

Bureau Meeting 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 to prevent pollution
12 - 14 November 2024
International Environment House, Geneva, Switzerland

Meeting Summary

Agenda item 1: Opening and welcome remarks

1. The Chair, Ms. Gudi Alkemade, opened the meeting and welcomed the participants.

Agenda item 2: Adoption of the agenda

2. The Chair introduced the provisional agenda, which was adopted without any changes.

Agenda item 3: In-depth preparations for OEWG 3.2 with facilitators

3. Bureau members held in-depth discussions with facilitators of OEWG 3.1 and the secretariat on the preparations and organization for OEWG 3.2. Participants had the opportunity to gain a better understanding of the key documents, main topics and discussion areas, interlinkages between documentation, and possible approaches to effectively facilitate discussions at OEWG 3.2.

Agenda item 4: Adoption of the meeting summary

4. The Chair invited the Bureau members to endorse the summaries of the Bureau meetings held on [11 September 2024](#) and [24 October 2024](#), respectively, as prepared by the secretariat. The Bureau endorsed the summaries without any changes.

Agenda item 5: OEWG 3.2 preparations

a. Reflections on the retreat and the next steps

5. The secretariat provided a summary of the [key reflections](#) from the discussions held under Agenda item 3 and shared the next steps based on feedback received.
 - The participants were able to achieve the following:
 - Strengthening facilitation/chairing skills and techniques;
 - Better understanding the key documents to be finalized at OEWG 3.2;
 - Identifying key topics and related discussion areas, including cross links in the key documents for OEWG3.2;
 - Exchanging views, experiences and strategies on chairing and facilitating.
 - Next steps identified in preparation for OEWG 3.2 included:
 - Preparation of the scenario note for OEWG 3.2, including the organization of work, by the Chair well in advance of OEWG 3.2;
 - Development of technical resource documents to support the facilitators in preparing for the facilitation of contact group discussions;

- Facilitating effective participation, including through a webinar for focal points on the scenario note;
- Continued outreach and consultations (informal, bilateral, regional, etc.) in the lead up to OEWG 3.2.

6. Bureau members expressed their appreciation to the secretariat and the Chair for preparing the retreat and general support for the next steps, including on:

- Specific needs for technical resource documents (that should be factual);
- The types of activities to facilitate effective participation;
- The importance of the scenario note to provide clarity on the expected outcomes and the organization of work, including on what will not be discussed at OEWG3.2;
- The need for further informal outreach and seeking feedback on the expected outcomes and organization of work for OEWG 3.2
- The importance of outreach (including informal and bilateral) and facilitation of online regional consultations after the documentation for OEWG 3.2 has been made available.
- Having a preparation meeting between Bureau members and facilitators in advance of OEWG 3.2.
- Requesting the Secretariat to prepare a roadmap on the activities and consultations in the lead up to OEWG 3.2.

7. The Chair noted that based on the outcomes of OEWG 3.1 the majority of the documents can already be prepared by the Secretariat, including the meeting documents and the technical resource documents for the facilitators. The online regional meetings, or any information sharing events, should be organized in a timely manner, e.g. 4 weeks prior to the meeting, to ensure participation of the relevant participants of OEWG 3.2. The Secretariat, with the support of Bureau Members, can help to identify key countries for informal and bilateral consultations as part of the roadmap.

8. Responding to a Bureau Member, the Chair confirmed that the regional consultations will be upon request by the regions and will be supported by the secretariat, as agreed at the previous Bureau meeting (in September 2024). In view of the current funding gap (see agenda 5c), the budget does not allow for in-person regional consultations. In addition, she reminded participants that it is foreseen that arrangements will be made for an in person regional consultation to be held one day before the OEWG 3.2 meeting to be scheduled back-to-back with the Intergovernmental Meeting.

b. OEWG 3.2 draft organization of work

9. The secretariat presented a general outline for the proposed approach for [the organization of work](#) for OEWG 3.2 (similar to previous meetings of the OEWG), and an [overview of documentation for OEWG 3.2](#). The Chair invited Bureau members to share their views.

10. Bureau Members provided initial feedback on the draft organization of work, including that:

- The clustering of issues to be addressed in contact groups should be changed, in accordance with the renewed focus of the work to be finalized.

- While agreeing to sequence the discussions in a logical order, 90-minute sessions may not apply to every issue.
- While striving to hold no more than two parallel contact groups, some flexibility may be required to finalize the work of the ad hoc open ended working group.
- Regarding the documentation, apart from the draft Rules of Procedures, consideration of the texts of all other “annexes” will be deferred to the first session of the panel’s governing body.
- Similarly, as agreed by OEWG 3.1, the annex on financial procedures will be forwarded as an information document and will not be considered at OEWG 3.2.
- Following clarification of the secretariat on the need for a decision on interim arrangements, as a consequence of the agreement at OEWG 3.1 that the governing body of the Panel will decide on its secretariat arrangements, the Chair sought views from Bureau Members on whether the draft decisions on interim arrangements would be better presented as a working document or an information document as was the case for the draft annexes in OEWG 3.1. Several members expressed their preference to introduce the draft decisions on interim arrangements as a working document as it will be clearer that this should be an outcome of the meeting.
- The Secretariat may also advise on comprehensive titles for the draft decisions taking into account the outcomes of OEWG 3.1.

c. Budget and resource mobilization

11. The secretariat presented a [revised budget](#) up to 31 March 2025, including OEWG 3.2 and the Intergovernmental Meeting, as well as an overview of the resources mobilized for the OEWG. To date the total cash contributions received amounts to US\$7.6 M, noting that the in-kind contributions from Switzerland, China, France, and UNEP were not included. The budget shortfall is estimated at approximately US\$ 1.4 M Extra costs for secretariat staff beyond 31 March 2025 are expected should OEWG 3.2 take place after February 2025.

12. Responding to questions from Bureau members, the secretariat clarified that the estimated cost of OEWG 3.2 and the Intergovernmental Meeting was based on the average costs of the past Geneva-Nairobi-Bangkok meetings and on the assumption of a 7-day meeting. The cost of the meeting will be subject to change depending on the actual dates and venue of the meeting. The secretariat also confirmed that further resource mobilization is on-going.

13. The Chair noted the shortfall of US\$ 1.4 M will be subject to further changes depending on the actual date, venue, and any additional agreed activities. The Chair expressed appreciation to donors who have contributed to OEWG so far and highlighted the need for continued resource mobilization efforts and asked the Bureau to encourage in their region’s new potential contributions.

d. Date and venue for OEWG 3.2 and the Intergovernmental Meeting

14. The secretariat presented an [update on the offers](#) received for hosting the back-to-back OEWG 3.2 and Intergovernmental Meeting. There was no significant update since the ad-hoc meeting on 24 October 2024, except the potential date for expressed in Uruguay’s hosting offer was identified as 14 - 20 June 2025.

15. The bureau members sought clarifications on the following:
- What the issues on the HCA are for China.

- The possible implication of the elections taking place in Uruguay.
- The possible overlap with meeting dates for BRS (regional) meetings.

16. Ms. Torres (Uruguay) informed that due to elections held in Uruguay, there will be a change in government, and the proposed dates for the meeting are therefore 14 - 20 June 2025 and that possible funding offers are currently being explored.

17. Prof. Li (China) indicated that the Host Country Agreement (HCA) template is currently being reviewed by China and that furthermore a possibility for co-hosting arrangements is being explored with Uruguay. Prof. Li also indicated the flexibility on the meeting dates.

18. Several Bureau members expressed interest further exploration of the co-hosting arrangement and emphasized the need to clarify the arrangements and any potential HCA issues.

19. The secretariat further provided information for relevant environmental meetings:

- BRS Asia-Pacific regional meeting: 8 - 11 April 2025 (Beijing, China)
- BRS CoP: 28 April - 9 May 2025
- GFC OEWG meetings: 23 - 27 June 2025 (Nairobi, Kenya)

20. The Chair expressed appreciation to China and Uruguay for the hosting offers and further thanked China for the indication of the potential co-hosting arrangement for OEWG 3.2 and IM, and on the flexibility on the meeting dates.

21. Several Bureau members expressed the urgency to decide on the meetings dates and venue, bearing in mind other environmental processes taking place around the same time, to ensure not to lose delegates coming to the resumed third session, and also noting that February 2025 was not far away if the Nairobi option were to be selected, which may not allow Member States the necessary time to prepare effectively for the meeting.

22. The Chair encouraged the proponents to resolve any outstanding issue of the HCA by the end of November, and/or to provide clarity on a possible co-hosting arrangement, to enable the bureau to take a decision as soon as possible.

23. It was agreed that the Bureau would reconvene on 9 December 2024 to resolve the matter of dates and venue for OEWG 3.2 and the Intergovernmental Meeting. In the meantime, Nairobi will remain the fall-back option.

Agenda item 6: Other Matters

24. The Chair proposed to come back to the discussion of meeting venue and date at an ad hoc Bureau meeting scheduled for 9 December 2024 to decide on its recommendation for the date and the venue and any other possible urgent matters. A full Bureau meeting will be held in January 2025 to prepare for OEWG 3.2.

Agenda item 7: Closing of the meeting

25. The meeting ended at 16:40 CET.

Participants

Bureau members

Ms. Gudi Alkemade, Chair of the Bureau of the SPP OEWG and Policy Coordinator, International Affairs Directorate Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management, Netherlands

Ms. Linda Kosgei, Rapporteur of the Bureau of the SPP OEWG and Head of MEAs, Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Forestry of Kenya

Mr. Oumar Diaouré Cisse, Vice-Chair of the Bureau of the SPP OEWG and Point Focal SAICM, Ministère de l'Environnement, de l'Assainissement et du Développement Durable, Mali

Prof. Jinhui Li, Vice Chair of the Bureau of the SPP OEWG and Distinguished Professor, School of Environment, Tsinghua University, China

Mr. Michel Tschirren, Vice Chair of the Bureau of the SPP OEWG and Senior Policy Advisor at the Federal Office for the Environment (FOEN), Switzerland

Mr. Alexandru Roznov, Vice Chair of the Bureau of the SPP OEWG and Assistant Counsellor, Ministry of Environment, Waters and Forests, Romania

Mr. Roman Filonenko, Vice Chair of the Bureau of the SPP OEWG and Senior Specialist of the Environmental Safety Division of the Government of Ukraine

Ms. Judith Torres, Vice Chair of the Bureau of the SPP OEWG and International Relations and Cooperation Office of the Ministry of the Environment, Uruguay

Mr. Linroy Christian, Vice Chair of the Bureau of the OEWG SPP and Director of Department of Analytical Services, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Barbuda Affairs (*online*)

Secretariat

Ms. Tessa Goverse

Ms. Nalini Sharma

Mr. Alvin Gachie

Mr. Didier Salzman

Ms. Kaai Tung Chan

Ms. Leonie Geene

Mr. Richard Miesen

Ms. Stephanie Laurelle

Mr. Zhanyun Wang

Observer(s)

Ms. Sheila Aggarwal-Khan, UNEP

Ms. Jacqueline Alvarez, UNEP

Ms. Lesley Onyon, World Health Organization

Ms. Virunya Bhat, World Health Organization

OEWG 3.1 Facilitators

Mr. Sam Adu-Kumi

Ms. Toks Akinseye

Ms. Itsuki Kuroda

Ms. Sofia Tingstorp

Ms. Safiya Sawney

Regrets

Bureau members

H.E. Saqlain Syedah, Vice Chair of the Bureau of the SPP OEWG and Ambassador of Pakistan to Germany

OEWG 3.1 Facilitators

Mr. Miguel Ruiz Botero

Ms. Kateřina Šebková

Ms. Keima Gardiner