

Economic Commission for Europe

Committee on Environmental Policy

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Environmental monitoring, assessment and reporting

Information paper no. 7

Annual timetable of activities for 2021, as amended if the next ministerial conference is rescheduled to 2022

Note by the secretariat

Summary

At its twenty-second session (25–27 January 2017), the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) Committee on Environmental Policy renewed the mandate and terms of reference of the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment for a five-year period (2017–2021). The terms of reference require the preparation of annual timetables of activities, taking into account the financial and human resources available (ECE/CEP/2017/2, paras. 5 and 32).

At its twenty-second session (27 October 2020), the ECE Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment, *ad referendum*:

(a) Adopted the timetable of activities for 2021 as set out in document ECE/CEP/AC.10/2020/3/Rev.1, while recognizing that it might need to be adjusted in the light of a possible change to the timing of the next Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference;

(b) Requested the secretariat to prepare an informal document for the next session of the Committee on Environmental Policy setting out the necessary changes to the annual timetable of activities 2021 if the next ministerial conference is rescheduled to 2022.

The present document responds to the Working Group's request, with changes to the timetable shown in tracked changes.

Introduction

1. The present document sets out a timetable of activities to be carried out by the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment in 2021.
2. The timetable is based on the renewed mandate and terms of reference of the Working Group (ECE/CEP/2017/2, annex II), the revised outline of the Working Group's activities leading up to 2021 (ECE/CEP/AC.10/2019/3) and written feedback received from member States in May 2020.
3. The Working Group will implement the activities in close collaboration with national and international governmental and non-governmental stakeholders, including youth organizations, research institutes and academia, and with other relevant United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) bodies, such as the Joint Task Force on Environmental Statistics and Indicators.
4. With the assistance of the ECE secretariat, member States and organizations that agree to lead any of the activities outlined below will need to facilitate their implementation and report to the Working Group on the progress made and challenges faced.
5. The Working Group will support the secretariat in its continuing efforts to mobilize resources and assistance from regional and international organizations and member States in order to enable the Working Group to operate fully.

Timetable of activities in 2021

<i>Main overall objective and activity^a</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Task or event</i>	<i>Timing (to be confirmed)</i>	<i>Indicator of achievement</i>	<i>Other activities^a</i>
A. Assist in the establishment and operation of national information systems in line with SEIS in Europe and Central Asia					
A.1. Continue supporting the establishment of SEIS with regard to its specific content and principles in support of regular environmental assessment processes and reporting	High	Capacity-building activities at annual sessions of the Working Group and Joint Task Force in support of SEIS establishment and regular monitoring and assessment, including on environment-related SDGs	May and October 2021	Holding of the capacity-building activities	B.3
		Development of an SEIS e-learning	Throughout 2021	SEIS e-learning platform	–

<i>Main overall objective and activity^a</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Task or event</i>	<i>Timing (to be confirmed)</i>	<i>Indicator of achievement</i>	<i>Other activities^a</i>
		platform (ECE with UNEP)			
A.2. Continue cooperating with the Joint Task Force in its work on environmental statistics and indicators, associated data sets and accompanying environmental information and data necessary to establish SEIS	High	Review and amendment of the ECE Guidelines for the Application of Environmental Indicators	Throughout 2021	ECE Guidelines for the Application of Environmental Indicators reviewed and amended as appropriate	–
		Annual session of the Joint Task Force	October 2021	Report on the session	A.1, A.5, C.2, D.1, D.2, D.3
A.3. Regularly evaluate the performance of ECE countries in establishing and implementing SEIS against the SEIS targets and performance indicators adopted by the Committee	High	Final review of progress in the establishment of SEIS	First half of 2021	Compilation of completed questionnaires on the establishment of SEIS	A.4
A.5. Prepare a mid-term and a final report for the Committee on the establishment and implementation of SEIS leading up to 2021	High	Presentation of the final report on the establishment of SEIS at the session of the Committee on Environmental Policy	November 2021	Welcoming of the final report by the Committee	–
A.6. Provide annual recommendations on how SEIS can be further strengthened in European and	Medium	Annual sessions of the Working Group and Joint Task Force	May and October 2021	Recommendations and advice provided to ECE countries in order to improve their	A.1, A.2, A.5

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Central Asian countries				SEIS performance	
B. Lead a process of consultation on the regular pan-European environmental assessment and the streamlining of regular state-of-the-environment reporting by 2020					
B.1. Bring together experts involved in the UNEP Global Environment Outlook process and the EEA European Environment Information and Observation Network to discuss and oversee the regular pan-European environmental assessment	Medium	Annual sessions of the Working Group and Joint Task Force and meetings between ECE, EEA and UNEP, as appropriate	Throughout 2021	Oversight described in the reports on Working Group and Joint Task Force sessions	C.3, D.3
		Support the preparation of a pan-European environmental assessment, supported by SEIS, with its nature, scope and leadership to be determined by the Committee on Environmental Policy	Throughout 2021	Draft pan-European environmental assessment supported by SEIS	

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B.2. Discuss and detail regional priorities concerning the streamlining of regular state-of-the-environment reporting	High	Annual session of the Working Group	May 2021	Regional priorities described in the report on the Working Group session	–
B.3. Oversee the implementation of proposed recommendations and guidance provided through the consultation process on the regular pan-European environmental assessment and the streamlining of regular state-of-the-environment reporting	Medium	Annual session of the Working Group and preparation of an overview of recommendations made and how they were addressed	May 2021	Implementation of recommendations supported, including through capacity-development activities and guidance	–
		Capacity-building and advisory missions conducted in order to assist in the streamlining of regular state-of-the-environment reports	Throughout 2021	Capacity-building activities implemented, and advisory missions conducted	
C. Initiate a process of consultation on the development of a regional environmental information and assessment network of networks					
C.2. Cooperate with the Joint Task Force to ensure that all	High	Annual sessions of the Working Group	May 2021 and October 2021	Progress on environmental statistics and indicators	–

<i>Main overall objective and activity^a</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Task or event</i>	<i>Timing (to be confirmed)</i>	<i>Indicator of achievement</i>	<i>Other activities^a</i>
planned and future activities are synergetic and streamlined		Group and Joint Task Force		described in the reports on Working Group and Joint Task Force sessions	
C.3. Develop capacities to engage other communities and networks to discuss how environmental, social and economic information and data can be integrated and utilized in decision-making	Medium	Annual session of the Working Group	May 2021	Participation by other communities and networks described in the reports on Working Group sessions	–
C.4. Operationalize proposed recommendations and guidance provided through the consultative process to ensure the sustainable implementation of a regional network of networks (optional)	Low	Annual session of the Working Group	May 2021	Participation by other communities and networks described in the reports on Working Group sessions	–
C.5. Publish outcomes from the Working Group's collaborative activities	Low	Publication of other guidelines as appropriate	Second half of 2021	Guidelines, lessons learned	–
D. Engage in capacity-building assistance addressing specific challenges related to environmental					

<i>Main overall objective and activity^a</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Task or event</i>	<i>Timing (to be confirmed)</i>	<i>Indicator of achievement</i>	<i>Other activities^a</i>
monitoring and assessment					
D.1. Detail regional and national capacity gaps in information and data needed for producing the ECE set of environmental indicators, the EEA core set of indicators, the OECD green growth indicators and the SDG indicators	Medium	Annual sessions of the Working Group and Joint Task Force	May and October 2021	Progress described in the reports on Working Group and Joint Task Force sessions	–
D.2. Support countries in the development of regional and national indicator frameworks to monitor the SDGs and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and activities to support its implementation	Medium	Capacity-building and advisory missions in support of SEIS establishment and regular monitoring and assessment, including on environment-related SDGs: national capacity-development workshops under the UNDA project ^b	Throughout 2021	Holding of the workshops and capacity-development events	B.3
		Annual sessions of the Working Group and Joint Task Force	May and October 2021	Progress described in the reports on Working Group and Joint Task Force sessions	
D.3. Engage and liaise directly with other relevant actors working on capacity-building in	Medium	Annual sessions of the Working Group and Joint Task Force	May and October 2021	Progress described in the reports on Working Group and Joint Task Force sessions: participation of the ECE secretariat in	–

<i>Main overall objective and activity^a</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Task or event</i>	<i>Timing (to be confirmed)</i>	<i>Indicator of achievement</i>	<i>Other activities^a</i>
related areas of work				meetings of other actors and vice versa.	
		ECE secretariat engagement with other actors, for example, EEA, OECD and UNEP	Throughout 2021	Reports on joint activities, for example, capacity-building workshops	
D.4. Implement capacity-building activities to provide assistance in accordance with priority areas of action	High	Regional capacity-building workshop or conference on environmental data	May 2021	Holding of the conference	–
Cross-cutting		Presentation to the Working Group of a document setting out the extension of the current terms of reference of the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment until mid-2023	May 2021	Expressions of support for the extension of the mandate and terms of reference of the Working Group until mid-2023 by the Working Group	–
		Presentation to the Committee on Environmental Policy of a document setting out the extension of the current terms of reference of the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment until mid-2023	November 2021	Extension of the mandate and terms of reference of the Working Group until mid-2023 by the Committee	–
		Annual session of the Working Group, including capacity-building and support for the	May 2021	Report on the session	A.1, A.2, A.5, B.2, C.2, C.3,

<i>Main overall objective and activity^a</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Task or event</i>	<i>Timing (to be confirmed)</i>	<i>Indicator of achievement</i>	<i>Other activities^a</i>
		development of regional and national indicator frameworks			C.4, D.1, D.2
		Drafting of an annual timetable of activities for 2022	First half of 2021	Approval of the timetable by the Working Group	C.2
		Presentation of the annual timetable of activities for 2022 to the Committee on Environmental Policy	November 2021	Approval of the timetable by the Committee	C.2

Abbreviations: EEA, European Environment Agency; OECD, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development; SDG, Sustainable Development Goal; SEIS, Shared Environmental Information System; UNDA, United Nations Development Account; UNEP, United Nations Environment Programme.

^a These are listed in the outline of activities of the Working Group leading up to 2021 (ECE/CEP/AC.10/2018/3), which is based on the objectives and activities set out in the terms of reference of the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment for a five-year period (2017–2021) (ECE/CEP/2017/2, annex II).

^b Improved environmental monitoring and assessment in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in South-Eastern Europe, Central Asia and the Caucasus.