



First meeting of the working group of the Open-ended Scientific Committee (OESC) for the International Year of Sustainable Mountain Development 2022 (IYM2022)

Summary report
7 February 2023, 15.30-17.00 – Zoom meeting

Background, opening and introductions

The Open-ended Scientific Committee (OESC) for the International Year of Sustainable Mountain Development 2022 (IYM2022) was set up in January 2022 to promote the observance of the International Year. Its members worked together to produce several [policy briefs](#) and supported the work of the Mountain Partnership Secretariat (MPS) by providing scientific supervision.

The OESC's work proved to be extremely relevant to advance the work of the MP, therefore it was proposed to change this ad hoc body into a long-term mechanism. The members agreed to continue working together and proposed to establish a voluntary working group to facilitate the transition.

This working group of the OESC was therefore established to:

- define the main role and functions of the new long-term body that will replace the OESC;
- draft the Terms of Reference of the body; and
- define the name of the body.

Members of the MPS joined the meeting as resource persons. Hugo Mantilla-Meluk of the Centro de Estudios de Alta Montaña (CEAM) volunteered to chair the meeting. The participants briefly introduced themselves (see the list of meeting participants in Annex 1).

Discussion on the role and functions of the new body

Working group members proposed the following considerations for the possible role and functions of the new body:

- Support the Five Years of Action for the Development of Mountain Regions 2023–2027 by ensuring scientific overview and developing key messages;
- Finalize the OESC's pending policy briefs, prepare new ones as needed, and compile the recommendations into coherent documentation;
- Coordinate the involvement of mountain scientists and practitioners at events to ensure a united and informed mountain presence;
- Underpin the Mountain Partnership's work and provide support to the Partnership's advocacy and communication goals;
- Contribute to the science-policy dialogue on mountains;
- Act, on request, as an independent evaluation unit, similar to those of funding mechanisms such as the Global Environment Facility and Green Climate Fund, to evaluate the sustainability of new projects being proposed in mountain areas;

- Conduct a global assessment of mountain ecosystems, or request the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) to conduct such an assessment;
- Revive the Convention of Biological Diversity's Programme of Work on Mountain Biodiversity; and
- Widen the scope of research on climate change in mountains following the recently published cross-chapter paper on mountains in the latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's Assessment Report.

Working group members expressed concerns regarding the need for funding to achieve such goals as developing a global assessment of mountains, although members agreed that such an undertaking would be useful. It was also proposed to be pragmatic when defining the scope of work for the new body to make its goals attainable.

Another topic of discussion included the definition of "science" and whether the new body would function using "western" knowledge systems only or be inclusive of Indigenous and traditional knowledge systems. The need to be inclusive of Indigenous and traditional knowledge systems was agreed, as was the need to include social sciences in the new body's definition of science.

Discussion on the Terms of Reference of the new body

Working group members underlined that the new body is distinct from the Mountain Partnership Steering Committee and should not duplicate the work of that body. It was agreed that the new body would not have any advisory or steering function but be a multidisciplinary body, in which scientists join forces to support, advance and share mountain scientific knowledge.

The MPS reminded the working group that the Mountain Partnership is an alliance of governments, institutions and organizations, while the OESC brings together individual scientists, joining in their personal capacity to support the IYM2022. This body's contributions to the Mountain Partnership and to the mountain agenda in general have been of great value, hence the MPS is pleased that the OESC members have decided to continue working together and supporting the MP.

It was suggested that the new body select some important thematic areas to focus its work on and possibly establish subgroups for each topic as appropriate.

Working group members requested to review the Terms of Reference of similar advisory bodies already in existence. Maria Rosa Cardenas of UNESCO offered to share those of the advisory group for a restoration project she is involved in.

Next steps:

- The MPS will circulate an online document wherein members of the working group should each propose three (3) objectives for the new body and four (4) thematic areas for subgroups. Working group members will have two (2) weeks to provide their inputs.

Discussion on the name of the new body

The working group proposed the name “Science and Knowledge Advisory Committee of the Mountain Partnership” for the new body. While the term “open-ended” was removed from the title, this concept (i.e. that new members may join at any time) will be reflected in the Terms of Reference.

Housekeeping

The MPS will circulate a poll to decide the date of the next working group meeting. Hugo Mantilla-Meluk agreed to continue in the roll as chair for the next meeting.

Annex 1: Meeting participants

Last name	First name	Affiliation	Country
Cararo	Andrea	BRS Secretariat	Switzerland
Cardenas	Maria Rosa	UNESCO	France
Chettri	Nakul	ICIMOD	Nepal
De Kock	Melissa	UNEP	Kenya
Hofer	Thomas	FAO	Italy
Mantilla-Meluk	Hugo	Centro de Estudios de Alta Montaña (CEAM)	Colombia
Marchant	Robert	University of York	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
Pinho	Simão	Centro de Investigação de Montanha (CIMO)	Portugal
Seag	Morgan	International Cryosphere Climate Initiative (ICCI)	United States of America
Shatberashvili	Nina	Caucasus Network for Sustainable Development of Mountain Region (Sustainable Caucasus)	Georgia
Vilá	Bibiana	Vicuñas, Camélidos y Ambiente (VICAM)	Argentina

Mountain Partnership Secretariat staff:

Samantha Abear
Allison Bozzi
Fabio Parisi
Rosaura Romeo
Yuna Lee