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Science Panel for the Amazon
Youth Advisory Committee
Terms of Reference

Background

The Science Panel for the Amazon (SPA), convened under the auspices of the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN), represents the world's first high-level regional science initiative dedicated to the conservation and sustainable development of the Amazon. Its mission is "synthesizing and communicating scientific knowledge about the Amazon, integrated with Indigenous and local knowledge, to accelerate solutions for sustainable and equitable development."

The SPA believes that by convening the world's leading scientists, synthesizing scientific knowledge on the region, and promoting the inclusion of Indigenous and Local Knowledge (ILK) and Indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLCs) in knowledge dialogues initiatives, sufficient evidence can be compiled to support the development of science-based solutions and advance sustainable development pathways for the Amazon. Further, by disseminating this information and engaging key constituencies, governance can be strengthened, policies enacted and enforced, and transformative sustainable pathways in the region be implemented.

The Panel is working to develop a portfolio of outputs targeted at academia, governments at various levels (municipal, provincial, national, and regional) and branches (executive, legislative, and judicial), the private sector (particularly the financial and investment sectors), civil society advocates, Indigenous Peoples and local communities, and the international community. The SPA advocates for a broad portfolio of solutions, supported by decades of research, that can be implemented to address Amazon's socio-economic, cultural, and ecological diversity and complexity.

The SPA operates under the leadership and guidance of its Co-Chairs, Strategic Coordinator, Science Steering Committee (SSC), and Strategic Committee (StC), with support from the Technical-Scientific Secretariat. The SPA will establish a **Youth Advisory Committee (YAC)** to play a key role in the SPA's efforts to mobilize the next generation of scientists in the region and ensure its work reaches a broader audience.

Composition of the Youth Advisory Committee

The Youth Advisory Committee will be composed of 8-13 members, including one SSC member and one StC member. The SSC and StC members will help lead the efforts of the YAC under the guidance of the SPA Co-Chairs, the Strategic Coordinator, and with the support of the Technical-Scientific Secretariat.

YAC membership will reflect a balance of multi-stakeholder constituencies. In addition, geographical and cultural diversity will be considered according to four dimensions:

- **Key research disciplines:** across the biological, ecological, Earth Systems, climate, human and social sciences

- **Countries and territories** (*including but not limited to*): Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, French Guiana, Guyana, Peru, Suriname, and Venezuela
- **Stakeholders**: representation from academia, arts and culture, economics, IPLCs, NGOs, and think tanks
- **Gender**

Responsibilities of the Youth Advisory Committee

The Youth Advisory Committee will amplify the voices and experiences of young people, and leverage their expertise, energy, and ideas to promote the conservation of the Amazon and the SPA's scientific and policy-relevant recommendations. The Youth Advisory Committee will actively engage with SPA members and leadership in the implementation of the SPA's Youth Engagement Strategy.

The overall objectives of the Youth Advisory Committee are to:

- Ensure integration of youth perspectives and innovation into the activities and outputs of the SPA;
- Contribute to promoting the SPA and its outputs among young people worldwide; and
- Foster collaboration and partnerships between the SPA and youth organizations, with a focus on advancing education, knowledge sharing, science communication, and representation and networking.

The Youth Advisory Committee will inter-alia:

- Provide recommendations on the elaboration and implementation of the SPA Youth Engagement strategy;
- Provide recommendations, as and when appropriate, on strengthening youth involvement in SPA's work;
- Connect the SPA with existing and new meaningful youth engagement initiatives;
- Advise the SPA on fostering innovation, as and when appropriate, of new initiatives and strategies relating to youth and the general public;
- Advise the SPA in its efforts to engage and include youth contribution and involvement in the Amazon conservation agenda;
- Advise the SPA on strategies to enhance the engagement of young scientists in the Amazon;
- Strengthen networking and knowledge sharing among different stakeholders, including youth organizations, to facilitate and increase the accessibility of SPA outputs and findings;
- Attend YAC meetings (at minimum quarterly); and
- Attend meetings of the full Panel (at minimum biannually).

Required Qualifications and Experience

Youth Advisory Committee members must be between the ages of 18 to 30, and will be assessed on the following criteria:

- Demonstrated commitment to the SPA's values and to working for youth rights, conservation, and/or environmental justice;
- Demonstrated engagement in a scientific career with a focus on a key research discipline of the SPA;

- Member in good standing, founder, or leader of a youth-led Amazon conservation/human rights movement, organization, or program at the global, regional, national, or grassroots level;
- Proven ability to dialogue and collaborate with diverse stakeholders across the Amazon conservation movement;
- Strong analytic and communication skills; and
- Ability to serve in an individual capacity.

Modalities of Work

- The SPA Youth Advisory Committee will hold regular (at least quarterly) roundtable virtual calls to carry out its responsibilities.
- All recommendations and advice will be made based on consensus by all members of the Youth Advisory Committee.
- The Technical-Scientific Secretariat of the SPA supports the operations of the Panel and will be responsible for organizing the logistics of Youth Advisory Committee meetings, including proposing an agenda and preparing materials for recommendation by the Youth Advisory Committee.
- The positions on the YAC are honorary and participation is pro-bono. However, pre-approved travel or meeting expenses may be covered.
- The SPA Youth Advisory Committee shall not produce publications unless approval is given by the SSC. Any publication by a participant, other than SPA, referring to the SPA Youth Advisory Committee activities shall contain appropriate disclaimers as decided by the SPA, including that the content does not reflect the views or stated policy of the participants.
- Members shall not make public statements about the SPA Youth Advisory Committee activities or on behalf of the SPA without the prior written consent of the Technical-Scientific Secretariat acting in consultation with the Co-Chairs and the Strategic Coordinator.

Term

- The term of service will be two years in length, with possibility to extend for one additional term.
- Members are expected to participate in their personal capacity and remain active in the SPA YAC throughout their term of service, as described previously in this Terms of Reference.
- Upon the end of their term, YAC members may be invited to act as “Emeritus Committee Members” and serve as informal youth ambassadors for the SPA.
- Members may resign from the Committee at any time. In the case that a member determines they are no longer able to participate in the YAC before the end of their initial one-year term, the member should notify the Secretariat as early as possible, ideally with at least four weeks’ notice.
- In the case that a member is unable to meet the expectations of the Co-Chairs, YAC membership should be considered an at-will commitment in which any member can be asked to step down at any time. Reasons include but are not limited to (i) failure to remain an active member of the YAC and (ii) activities deemed to be contrary to the rules and values of the SPA as described in the Code of Conduct.