Terms of Reference
Independent Panel on Evidence for Action against Antimicrobial Resistance

I. Background

1. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) (hereafter referred to as the Quadripartite Organizations) seek to establish an Independent Panel on Evidence for Action against Antimicrobial Resistance (the Panel) in response to the *Political Declaration of the High-level Meeting on Antimicrobial Resistance* (Political Declaration) adopted by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) through Resolution A/RES/79/2 of 7 October 2024 at the 79th Session of the UNGA in 2024. In the Political Declaration, UN Member States "*Invite 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 ongoing efforts, after an open and transparent consultation with all Member States on its composition, mandate, scope and deliverables*".
2. In the Political Declaration, UN Member States recognized AMR as "one of the most urgent global health threats and development challenges" and affirmed that AMR "demands immediate action" through "a One Health approach", including coordinated, multisectoral action at global, regional and national levels.

II. Guiding principles

3. In carrying out its work, the Panel shall be guided by the following principles:

   a) Upholding scientific independence, credibility, and legitimacy, while adequately reflecting differing scientific views within the Panel's work;
   b) Ensuring impartial and unbiased scientific judgement including by conducting independent assessments, reaching independent conclusions, applying transparent procedures and policies, and maintaining robust safeguards for the prevention, disclosure, and management of conflicts of interest;
   c) Taking an interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approach that incorporates a broad range of relevant disciplines and sources of information, including sectoral, scientific, technical, and socioeconomic expertise, and taking into account as appropriate, relevant forms of knowledge, including indigenous knowledge and local knowledge; and
   d) Maintaining flexibility to respond to countries' needs, in particular, those of developing countries.

III. Purpose

4. The overall purpose of the Panel, as established in the Political Declaration, is "*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 ongoing efforts".*

   The Panel shall carry out the following functions:

   a) Assessment: conduct independent, robust, and authoritative assessments of current issues and identify potential evidence-based options to address AMR;

   b) Horizon scanning: identify and prioritize emerging trends, risks, and impacts relevant to policymakers, and propose evidence-based options, where possible;

c) Policy-relevant evidence and tools: identify and promote access to relevant scientific tools and methodologies that support policymakers to translate evidence into policy formulation;

d) Knowledge management and information sharing: identify key scientific research and evidence gaps and encourage communication and information sharing particularly between scientists and other knowledge bearers, and policymakers.

5. The Panel shall produce a range of outputs to support evidence-informed decision-making on AMR, including by identifying priority issues related to AMR sources, trends, drivers, gaps, impacts, and the effectiveness of interventions, and proposing evidence-based solutions to address challenges. Outputs may include, but are not limited to, global and regional assessments, action-oriented and technical reports, thematic analyses, tools and methodologies, and summary documents. All outputs shall be grounded in the best available scientific evidence, and developed through rigorous, transparent and quality-assured processes. All outputs shall adhere to UN system practices and policies with respect to engagement with countries and territories, including the manner in which such countries and territories are referenced in UN official terminology and maps.

IV. Structure and composition

6. The Panel shall be composed of an Expert Committee, and any *ad hoc* expert thematic working groups that the Expert Committee may wish to establish. The Panel shall be supported by the Secretariat.

A. Expert Committee

Membership

7. The Expert Committee shall be composed of thirty (30) independent experts with recognized scientific and policy expertise and practical experience relevant to AMR, across the human, animal, plant, agrifood, environmental, and socio-economic sectors.

8. Members of the Expert Committee shall serve in their individual capacities and exercise independent and impartial judgement.

9. Members of the Expert Committee shall be selected and appointed through an open, transparent, merit-based, and competitive process to be conducted by the Quadripartite Organizations, ensuring geographical, sectoral, and gender balance.

10. Interested candidates shall be invited to submit a written expression of interest accompanied by supporting documents including a curriculum vitae and a duly completed Conflict-of-Interest Disclosure Form, in accordance with the Conflict-of-Interest Policy. To support effective engagement between the Expert Committee and national policy processes, candidates are strongly encouraged to provide a letter of support from a competent governmental authority.

11. To ensure continuity of the Panel's work and retention of institutional memory, the terms of office of members of the Expert Committee shall be staggered, such that no more than half of the Committee members are replaced at any given selection cycle. For the initial composition of the Expert Committee, half of the members shall serve an initial term of two (2) years, while the remaining members shall serve an initial term of three (3) years, in accordance with procedures established by the Quadripartite Organizations. All members may have the option for renewal for a second term of three (3) years, taking into consideration sectoral, gender, and geographical balance. No member shall serve more than two (2) consecutive terms.

12. If a member of the Expert Committee resigns or is unable to perform their functions, the Quadripartite Organizations may appoint a replacement for the remainder of the term following procedures established by the Quadripartite Organizations.

Leadership

13. The Expert Committee shall be led by two Co-Chairs and two Vice-Chairs, elected by the Committee from among its members, who shall be responsible for the effective execution of the Committee's functions. The Expert Committee shall also select a Rapporteur.

Functions

14. The Expert Committee shall:
    a) Develop, and implement the Panel's work programme;
    b) Develop and submit an indicative budget to be approved by the Quadripartite Organizations;
    c) Establish, oversee and terminate ad hoc expert thematic working groups, as appropriate, and select members of relevant ad hoc groups through an open and transparent process;
    d) Review and approve outputs of the Panel, in accordance with the work programme;
    e) Review and approve the deliverables produced by the ad hoc expert groups, in accordance with the work programme;
    f) Develop and implement a transparent peer-review process for high-quality outputs;
    g) Engage the scientific community, and other forms of knowledge in the implementation of the Panel's work programme;
    h) Liaise, through its Co-Chairs and Vice-Chairs, with other relevant AMR governance structures, instruments and bodies, such as the GLG and the MSPP;
    i) Present and promote outputs of the Panel to the Global High-Level Ministerial Conference on AMR, UNGA, governing bodies of United Nations system entities, specialized agencies, and other international mechanisms and relevant forums, as appropriate, subject to the rules, policies and procedures of the relevant mechanisms or entities, and ensuring that appropriate disclaimers are included to indicate that any views and/or positions within the outputs are solely those of the Panel and do[es] not reflect the views or positions of the Quadripartite Organizations;
    j) Provide a report to the Quadripartite Organizations, on activities and outcomes of work on an annual basis.

B. *Ad Hoc* expert thematic working groups

15. *Ad hoc* expert thematic working groups shall be established by the Expert Committee to deliver specific outputs within the Panel's work programme, as required. The Expert Committee shall define the terms of reference for such groups at the time of establishment.

C. Observers

16. The Expert Committee, through its Co-Chairs and Vice-Chairs, and in coordination with the Panel's Secretariat, may invite individuals, either in their personal capacity, or as representatives of a governmental institution, intergovernmental organization, or non-state actor, to attend and participate in the meetings of the Panel, or parts thereof, as "Observers".
17. Observers shall not participate in decision-making, voting, consensus-building, or the formal adoption of recommendations of the Expert Committee.

D. Secretariat

18. The Panel's Secretariat shall be hosted by UNEP and jointly facilitated by the Quadripartite Organizations. While the rules, policies and procedures of UNEP shall apply to any administrative matters of the Secretariat, all four organizations shall coordinate and contribute to the implementation of the Secretariat's technical functions in accordance with their own regulations, rules and procedures.

19. The administrative functions of the Secretariat shall include:

    a) Supporting the planning and organization of the Panel's meetings, including preparation of background documentation;

    b) Managing the financial, contractual and legal matters related to the Panel in accordance with relevant rules and regulations;

    c) Carrying out, as appropriate, any other functions of the Panel assigned by the Expert Committee, subject to the availability of resources, and the rules, regulations and policies of UNEP.

20. Technical functions jointly implemented and coordinated by the Quadripartite Organizations shall include:

    a) Supporting the development of the work programme and its indicative budget, including approval of the indicative budget by the Quadripartite Organizations;

    b) Supporting the implementation of the work programme in coordination with the Expert Panel and in accordance with its policies, processes, and procedures;

    c) Monitoring and reporting to the Expert Committee on progress with implementation of the work programme and budget, providing quality assurance processes, and assisting in the evaluation of the Panel's work;

    d) Mobilizing financial resources to support implementation of the work of the Panel, provided that the acceptance of such funding shall be subject to the respective rules, policies and procedures of Organizations that will receive and manage them;

    e) Conducting outreach activities to promote the Panel's work including disseminating its outputs;

    f) Providing relevant outputs of the Panel to AMR related policy processes;

    g) Disseminating findings of the Panel to facilitate the uptake of relevant policy relevant recommendations from the Panel;

    h) Enabling, as appropriate, stakeholder participation in relevant activities of the Panel;

    i) Proposing and facilitating any cooperation arrangements as required.

V. Financial Arrangements

21. A dedicated financial mechanism shall be made available, leveraging existing financial mechanisms and resources to collect voluntary public and private contributions from diversified sources to support the work of the Panel, with a due diligence process to prevent and avoid conflicts of interest.

22. The contributions to the Panel's financial mechanism must not influence or condition the work of the Panel. In-kind contributions from governments, the scientific community, and other stakeholders may be accepted by each of the Quadripartite Organizations in accordance with their respective rules, policies and procedures.

VI. Review and evaluation

23. The Panel will provide annual progress reports on its work to the Quadripartite Organizations.

24. The Quadripartite Organizations shall commission at least two (2) years following the establishment of the Panel an independent initial external review and evaluation of the Panel's efficiency, effectiveness, and future strategic direction of the Panel, in an open and transparent manner. The findings of the evaluation shall be made publicly available.

VII. Conflict of Interest

25. All members of the Panel's governance framework and contributors to the Panel's work shall adhere to the Conflict-of-Interest Interest Policy of the Panel.

VIII. Amendments to the Terms of Reference

26. Any amendments to these Terms of Reference shall be discussed and approved by the consensus of the Quadripartite Organizations.