

Updated Terms of Reference of the UNEP Working Group on Nitrogen

Working paper for the sixth meeting of the UNEP Working Group on Nitrogen

Introductory note

The present document has been prepared for the 6th meeting of the UNEP Working Group on Nitrogen which will take place online from 26 to 27 June 2024. The document consists of a revision of the Terms of Reference prepared for the 2nd meeting of the UNEP Working Group on Nitrogen which took place 17 January 2023. The revisions (in blue) build on the stipulations of UNEA resolutions 4/14 and 5/2 on sustainable nitrogen management.

Background

The fourth session of the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA-4) adopted a first resolution on “Sustainable nitrogen management” (resolution 4/14), while the fifth session of UNEA (UNEA-5.2) adopted a second resolution on “Sustainable nitrogen management” (resolution 5/2).

To facilitate the implementation of resolution 4/14 and to strengthen the engagement and ownership of the implementation process by Member States and stakeholders, the Executive Director of UNEP decided to convene a Working Group on Nitrogen. The mandate of the Working Group was further extended after the adoption of resolution 5/2.

Resolution 5/2 operative paragraph 3(d) also requested the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to invite Member States to nominate focal points to join the UNEP Working Group on Nitrogen. Focal points will participate in the meetings of the UNEP Working Group on Nitrogen and serve as contact point between UNEP and their country.

The UNEP Working Group on Nitrogen is Co-Chaired by two Member State representatives, Ms. Purvaja Ramachandran, Director, National Center for Sustainable Coastal Management, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change of India and Mr. Mihai Constantinescu, [Director of the Management Unit Pollution Prevention and Reduction in Rural Areas](#), Ministry of Environment, Waters and Forests of Romania.

[The first five meetings of the UNEP Working Group on Nitrogen were focused on 1\) identifying the current situation and progress made by the Member States in applying measures on sustainable nitrogen management and on 2\) drafting a Voluntary National Action Plan Template, to further encourage Members States to adopt best practices for policy preparation and implementation. Moreover, various cooperation methods with relevant Multilateral Environmental Agreements \(MEAs\) were also investigated.](#)

Objective

The overall objective of the UNEP Working Group on Nitrogen is to facilitate the implementation of UNEA Resolutions 4/14 and 5/2 on “Sustainable nitrogen management”.

Terms of Reference

- Provide technical and policy recommendations options to accelerate actions to significantly reduce nitrogen waste globally by 2030 and beyond through the improvement of sustainable nitrogen management;
- Prepare a roadmap for further implementation of resolutions 4/14 and 5/2 on “Sustainable nitrogen management” aiming at a significant reduction of nitrogen waste by 2030;
- Set-up a Scientific Technical Support Team for ensuring the scientific basis for activities of the Working Group, including through sharing of technical expertise and information necessary for the preparation and implementation of national actions;
- Further consolidate the Voluntary National Action Plan Template, by considering a simple monitoring and evaluation framework;
- Encourage, assist and support Member States, upon their request and subject to the availability of resources, in setting-up an action plan to enhance existing actions on sustainable nitrogen management;
- Intensify cooperation with various relevant MEAs for an appropriate integration of nitrogen management best practices and homogenisation of the approaches and monitoring systems;
- Promote awareness raising on the multiple impacts of nitrogen losses, including via global and regional events;
- Share information and promote exchange of experience on voluntary national action plans, as available, according to national circumstances;
- Identify possible modalities for the options being considered for improved coordination of policies across the global nitrogen cycle at the national, regional and global levels, including, among other options, for an intergovernmental coordination mechanism for nitrogen policies, as specified in subparagraph (a) of UNEA Resolution 4/14;
- Provide a forum for the dissemination and communication of information related to the implementation of UNEA resolutions 4/14 and 5/2; and
- Participate in experts’ groups meetings / roundtables / dialogues organized by the UNEP Working Group on Nitrogen or in collaboration with the Global Partnership on Nutrient Management (GPNM).

Focal points

Focal points should be nominated through an official communication by a Member State submitted to unep-nitrogenworkinggroup@un.org. Focal points should:

- Possess good knowledge and understanding of both technical and policy aspects of sustainable nitrogen management;
- Have experience in intergovernmental processes; and
- Be available to participate in meetings of the Working Group¹.

¹ Should the Focal Point not be available, an official communication from the Focal Point delegating participation to a designated alternative Focal Point should be communicated to the secretariat. Also, at the invitation of the Focal Point and with prior notification of the Secretariat of UNEP Working Group on Nitrogen, other representatives may participate.

Stakeholder engagement

UNEP Major Groups and other Stakeholders:

- UNEP recognizes the importance of engaging Major Groups and other Stakeholders as partners and appreciates the perspectives they bring to the table, valuable research, and advocacy functions they perform and their role in helping foster long-term, broad-based support for UNEP's mission.
- Major Groups and Stakeholders organizations accredited to the UN Environment Assembly² may participate in the meetings of the UNEP Working Group on Nitrogen as observers.
- The nine Major Groups are as follows:
 - Farmers,
 - Women,
 - The Scientific and Technological Community,
 - Children and Youth,
 - Indigenous Peoples and their Communities,
 - Workers, and Trade Unions,
 - Business and Industry,
 - Non-Governmental Organizations,
 - Local Authorities.

Members of the Global Partnership on Nutrient Management:

- At the discretion of the Co-Chairs, members of the GPNM and of the UNEP Major Groups and other Stakeholders can be invited to attend the meetings of the UNEP Working Group on Nitrogen as observers. This includes representatives of the scientific community, [other than the members of Scientific Technical Support Team](#), who may be invited to present relevant scientific views, as needed.

² <https://www.unep.org/civil-society-engagement/major-groups-modalities/major-group-categories>