



# Establishing an Independent Panel on Evidence for Action against Antimicrobial Resistance (IPEA)

## Foundational elements for consultation with Member States and other stakeholders

June 2025

### 1. Why an independent science panel?

Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is a critical and growing global threat to human, animal and plant health, and is closely linked to the environment and pollution, which play a key role in its development, transmission and spread. AMR occurs when microbes such as bacteria, viruses, fungi, and parasites no longer respond to antimicrobial agents.<sup>1</sup> As a result of drug resistance, antibiotics and other antimicrobial agents become ineffective and infections become difficult or impossible to treat, increasing the risk of disease spread, severe illness and death. AMR also poses risks to food security, economic stability, and environmental sustainability. Addressing AMR requires a coordinated, evidence-based, global response in human and animal health, and the agrifood and environmental sectors.

While AMR poses complex and inter-related scientific questions and challenges, existing data are inadequate, and tend to be fragmented across sectors. Following up on a recommendation by the Inter-Agency Coordination Group on AMR in 2019, the 2024 United Nations General Assembly Political Declaration on AMR called for the establishment of an Independent Panel on Evidence for Action against Antimicrobial Resistance (IPEA) by 2025.<sup>2</sup> This panel, to be established by the Quadripartite organizations,<sup>3</sup> will support Member States by facilitating the generation and use of multisectoral, scientific evidence to better inform and guide policy making and interventions to prevent and mitigate the impact of AMR. The political declaration calls for the panel to be established making use of existing resources and avoiding duplication of ongoing efforts, after an open and transparent consultation with all Member States on its composition, mandate, scope and deliverables.

### 2. Purpose and scope of this document

This paper marks the beginning of the consultative process to help define these key elements of IPEA. It aims to inform thinking by highlighting lessons from a range of existing science-policy panels and, where relevant, presenting perspectives of the Quadripartite organizations for consideration and feedback by Member States and other stakeholders in the AMR response. Further consultation documents will follow, including draft founding documents for IPEA, based on the feedback received during this first phase of the consultation process.

This document summarizes key findings of an initial analysis developed by the Tripartite organizations and UNEP in 2020 ([“Reference Paper on Models to Inform the Development of Terms of Reference of](#)

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1. Antimicrobials are agents used to prevent, control and treat infectious diseases in humans, animals and plants. They include antibiotics, fungicides, antiviral agents and parasiticides. Disinfectants, antiseptics, other pharmaceuticals and natural products may also have antimicrobial properties (Quadripartite Common Terminology – 2022)

2. Member States invited the Quadripartite organizations “to establish an independent panel for evidence for action against antimicrobial resistance in 2025 to facilitate the generation and use of multisectoral, scientific evidence to support Member States in efforts to tackle antimicrobial resistance, making use of existing resources and avoiding duplication of on-going efforts, after an open and transparent consultation with all Member States on its composition, mandate, scope, and deliverables”.

3. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH), and World Health Organization (WHO).

[the Independent Panel on Evidence for Action against AMR](#)”), which examined 11 comparable science-policy panels and networks from across the One Health spectrum, including human, animal and plant health, food and feed production, and the environment. A complementary analysis undertaken by the Quadripartite organizations in 2025 (“[Thought Starter on Key Elements for Establishing an Independent Panel for Evidence for Action against Antimicrobial Resistance \(IPEA\)](#)”) examined in depth three interdisciplinary and intersectoral science-policy panels that were designed to provide authoritative science advice on complex and evolving challenges, enhance coordination, and engage with a range of stakeholders.

Taken together, the analyses identify key elements that have contributed to these panel’s scientific credibility, policy relevance, and political legitimacy. Their focus is on **institutional design** rather than identifying thematic areas of work, recognizing that AMR is a dynamic and complex issue and that IPEA will develop its own programme of work. In assessing options for design of the IPEA, the Quadripartite organizations aim to align with the principles outlined in the 2024 Political Declaration on AMR, emphasizing the need for the panel to be independent and multisectoral, and to make efficient use of resources. The panels reviewed comprise a mixture of intergovernmental and other models. The intention of this paper is not to prescribe a specific model for IPEA, but to inform its development through best practices and lessons learned.

### **3. Summary of key findings from the analysis and issues for Member State/stakeholder consideration**

#### **3.1 Overview**

Science-policy panels primarily synthesize existing scientific evidence to inform policymaking, rather than generate new evidence. The analysis shows that scientific credibility, policy relevance, and political legitimacy are key factors in determining a panel’s effectiveness. These qualities are in turn shaped by the panel’s structure, independence, inclusivity, and adaptability. Effective panels are agile, inclusive and diverse, have effective systems for managing conflicts of interest, and minimize bureaucracy. Their institutional arrangements should reflect the specific needs of their thematic areas. Because no single model fits all, panels can and should learn from each other. The principle of “form follows function” should guide IPEA’s design. Additionally, because existing panels have evolved over time, the analysis undertaken provides a snapshot, rather than a fixed blueprint.

#### **3.2 Scope/objective of the panel**

The analysis indicates that a well-defined objective is central to shaping the scope of a science-policy panel and therefore its future effectiveness. Striking a balance between specificity and flexibility is essential. Specificity offers clarity, while flexibility allows the panel to adapt to emerging issues over time. Effective panels achieve an appropriate balance between these elements by maintaining broad overarching objectives and refining their focus through periodically updated multi-year work programmes that are developed through an open, transparent and inclusive process. This approach ensures adaptability, relevance, and alignment with other initiatives, while avoiding duplication.

#### ***Proposal for Member State and stakeholder input***

For IPEA, the 2024 Political Declaration on AMR suggests a model that supports bi-directional communication between science and policy. Drawing from established practices and the language of the Political Declaration, the following broad objective may be appropriate for IPEA:

*“The objective of the Independent Panel for Evidence for Action against Antimicrobial Resistance is to facilitate the generation, synthesis and use of multisectoral, scientific evidence to support Member States in their efforts to tackle antimicrobial resistance, **making use of existing resources and avoiding duplication of ongoing efforts.**”*

### **3.3 Functions and outputs of the panel**

The review indicated that science-policy panels vary in their functions and outputs, with some focusing narrowly on assessments and others encompassing additional deliverables. The scope of functions and outputs determines the panels’ ability to inform policy, adapt to emerging issues, and be of benefit to diverse stakeholders. Deliverables may include the following:

- *Assessments* are core outputs across most panels, synthesizing diverse knowledge sources from various sectors into comprehensive, thematic, or methodological reports.
- *Horizon scanning* may help to identify and highlight early signs of emerging risks or opportunities, and appropriate responses.
- *Knowledge management* may ensure effective gathering, sharing and use of information, help to identify and highlight research gaps, and enhance stakeholder engagement.
- *Policy support* involves development of tools and methodologies based on the panel’s outputs to guide decision-making at all levels, incorporating diverse knowledge systems.
- *Capacity-building* focuses on enabling expert participation and enhancing the uptake of panel outputs, primarily at the individual and organizational levels.

The 2024 Political Declaration on AMR implies that the work of the IPEA should build on, complement and connect – rather than duplicate – the existing scientific and technical work of the Quadripartite and other organizations, which can be ensured through an open, transparent and inclusive work programme development process.

#### ***Issues for consultation with Member States and other stakeholders:***

While the functions and outputs of IPEA will depend on how its objective is defined, the typical core functions and outputs listed above may serve as an initial framework for the work of the IPEA. More detail on specific activities can be determined after IPEA is established through an open, transparent, and inclusive process of work programme development.

### **3.4 Institutional arrangements for the panel**

Institutional arrangements set out the architecture required for a panel to fulfil its objective, perform its functions, and deliver its outputs. The independent nature of IPEA mandated by the 2024 Political Declaration on AMR implies that the panel should establish its own institutional arrangements, in consultation with Member States. The IPEA’s institutional arrangements may be underpinned by key principles, such as the need to optimize the legitimacy, uptake and impact of the panel’s work; transparency; effective management of conflicts of interest; and scientific independence.

#### **3.4.1 Structure, functions and modalities of work**

Despite varying names, the organizational structure of existing science-policy panels typically includes a governance component, one or more “working” components, and a Secretariat. For each component, the following considerations are relevant:

**3.4.1.1** The **governing body** is composed of the panel members. The core functions of a governing body for IPEA need to be defined to ensure its independence, policy relevance, legitimacy, transparency, accountability, and inclusiveness, while also balancing practical factors, such as budget. Governing bodies are typically responsible for key decision-making and overarching oversight functions, including setting strategic direction; safeguarding scientific integrity; approving the budget and work programme; ensuring delivery of and approving outputs; setting and amending rules and procedures; managing institutional arrangements, such as establishing subsidiary bodies and delegation of tasks to them; and oversight of the Secretariat. Some governing bodies play specific roles in effectiveness evaluation.

Modalities of work for governing bodies vary, with decisions typically made through periodic meetings with differing formats (in-person or online), and standing or *ad hoc* non-member/stakeholder observer participation, or *ex officio* membership. Workload and frequency of meetings can be managed through delegation to standing or *ad hoc* subsidiary bodies, or virtual sessions. Inclusive participation and observer modalities - such as interpretation services - further support transparency and policy relevance, while impacting costs.

**3.4.1.2** **One or more subsidiary or “work” bodies**, composed of individuals with relevant expertise selected through a nomination or other process. These bodies are often delegated by the governing body to perform the day-to-day operational work of the panel between governing body meetings. Typically, the functions delegated include 1) oversight of administrative matters (such as budget monitoring and resource mobilization,) and the directional aspects of scientific and technical work (such as expert selection); and 2) the scientific and technical functions, such as work programme development and implementation, including conducting assessments and developing outputs. These managerial and scientific/technical functions may be combined in one subsidiary body, or separated among several bodies, each with distinct advantages. Combined bodies offer coherence, while separate bodies allow for specialized focus.

The science-policy panels reviewed illustrate distinct models for subsidiary bodies that are responsible for work programme implementation. These include *ad hoc* bodies of experts tailored to specific tasks, a standing body of experts with revolving turnover, or a hybrid of these involving standing bodies for specific tasks and *ad hoc* groups. Each model has trade-offs: standing bodies offer efficiency but may lack flexibility to respond to emerging issues, while *ad hoc* bodies provide adaptability but require additional time and effort to become operational.

Regardless of structure, subsidiary bodies typically have detailed terms of reference and aim for inclusiveness and balance in expertise (including different disciplines), geography, and gender, with a defined method for nomination and selection of their members. Their size and working modalities vary, influencing cost, coordination, and effectiveness, and must align with the nature of the panel’s work and available resources.

**3.4.1.3** **A Secretariat** to support the work of the governing body and subsidiary bodies, including functions such as organizing meetings, managing finances and logistics, supporting work programme development and implementation, human resources management, external liaison, and communications, including inter-governmental matters. Some secretariats also engage in scientific/technical tasks, which can support retention of institutional knowledge.

Consideration should be given to the specificity and flexibility of the Secretariat's role, and to whether it will be hosted by one or more intergovernmental organizations. Hosting by such organizations offers advantages such as access to infrastructure, expertise, and networks, while allowing the panel to remain independent. The panels reviewed illustrate various hosting models, including hosting by a single organization, co-hosting, hosting support through partnership agreements, and/or hosting of technical support units for specific subsidiary bodies in national institutions.

### **3.4.2 Composition of the governing body**

The composition and size of the panel's governing body will significantly influence the panel's legitimacy and effectiveness. While the 2024 political declaration on AMR states that the IPEA should be established in consultation with Member States and should inform their decision making, it does not prescribe a particular membership model. Because the core function of a science-policy panel lies in its ability to assess, synthesize, and communicate robust scientific evidence in a way that is accessible and actionable for policymakers, the composition of the IPEA governing body should emphasize its capacity to bridge science and policy, rather than institutional affiliation.

Governing bodies of the science-policy panels analyzed reflect a range of membership composition, including "intergovernmental" models composed of government officials; panels composed of scientific experts either appointed by governments, acting in their individual capacities, and/or representing sectors or disciplines; and representatives of other key stakeholder groups, such as civil society, the private sector, and patient, consumer, or occupational groups.

#### ***Intergovernmental panels***

Several panels in the analysis are considered "intergovernmental" in that the members of the governing body are government officials and/or experts nominated by their governments. Such panels are often affiliated with or established by multilateral organizations at the request of Member States.

"Governance by governments" can help to ensure that a panel's outputs are salient, credible, taken up by decision makers, and have optimal impact at the country level. Existing intergovernmental panels vary in how membership is structured and the manner of member participation, which is often facilitated through appointment of government-nominated focal points, observer roles and other approaches. The analysis does not suggest that intergovernmental panels lack independence or autonomy in decision-making.

Decision-making on the establishment of a panel that is intergovernmental in nature would need to include whether the governing body should comprise all or only selected national governments, and whether and how to involve other intergovernmental actors, such as regional economic integration organizations and the Quadripartite organizations.

#### ***Hybrid panels***

The governing bodies of some panels in the analysis have largely academic/expert membership, reflecting their specific mandates, or a hybrid membership of government and science/policy experts. Such models can successfully inform policy processes and potentially represent broader perspectives of the end-users of a panel's outputs than intergovernmental panels.

#### ***Non-state actors***

It is important to carefully consider participation modalities for non-state actors, including their selection, role and the criteria and procedures for their participation. Given the roles played by a range of non-state

actors - including communities, civil society, and the private sector - in both contributing to and mitigating the impact of AMR, mechanisms for engagement of non-state actors will likely be important for IPEA (see also section 3.4.3).

### 3.4.3 Size of the governing body

The optimal size of a governing body is largely determined by issues such as representativeness of geography, disciplines, sectors, and gender. Size has an impact on operating costs, such as for travel and in-person meetings. Overall, an appropriate balance of these factors - underpinned by defined principles – should determine the panel’s size, while also aiming to be administratively and financially efficient.

#### ***Issues for further consultation with Stakeholders and Member States:***

**Governing body:** Based on the analysis, the Quadripartite organizations recognize that there are several potential governing body models for the IPEA, including one with a membership that is solely comprising of government representatives (intergovernmental), or a hybrid of governmental and non-governmental members. Additionally, the engagement of non-state actors either as formal members or through other structured engagement mechanisms should be further explored to ensure inclusive and effective participation. *Consultations should focus on determining which of these models would be fit-for-purpose for the IPEA considering the merits and demerits of each of the options.*

**Subsidiary bodies:** The analysis suggests potential advantages in establishing two distinct subsidiary bodies—one to oversee the panel’s administrative functions and another for scientific/technical functions. Given the complex and evolving nature of AMR, the IPEA may adapt its work bodies on an *ad hoc* basis, with composition, functions and working modalities tailored to the specific needs of the work programme. Only essential provisions for them may need to be provided in the IPEA core institutional arrangements and founding documents. Clear rules and processes for such bodies may be included in the Rules of Procedure. *Consultations should help define the nature of subsidiary bodies suitable for the IPEA.*

**Secretariat:** A key initial decision is which kind of entity is best suited to host the Secretariat considering its anticipated scope and functions. Given that the 2024 Political Declaration on AMR anticipates that the outputs of IPEA should support Member States efforts, one or more of the Quadripartite organizations may be well-positioned for this purpose. The criteria for selecting the Secretariat’s physical location may also need to be defined, potentially through proposals from Member States or based on the capacity of potential hosting organization(s). Additionally, the possibility of establishing *ad hoc* technical support units, hosted by governments or other stakeholders, could enhance the Secretariat’s capacity to support specific work bodies. Functionally, the Secretariat could mirror existing science-policy panels by managing the work programme, budgets, meetings, and external communications, and possibly also take on some technical tasks. The level of detail in defining these functions should balance specificity with flexibility. The Secretariat’s working modalities may be developed in consultation with the governing and subsidiary bodies once they are established. *Consultations should focus on determining suitable entities to host and serve as the secretariat to the IPEA.*

### 3.4.4 Relationships with stakeholders

Effective stakeholder engagement enhances the credibility, relevance, and impact of science-policy panels. Stakeholders contribute diverse expertise; help shape work programmes; and support the dissemination and uptake of outputs. Their involvement fosters inclusiveness, prevents duplication, and creates synergies. Many panels illustrate the value of engaging a wide range of actors, including policymakers,

civil society, Indigenous Peoples, and local communities. Stakeholders can also support core functions such as capacity-building and knowledge management. Engagement can take various forms, such as formal inclusion in institutional bodies and processes, establishment of strategic partnerships, and informal mechanisms such as stakeholder networks and events. Formalizing partnerships may help clarify roles and responsibilities, while maintaining independence through conflict-of-interest safeguards. Recognizing and incentivizing in-kind contributions is also important to sustain long-term engagement and avoid expert fatigue.

The Quadripartite is developing a stakeholder mapping and engagement strategy, and further details—such as criteria for stakeholder selection—may be outlined in future procedures, policies, or guidance documents, either before or after the formal establishment of IPEA.

***Issues for further consultation with Member States and other stakeholders:***

To establish effective stakeholder relationships, The IPEA may adopt a combination of formal and informal approaches. Formal mechanisms could include provisions in institutional arrangements that allow stakeholders to participate as observers in meetings and contribute to the panel's work, as well as the formation of strategic partnerships with selected stakeholders. Informal approaches may involve broader engagement through channels such as open consultations, stakeholder networks, and collaborative activities, building on existing mechanisms, such as the AMR Multistakeholder Partnership Platform. Regardless of the approach, it is essential to ensure transparency in stakeholder roles and relationships and implement safeguards to prevent conflicts of interest.

### **3.4.5 Effectiveness evaluation mechanisms**

Effectiveness evaluation is vital for science-policy panels to achieve their goals and impact, as it helps to identify strengths, address weaknesses, and continuously improve processes and outcomes. It also fosters trust and credibility by showing a commitment to quality and responsiveness. While some panels include formal evaluation provisions, others have adopted informal approaches - such as lessons-learned documents - to support ongoing improvement.

***Issues for further consultation with Member States and other stakeholders:***

The IPEA may include a provision on the need for periodic, independent effectiveness evaluation in its founding document to help ensure continuous improvement and accountability.

### **3.4.6 Financial arrangements**

Financial arrangements are a critical component of a science-policy panel's ability to function effectively and respond to the needs of its members and stakeholders. Sustainable and predictable funding ensures the panel's operational flexibility and long-term viability. The analysis emphasizes the operational mechanisms behind financial arrangements, rather than specific costs, which depend on the panel's design. Notably, some panels have created a task force or similar entity to explore funding options and ensure adequate resources for their work.

Typically, panels manage finances through an independent trust fund and a structured budget process aligned with their work programme, overseen by the governing and administrative subsidiary bodies, and administered by the Secretariat. While most funding comes from voluntary contributions by member governments—usually without conditions—some panels require mandatory contributions from members. In-kind contributions, such as expert time and technical support, also play a significant role. Transparency in both monetary and in-kind contributions is essential to maintain trust and avoid conflicts of interest.

***Issues for further consultations with Member States and other stakeholders:***

The analysis by the Quadripartite outlines several key elements to ensure transparency, sustainability, and operational effectiveness of IPEA. A trust fund could be established or engaged to collect voluntary contributions, governed by financial rules adopted by the panel's governing body. Contributions from governments, UN bodies, intergovernmental organizations, and stakeholders—including the private sector and foundations—could be welcomed if they are free of conditions and not earmarked without approval. The governing body could adopt the panel's budget and regularly review expenditures, supported by an administrative subsidiary body and a Secretariat responsible for budget preparation and financial reporting. Additionally, a task group on financial stability could be formed to explore funding options and help ensure financial sustainability. Efficiency and value for money should underpin all financial arrangements.

### **3.4.7 Rules, policies and procedures**

In addition to core elements, science-policy panels typically adopt a range of rules, policies, and procedures to support their operations. These typically cover areas such as decision-making processes, work programme development, and financial management. While not all of these need to be in place before IPEA is launched, certain elements are essential for the panel to begin functioning effectively, such as rules of procedure, financial procedures, a conflict-of-interest policy, and a process for determining the programme of work.

***Issues for further consultations with Member States and other stakeholders:***

Given the tight timeline for IPEA's establishment, the critical rules, policies and procedures necessary for its functioning may be developed as a high priority in advance of launch. These may include rules of procedure, financial procedures, a conflict-of-interest policy, and a process for determining the programme of work. This phased approach would allow the panel to start its work promptly, with additional elements to be developed and refined as needed.

## **4. Conclusion**

This document draws on lessons from 12 existing science-policy panels reviewed by the Quadripartite organizations in 2020 and 2025 and is informed by practical insights to help ensure IPEA's scientific credibility, independence, policy relevance, and political legitimacy. Its aim is to gather feedback from Member States and stakeholders to guide the development of foundational documents for IPEA's establishment and operations. Importantly, IPEA's design should be tailored to its specific purpose rather than replicating existing models. While some science-policy panels may appear costly, a significant proportion of their budgets supports inclusive participation and work programme implementation, which are critical for legitimacy and impact. Financial data available from some panels illustrate varying budget levels and priorities, with significant in-kind contributions from the scientific community. Furthermore, not all elements need to be finalized before IPEA's launch, and IPEA should have flexibility to evolve over time. Initial feedback from Member States and other stakeholders should focus on the foundational components discussed in this paper, with emphasis on those that need to be in place for the panel's prospective launch in late 2025.

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