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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**

Summary of views on the capacity-building function of the science-policy panel

Note by the secretariat

At its second session, 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 requested the secretariat to prepare, in consultation with the Bureau, timely webinars on the capacity-building function of the science-policy panel and to submit a summary of the views expressed on the function to the ad hoc open-ended working group at its third session for information purposes. A summary of the webinars and of the views expressed during the two webinar sessions is set out in the annex to the present note, without formal editing. The ad hoc open-ended working group on a science-policy panel may wish to consider the information provided.

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

Annex*

Summary of views on the capacity-building function of the science-policy panel

I. Introduction

1. A webinar on the capacity-building function of the panel was organized on 11 April 2024 with two sessions held on this day with the same agenda to accommodate for participants from different time zones and to encourage wide participation. A total of 250 participants joined the sessions. Links to the recordings of the webinars can be found on the OEWG website.¹
2. In addition, an online form was made available prior and during the webinars to solicit written inputs on the capacity-building function of the panel to facilitate further collection of views from representatives. The online form was available on the Geneva Environment Network website and advertised through the registration link for a period of two weeks from 26 March to 12 April 2024.
3. Section II of the present document provides a summary of the presentations made during the webinar, whereas section III summarizes the views expressed during the interactive discussions at the webinars as well as through written submissions.

II. Summary of the presentations made during each webinar

4. The facilitator of the webinar highlighted the importance of the capacity-building function of the panel and the need for OEWG to agree on a text for this function at its third session, 17 – 21 June 2024 in Geneva.
5. The secretariat provided background information on the development of the capacity-building function of the panel and presented the function in the context of the objective and the other four agreed functions of the science-policy panel.
6. Two text proposals on the capacity-building function of the panel had been put forward at the resumed first session of the OEWG held in January 2023 in Bangkok, as follows:
 - **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.”
7. Further consideration of this text took place at the second session of OEWG in December 2023 in Nairobi, Kenya. The two text proposals were included in the outcome of the second session of OEWG as part of the compilation of proposals to establish a science-policy panel under Section A “Scope, objective and functions of the Panel” (UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/2).
8. The secretariat also presented an overview of capacity-building activities carried out by different organizations based on a mapping of existing capacity-building activities undertaken by the secretariat in preparation of previous OEWG sessions. The outcome of these exercises are available in documents UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.1/5 and UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.2/INF/3.
9. A further presentation focused on the capacity-building activities carried out by existing science-policy interfaces (SPIs), such as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), the Stockholm Convention’s Persistent Organic Pollutants Review Committee, the Global Environment Outlook (GEO), the International Resource Panel (IRP) and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), and highlighted that the focus of their capacity-building was to support

* The annex has not been formally edited.

¹ <https://www.unep.org/oewg-spp-chemicals-waste-pollution/webinar-series>.

core work, notably enabling effective participation in the interfaces' processes and enhancing scientific contributions. To augment impact, collaboration with other partner organizations was sought.

10. This was followed by a presentation on the wide range of capacity-building activities undertaken or foreseen by other international bodies on chemicals, waste and pollution prevention, such as by the secretariat of the Basel, Stockholm and Rotterdam conventions, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the International Labour Organization (ILO), UNEP and the Global Framework on Chemicals, with capacity-building activities ranging from support to the implementation of multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), initiatives to develop countries' capacities for scientific analysis, to activities to develop countries' capacities for the broader sound management of chemicals, waste and pollution prevention. In summary, the secretariat noted that there are a number of organizations working on capacity-building in the chemicals, waste and pollution prevention space undertaking various efforts in order to respond to existing mandates and different needs, with science-policy interfaces such as IPCC, IPBES, GEO and the subsidiary bodies of MEAs specifically focusing on strengthening the science-policy interface.

11. A representative of the IPBES Technical Support Unit on capacity-building presented how IPBES designed and implemented its capacity-building function. In order to develop its capacity-building function, IPBES first undertook an analysis of existing capacity-building needs among its members. Based on this analysis, IPBES developed a capacity-building rolling work programme. The representative noted that this approach allowed the IPBES Plenary, its governing body, to define and prioritize its capacity-building activities in a flexible manner and adapt to emerging needs. The rolling work programme further enabled IPBES to inform other organizations of opportunities, priorities and needs for capacity-building identified by IPBES, to enhance cooperation while avoiding duplication of work. IPBES relied on contributions and support from more than 250 organizations. In terms of capacity-building activities, IPBES itself undertakes the following: a fellowship programme; a training and familiarization programme; work to support the uptake of IPBES deliverables; meetings and workshops, and encouragement for the development of science-policy platforms and network at national and regional levels.

12. An IPBES fellow subsequently shared experiences as beneficiary of IPBES capacity-building activities. The fellowship programme allowed to build professional and scientific networks, take part in trainings and participate in a mentorship programme. It also allowed fellows to exchange knowledge and develop bespoke skills contributing to career development as well as deepening collaboration with civil society, experts and youth in the country of origin of the fellow.

13. During the Q&A session, many questions were aimed at further understanding how IPBES implemented its capacity-building function across different geographical scales, while avoiding duplication of work and maximizing impact. The IPBES representative highlighted the importance of IPBES' collaboration with strategic partners in the delivery of its capacity-building function given the limited human and financial resources for capacity-building within IPBES.

III. Summary of the views expressed during the webinars and through written inputs on the capacity-building function of the science-policy panel

14. Following the presentations, an open discussion was held, which was structured around the three main questions that had been shared prior to the webinars through an online form. The objective of the session was to allow participants to share their views on the capacity-building function of the science-policy panel to contribute further to the sound management of chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution.

15. The three questions were:

1. What should be the focus of priority capacity-building activities for the panel to undertake?
2. How can we avoid overlap and duplication of work?
3. How can coordination and cooperation be promoted with relevant multilateral agreements, other international instruments and intergovernmental bodies, and others?

16. The following views were shared in response to the first question:

- Capacity-building activities that the panel could prioritize include: activities to facilitate participation of different types of actors from around the world and from all scientific disciplines in the work of the panel; communication activities in different languages;

providing learning and mentorship opportunities; building networks of policy-makers, researchers and actors from civil society and the private sectors; promoting access to data, and supporting policy-makers in the uptake of the panel's work, especially from developing countries.

- Some participants proposed that capacity-building activities should include support and technical assistance to implement practical solutions, technology transfer to developing countries and activities to strengthen data-generation capacities.
- Some participants expressed the view that the capacity-building function of the panel should primarily focus on facilitating the objective of the panel and that the capacity-building activities should support the other four functions. Activities that fall outside the other four functions of the panel should be facilitated through strategic partnerships.
- Participants highlighted the importance of undertaking an analysis of existing capacity-building needs to define and prioritize the capacity-building activities of the panel. This analysis would facilitate a shared understanding of the different needs from different stakeholders working on chemicals, waste and pollution prevention (from different regions, gender, age or language).
- Some participants also supported the way IPBES developed its capacity-building activities, through the elaboration of a rolling work-programme that allows for flexibility and adaptation to evolving needs over time.

17. The following views were shared in response to questions 3 and 4:

- Participants agreed on the importance of avoiding overlap and duplication of work and promoting coordination and cooperation.
- Many participants expressed the view that a further mapping exercise would be useful to understand what types of activities are already undertaken by other organizations and therefore avoid duplication of work.
- Some participants suggested the establishment of consultation or coordination mechanisms, such as joint committees or programmes, or invitations to members of other organization to take part in the work of the science-policy panel. Participants also proposed to develop strategic partnerships on capacity-building with other organizations, including the private sector. The importance of good communication between organizations was stressed as a means to avoid duplication of work.
- It was highlighted that the scientific work of the panel itself could also contribute to coordination of various stakeholders by providing a common basis for prioritization.

18. In conclusion, the webinars highlighted a clear convergence of view on the importance of the capacity-building function of the panel, with an express need for activities to ensure the active participation from diverse stakeholders, flexible and tailored programming, and alignment or coordination with existing initiatives.

Appendix: Agenda of the webinar

The agenda of the webinars was the following:

Technical opening

- Diana Rizzolio | Coordinator, Geneva Environment Network

Introduction

- Alexandru Roznov | OEWG Bureau member

Ongoing discussions on the capacity-building function of the Panel

- Tessa Goverse | Head of the OEWG secretariat

Capacity-building activities carried out by relevant organizations

- **Zhanyun Wang** | OEWG secretariat

Presentation of IPBES capacity-building activities

- **Ingunn Storro** | Head of the Technical Support Unit in charge of capacity-building, IPBES
- **Maysoun Mustafa** | Nexus Assessment-Fellow, IPBES

Q&A session

- **Moderated** by Alexandru Roznov

Open discussion on the capacity-building function of the Science-Policy Panel on chemicals, waste and pollution prevention

- **Moderated** by Alexandru Roznov
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