 pages 7 and 8, paras 21-36.

At OEWG2 in Nairobi, a 'policy committee' was proposed by one member state.
It is the strongly held view of the S&T MG that a 'Policy Committee' is not necessary for efficient functioning of the SPP. Such a separate policy committee would be seen as a duplication of effort, bring increased costs and timelines to the work, and could in reality **weaken the science-policy interface**, when the intent of the whole process is to *strengthen* the science-policy interface.

It is the view of the S&T MG that a separate policy committee is not needed but a 'policy' working group/task force as part of the IEC would be sufficient in considering advice on or development of policy options etc. and this work would then feed into prioritisation mechanisms led by the IEC, which bring science and policy together effectively.

A separate Policy Committee could, in reality, weaken the concept of the SPP, separating scientists from policymakers, lead to lengthening of processes, miscommunications, constraints on scientific discussion and increased costs of delivery by having an additional committee.

It is important to note that the above considerations on Institutional Arrangements whilst they stand alone, are also being considered in the context of there being a newly established mechanism of scientific contributions into the SPP, though The Concept of an 'SPP Science Alliance'.

In the S&T MG community, it is recognised that there are many scientists in the world who may have useful evidence and knowledge to share. To cast the net as widely as possible so that governments and stakeholders have access to as many of the best and most relevant scientific experts as possible on priority issues, it is proposed that a new 'SPP Science Alliance' is formed, that acts as an umbrella organisation focused on the work of the SPP that can coordinate the participation of experts. An SPP Science Alliance could provide a formalised mechanism to share the best scientific evidence and build new networks, possibly even capacity building activities given adequate funding, that would be useful for strengthening the science-policy interface even further than can be achieved through the current membership of the S&T MG. ***Importantly, such a concept requires funding to be established, estimated to be on the scale of a few hundred thousands of Euros/dollars to initiate. If member states agree, it would be useful if a statement could be declared in OEWG that such an SPP Science Alliance would be considered useful to the SPP.***

Please see the separate submission document from S&T MG on 'The request for policymaker support to establish a SPP Science Alliance – an opportunity to broaden the inclusion of the scientific community in the science-policy panel for chemicals, waste and pollution prevention''.

2. Managing Conflicts of Interest

All participants in the SPP or a new Science Alliance must be asked to record and declare both their financial and non-financial interests.

As output from OEWG2, the secretariat produced a template of a proposed form Appendix B for individuals to declare their interests. This form appears to be useful and generally fit-for-purpose with a few suggested amendments.

It is suggested that the form makes it clear that interests are to be declared from the past 4 years.

Interests may be broader that scientific in nature, but could also be business and personal interests.

It is suggested that there is a *mandated* culture of transparency, i.e. publication of SPP members interests online, and an expectation that participants verbally declare any relevant interests in every meeting, recorded in the minutes, where advice is being generated, technical reviews performed and decisions made.

It is noticed that interests of family members such as spouse or civil partners are not included in the form. Benefits to spouse/civil partners should also be explicitly mentioned in section 13 of the Appendix B form. The question asks about adverse impacts, but this should also include where financial or non-financial 'benefits' could be regarded as a legitimate interest.

3.0 OEWG Science-Policy Panel to Contribute Further to the Sound Management of Chemicals, Waste, and Pollution Prevention

Accredited Scientific and Technological Community Major Group Stakeholder Statement

Society of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry (SETAC)

Background

SETAC is a professional scientific society and is a UNEP accredited Scientific and Technological Community Major Group stakeholder. SETAC is very concerned with the global threat that poorly managed chemicals and waste pose to human and ecological health. We firmly believe that our mission to advance environmental science and management and our principles of multidisciplinary approaches, sectoral balance, and science-based objectivity, as well as our global network of environmental experts, make SETAC especially suited to partner in any endeavor when the shared goals are to better understand and improve our environment.

As such, SETAC was delighted with the adoption of resolution 5/8 at UNEA 5.2. Following that decision, SETAC established an advisory panel on chemicals management (SETAC CheM Panel) to coordinate SETAC's contributions to the policy dialogue at UNEP and the Open Ended Working Group (OEWG) for the establishment of a science-policy panel to contribute further to the sound management of chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution (SPP CWP). The members of the SETAC CheM Panel are appointed by the SETAC World Council, guided by the SETAC principles, to ensure geographic and sectoral balance, interdisciplinarity, and focus on science-based objectivity. As such, the SETAC CheM Panel includes members from Africa, Asia-Pacific, Europe, Latin America, and North America, across Academia, Business, Government, and NGO sectors. The panel is composed of Michelle C. Bloor (Chair, University of Glasgow, U.K.), Stijn Baken (International Copper Association, Belgium), Adriana Bejarano (Shell Global Solutions, North America), Tarryn L. Botha (University of Johannesburg, South Africa), Michelle Embry (Health and Environmental Science Institute (HESI), North America), Darren Koppel (Australian Institute of Marine Sciences (AIMS), Australia), Todd Gouin (TG Environmental Research, U.K.), Lorraine Maltby (University of Sheffield, U.K.), Amanda Reichelt-Brushett (Southern Cross University, Australia), Helena Silva de Assis (Federal University of Paraná, Brazil).

The Institutional Arrangements of the Governing Body and Plenary

SETAC acknowledges and respects the decision-making powers of governments and Member States and their role in determining the SPP CWP procedures, the program of work, and the configuration of the Governing Body and Plenary. **In all aspects of the SPP CWP when it is established, SETAC would urge for the continued involvement of civil society representatives and non-government scientists.** Including civil society representatives and non-government scientists as observers in the Governing Body and Plenary would be an inclusive approach, and would ensure that the widest possible range of independent robust evidence is available for governments in their decision-making processes.

Composition of the Interdisciplinary Expert Group

While SETAC appreciates that the Interdisciplinary Expert Group needs to be agile, which is sometimes easier to achieve with smaller groups, and while we understand that the expertise required for this group will rotate depending on the questions under investigation and the expertise needed for that particular focus, we would ask that consideration is given to increasing the number of seats for civil society representatives and non-government scientists. **SETAC suggests that as a minimum, each of the nine UNEP Major Groups is allocated one seat.** Each Major Group has the breadth of expertise necessary for the SPP CWP processes. Without this allocation, some of this expertise will be missing from the work of the group, such as Indigenous scientific knowledge and independent non-government science.

The Proposed Policy Committee

SETAC considers the inclusion of the proposed Policy Committee as a duplication of effort, which would add another layer of unnecessary oversight and financial burden to the SPP CWP processes. The proposed Policy Committee is likely to weaken the science-policy process and slow it down. **SETAC suggests that the establishment of a 'Policy Working Group' within the Interdisciplinary Expert Group would be an ideal way to provide policy advice or policy development without the need to include an additional committee**, which would separate the science from the policy and potentially result in silos and communication challenges.

Conflicts of Interest

SETAC recommends that all participants in the SPP CWP must be asked to declare their financial and non-financial interests. The Conflict of Interest Form presented in Appendix B is a reasonable document, but SETAC has a few helpful suggestions to strengthen the evidence that it will generate.

- The form should ask for interests to be declared for the past 4 years.
- Interests could be broader than scientific, so business and personal interests should also be requested.
- Spouse/civil partners in addition to the already mentioned children and siblings should be included in Appendix 2, Question 13.
- As well as considering how their work with the SPP CWP might have an 'adverse effect' (Appendix 2, Question 13), the form should include a question on the reverse situation, i.e. the *beneficial* effect that might come from 'the interests of any other persons or entities with whom you have substantial …?'.

In addition to the completion of the Conflict of Interest Form, and to ensure full transparency and trust in the SPP CWP processes, SETAC would encourage the publication of interests online. Furthermore, at the start of meetings, the chair should ask for attendees to verbally declare any relevant interests, which can then be recorded in the meeting minutes and, if deemed appropriate, the attendee can be excused.

Capacity Building

SETAC considers a global perspective to be important, but without losing sight of the specific issues that might have highly significant local impacts. For example, many value chains are global and the use of chemicals in one part of the world can have major environmental impacts in other geographical regions. In contrast, impacts at the local/ regional level also need to be considered, especially in less developed/ resourced regions. Consequently, it is key to consider the intended impact early in the process to allocate (or find) resources, for tangible actions in the assessments to be implemented.

SETAC considers capacity building to be of critical importance if the SPP CWP is to make a difference globally. Developing a mechanism to facilitate connectivity and partnership with various groups is vital. SETAC has a framework that can bring this to the fore e.g., Special Sessions at our Annual Meetings (Europe, North America and Asia Pacific) and Biannual Meetings (Latin America and Africa), Interest Groups, horizon scanning, training courses, workshops, certification program (IBERA Certification) and other engagement activities with our membership. SETAC also has experience working collaboratively with other organizations and we have the capability and desire to do so to support the SPP CWP, and further develop our collaborative capacity.

2 June 2024

World Health Organization

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 (OEWG 3)

WHO comments on proposed "Conflicts of Interest" arrangements

OEWG3 Pre-session Documents

As noted in the draft Conflict of Interest policy set out in Annex 5 to the Compilation of proposals for establishing a science-policy panel:

'The operating principles of the Panel provide that, in carrying out its work, the Panel and the supporting subsidiary bodies must be scientifically independent and ensure credibility, relevance and legitimacy through its work and transparency in its decision-making processes and use clear, transparent and scientifically credible processes for the exchange, sharing and use of data, information and technologies from all relevant sources, including peer-reviewed and non-peer-reviewed literature, as appropriate, [alongside other reliable sources, to ensure a comprehensive, and robust assessment process](del). … The role of the Panel requires that it pays special attention to issues of independence and bias in order to maintain the integrity of, and public confidence in, its outputs and processes. It is essential that the work of the Panel is not compromised by any conflict of interest for those who execute it.'

WHO considers declaration and management of conflicts of interest essential to the development of unbiased and credible recommendations and guidance. We welcome the recognition in the Panel's operating principles of the need for scientific independence, credibility, transparency in decision-making and transparent and scientifically credible processes, as well as to maintain integrity and public confidence in Panel work and outputs and to ensure that the work of the Panel is not compromised by conflicts of interest.

WHO is a science- and evidence-based organization focused on public health. Guidelines and delivery of evidence-based technical recommendations and guidance are fundamental means through which WHO fulfils its mandate of providing technical leadership in health. Accordingly, we offer the following comments as insights from the WHO experience and to suggest ways in which the SPP conflicts of interest (COI) policy and declaration of interests form could be strengthened and better align with WHO processes and requirements.

Compilation of proposals for establishing a science-policy panel UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/2

Annex 5. Conflict-of-Interest policy

A. Purpose and B. Scope

- ‘1. … According to the operating principles of the Panel, in carrying out its work, the Panel and the supporting subsidiary bodies must be scientifically independent and ensure credibility, relevance and legitimacy through its work and transparency in its decision-making processes and use clear, transparent and scientifically credible processes for the exchange, sharing and use of data, information and technologies from all relevant sources, including peer-reviewed and non-peer-reviewed literature, as appropriate, [alongside other reliable sources, to ensure a comprehensive, and robust assessment process](del).’

- Chapter 6 of the **WHO Guideline Development Handbook** (2nd Ed.) https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241548960 notes that the declaration and management of conflicts of interest is essential to the development of unbiased and credible recommendations and guidelines. The chapter defines the basic concepts, describes the principles involved, and outlines how WHO staff who develop guidelines can collect declarations of interest and assess and manage any conflicts. This Handbook can provide guidance from the experience of WHO, as the peak global technical body on health and a trusted adviser to governments, including through publication and dissemination of policy guidance based on best available science.

- The Panel and subsidiary bodies must be scientifically independent according to the operating principles of the Panel. As setting the scientific agenda can influence outcomes, all those involved at the Panel or subsidiary bodies in setting the scope and parameters of scientific inquiries and deliverables should be subject to the COI policy, not just those directly involved in preparing reports and deliverables (para 3 and 7 – scope).

- In establishing independence, it would be beneficial to include in the COI policy a strong statement/reminder that panel members are appointed to act independently and not represent the Member, organization or institution appointing them.

C. Conflict of Interest

- See comments below on the SPP COI form regarding the limitations to the definition of conflict of interest used in this Annex, as detailed in paragraphs 12, 13, 15, 16 and 17.

- Paragraph 13 – Noting the need to balance bias and differing viewpoints in Panel author teams, the existing or previous and ongoing relationships, and a history of engagements and publications must be disclosed in order to allow a determination of potential biases and different viewpoints, as well as potential conflicts of interests. For this purpose, the WHO DOI form requires disclosure of interests in the previous 4 years and the WHO Handbook for Guideline Development requires experts applying to work on guidelines to provide their professional CV.

- Paragraph 17 - If it is intended that only ‘significant and relevant’ financial interests are disclosed, a clear number should be provided which is regarded as significant. The WHO DOI form sets these figures low, at ‘any remuneration’ for employment, consulting or financial research support, $1,000 for non-monetary research support and $5,000 for investments. As clearly stated in the form, declaring an interest does not automatically disqualify and applicant or limit participation, but allows the Secretariat to assess potential conflicts of interest based on all relevant information.

Appendix A

- Paragraph 3 – Noted that the requirement to submit a COI form is square bracketed for the Interdisciplinary expert Committee of the Panel. It is critical to meet the objectives of the panel in ensuring independence, transparency, credibility and in building trust in the work of the Panel and its outputs that all experts involved in setting the scientific agenda

or determining the approach and scope of products, as well as experts engaged in developing products, to submit declarations of potential conflicts of interest.

- In the process prior to appointment, we recommend a public comment period, during which the names of potential panel members are published for two weeks/one month to allow for the public to submit comments, as in some cases public comments can inform of additional conflicts than those disclosed. The WHO guidelines/expert process includes this step.

- WHO processes make clear that further information will be sought from an expert if necessary as part of the review and engagement process. We recommend that this is also explicitly stated in this policy and on the DOI form.

- Paragraph 7 – Periodic updates to DoI should apply to all groups including Panel members to ensure that they retain currency and meet the objectives of the policy. While all should routinely notify changes, a stronger process would require a new form from every person within the scope of the policy at a fixed time (e.g. annually).

- Paragraph 7bis – It is strongly suggested that (c) (the ability to assign future intellectual property rights) and (d) (confidentiality of commercial , government or industrial information) are deleted from the exemptions to disclosure. Both categories are potentially extremely broad and can be subjectively interpreted. Accordingly, neither should exempt disclosure for the purpose of determining conflicts of interest. If it is determined that disclosure beyond the COI committee or Panel would adversely and materially impact such interests, the information can be managed in accordance with confidentiality procedures.

- Paragraph 10 – It is strongly suggested that the final sentence in square brackets is not deleted and should in fact be strengthened by giving the COI Committee (which must be independent of the Panel) decision-making authority . In cases where a COI cannot be resolved, it is critical to protect the integrity and work of the Panel that the COI Committee retains the capacity to exclude an individual from Panel work, for specific activities or in general.

- Paragraph 13 – Whilst taking all legally required steps to protect personal information, in the interests of meeting the principles detailed in the Panel's operating procedures, in WHO Guidelines and related products, the existence of any conflicts of interest, and the way in which they have been managed, is published in the final product.

- There is value (for example to help build credibility and trust) in routinely publishing information about interests declared (but not the COI form itself) by all experts on a continuous basis. WHO states that it retains the right to publish further information about an expert from their DoI form (not necessarily the form itself) if it becomes necessary due to questions raised. Other technical organizations also take this approach - for example IARC does this routinely, without disclosing too much personal information.

- Paragraph 14 – 19: If a COI Committee is considered necessary by Member States, a smaller committee might be considered to expedite its operations. A COI Committee should be established to operate and consider potential conflicts independently of the Panel.

- In addition, noting the operating principle for the Panel to have clear, transparent and scientifically credible processes for the exchange, sharing and use of data, information and technologies from all relevant sources, it is suggested that as in WHO guidelines and guidance documents, all data, information and methodologies on which guidance is based should be made publicly available for review by any interested party.

Draft conflict-of-interest disclosure form UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/2/Add.5

The **WHO Declaration of Interests for WHO Experts** form (Available at: https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/air-pollution-documents/doi_en_form_blank8ba6ab2c-dd62-49a9-914d-aacb4f7ebec7.pdf?sfvrsn=387a7953_5) provides as follows:

'All experts serving in an advisory role must disclose any circumstances that could represent a **potential conflict of interest** (i.e., any interest that may affect, or may reasonably be perceived to affect, the expert's objectivity and independence). You must disclose on this Declaration of Interests (DOI) form any financial, professional or other interest relevant to the subject of the work or meeting in which you have been asked to participate in or contribute towards and any interest that could be affected by the outcome of the meeting or work. You must also declare relevant interests of your immediate family members (see definition below) and, if you are aware of it, relevant interests of other parties with whom you have substantial common interests and which may be perceived as unduly influencing your judgement (e.g. employer, close professional associates, administrative unit or department). Please note that not fully completing and disclosing all relevant information on this form may, depending on the circumstances, lead WHO to decide not to appoint you to WHO advisory bodies/functions in the future.'

By comparison, **the SPP draft conflict of interest (COI) disclosure form**:

- Does not include potential COIs which 'may reasonably be perceived to affect' the declarant's objectivity, which is an important factor in 'maintaining public confidence in, the Panel's deliverables and processes.'
- Does not specifically require disclosure of interests which may potentially impact the declarant's independence, focusing instead on objectivity and the possibility of creation of unfair advantage or resulting in material gain related to the work of the Panel. This could undermine 'the objective of the Panel (which) requires that special attention be paid to issues of independence and potential bias in order to maintain the integrity of, and public confidence in, the Panel's deliverables and processes.'
- Requires disclosure of (a) interests that could 'significantly' impair the declarant's objectivity. It is unclear how significance should be assessed, but this implies a higher threshold of impairment and declarants may decide not to declare interests that may impact their objectivity in carrying out their duties and responsibilities for the Panel on the basis that they do not consider that impact to be a significant impairment. A more robust and transparent process would be to require disclosure of all interests which may be perceived as unduly influencing the declarant's judgement (as in the WHO form) and for the interests declared to be independently assessed e.g. by the SPP Secretariat or COI committee to determine whether objectivity (or independence) could be impacted or impaired in a way that could impact the work of the Panel or public perception of it.
- Requires disclosure of interests that could (b) 'create an unfair advantage for you or any person or organization, and which could result in your securing a direct and material gain through outcomes related to a Panel process.' This appears to require that both an unfair advantage and a direct material gain for the declarant are created, which is a narrow interpretation of COI and a high threshold, and which may not capture all relevant interests. It is also important to note that vested commercial interests may only seek the continuation of business as usual, which may in some circumstances impacted by the Panel's work. Such commercial interests could exercise undue influence on a declarant or impair their objectivity,

but do not create an 'unfair advantage' in favour of a particular person or organization, particularly if the outcome benefits an industry sector.

- Requires disclosure only of current employment, engagement or contractual relationships and remuneration or financial support that is being received at the time of the declaration. This declaration does not capture previous recent engagements which may impair or unduly influence the independence or objectivity of a declarant or demonstrate a particular leaning or potential bias, which could be considered in the balance of the Panel (see paragraph 13 of the Conflict of Interest Policy). In contrast, the WHO form requires disclosure of remuneration and research support in the past 4 years and for experts engaged in guideline development also requires candidates to provide a CV.

In the specific questions in the SPP COI form:

- It would be beneficial to clarify what is meant by the 'Panel's work' as individuals may be conflicted in relation to one area of work but not others.

- Part I Question 5 asks whether the declarant 'own(s) any intellectual property interests' that might be affected by the Panel's work. Given the range of potential interests in intellectual property, this question could be made more comprehensive by rephrasing as 'hold any form of interest in intellectual property'.

- Part III Question 12 asks '…would the outcome of the meeting or work adversely affect interests of others with whom you have substantial common personal, professional, financial or business interests,' including close family and associates. This question should cover all impacts, as positive impacts on the interests of the family or close associates of the declarant are also generally considered to create potential conflicts of interest. The WHO DOI form instead asks 'would the outcome of the meeting or work benefit or adversely affect interests of others with whom you have substantial common personal, professional, financial or business interests …' The question should be amended to 'benefit or adversely impact'.

- We strongly recommend that the question regarding close family includes the declarant's spouse or partner.

- The form (and policy) would also be strengthened by including a question on public comments made by the declarant on matters relevant to the panel's work, in particular for the management of actual or perceived bias.

Contacts for Further Information

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