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Committee on Environmental Policy

Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment

Twenty-fourth session

Geneva, 11 and 12 April 2022

Item 3 of the provisional agenda

Implementing the mandate and terms of reference

Draft annual timetable of activities for 2023

Note by the secretariat

Summary

At its twenty-sixth session (Geneva (hybrid), 9 and 10 November 2020), the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Committee on Environmental Policy approved the extension of the mandate and terms of reference (2017–2021) of the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment until mid-2023.^a The terms of reference require the preparation of annual timetables of activities, taking into account the financial and human resources available.^b

The present document provides a draft annual timetable of activities for 2023 for consideration by the Working Group at its twenty-fourth session. The annual timetable of activities for 2023 will be submitted to the Committee on Environmental Policy for consideration at its twenty-eighth session (location and dates to be confirmed).

^a ECE/CEP/2020/2, para. 38 (c).

^b ECE/CEP/2017/2, para. 32 (b), and annex II, para. 5; ECE/CEP/AC.10/2021/4.



Introduction

1. The present document sets out a timetable of activities (see table below) to be carried out by the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment in 2023.
2. The timetable is based on the extended mandate and terms of reference of the Working Group (ECE/CEP/2017/2, annex II; ECE/CEP/AC.10/2021/4) and the revised outline of the Working Group's activities leading up to 2021 (ECE/CEP/AC.10/2019/3), which is still partly valid given the postponement of the Ninth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference to October 2022 and due to the subsequent extension of the mandate and terms of reference of the Working Group until mid-2023. Adjustments were made as needed, in particular for the second half of 2023, for which a new mandate and terms of reference and a new outline of activities will be developed by the Working Group following the Ninth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference.
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 member States and regional and international organizations in order to enable the Working Group to operate fully.

Timetable of activities in 2023

<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>
A. Assist in the enhancement and operation of national environmental information systems in Europe and Central Asia in line with SEIS principles and pillars and by applying new technologies				
A.1. Continue supporting the enhancement of SEIS with regard to its specific content and in line with principles and	High	Capacity development activities at annual sessions of the Working Group and Joint Task Force in support of enhanced implementation and regular monitoring and	May and October 2023	Holding of the capacity development activities

<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>
pillars in support of regular environmental assessment processes and reporting		assessment, including on environment-related SDGs Maintain and enhance the regional e-learning and knowledge-sharing platform (ECE with UNEP), including on SEIS	Through-out 2023	Regional e-learning and knowledge-sharing platform
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 enhance national environmental information systems in line with SEIS	High	Support to the application of the revised ECE Guidelines for the Application of Environmental Indicators by member States Annual session of the Joint Task Force	Through-out 2023 October 2023	Training on revised ECE Guidelines for the Application of Environmental Indicators Report on the session
A.3. Regularly evaluate the performance of ECE countries in implementing national environmental information systems against the SEIS pillars and principles	Medium	Annual sessions of the Working Group and Joint Task Force	May and October 2023	Compilation of completed questionnaires on production of selected revised indicators and on SEIS and report of member States on progress in implementation
A.5. Prepare progress reports for the Committee on Environmental Policy on the establishment and implementation of national information systems in line with SEIS principles and pillars beyond 2021	Medium	Presentation of a progress report on selected indicators related to the enhancement of SEIS at regular session of the Committee on Environmental Policy	November 2023	Welcoming of the progress report by Committee members

<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>
A.6. Provide annual recommendations on how national information systems in line with SEIS principles and pillars can be further strengthened in European and Central Asian countries	Medium	Annual sessions of the Working Group and Joint Task Force	May and October 2023	Recommendations and advice provided to ECE countries in order to improve their performance
B. Lead a process of consultation on the regular pan-European environmental assessment and the streamlining of regular state-of-the-environment reporting beyond 2022				
B.2. Discuss and detail regional priorities concerning the streamlining of regular state-of-the-environment reporting	Medium	Annual session of the Working Group	May 2023	Regional priorities described in the report on the Working Group session
B.3. Oversee the implementation of proposed recommendations and guidance provided related to monitoring and assessment by the Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference, by the seventh 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 are addressed	May 2023	Implementation of recommendations supported, including through capacity development activities and guidance
		Implementation of capacity development and provision of advisory services in order to assist in the streamlining of regular state-of-the-environment reports	Throughout 2023	Capacity development activities implemented, and advisory services provided

<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>
C. Consultation on the enhancement of a regional environmental information and assessment network and partnerships in support of the Working Group's mandate as regional environmental knowledge and assessment platform				
C.2. Cooperate with the Joint Task Force to ensure that all planned and future activities are synergetic and streamlined	High	Annual sessions of the Working Group and Joint Task Force	May and October 2023	Progress on environmental statistics and indicators 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 (including gender) and economic information and data can be integrated into and utilized in decision-making	Medium	Annual session of the Working Group	May 2023	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	2023	Guidelines, lessons learned
D. Engage in capacity development 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>
monitoring and assessment				
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 development and advisory services in support of SEIS implementation and regular monitoring and assessment, including on environment-related SDGs Annual sessions of the Working Group and Joint Task Force	Through-out 2023 May and October 2023	Holding of the workshops or sessions 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 development in related areas of work to enhance environmental monitoring and assessment through, for example, the use of new technologies, enhanced digitalization and consideration of gender aspects in monitoring and assessment	Medium	Annual sessions of the Working Group and Joint Task Force ECE secretariat engagement with other actors, for example, EEA, ITU, OECD, UNEP or WHO	May and October 2023 Through-out 2023	Progress described in the reports on Working Group and Joint Task Force sessions: participation of the ECE secretariat in meetings of other actors and vice versa Reports on joint activities, for example, capacity development workshops
D.4. Implement capacity development activities to provide assistance in accordance with priority areas of action	High	Capacity development activities during the Working Group and Joint Task Force sessions	May and October 2023	Holding of the sessions
Cross-cutting		Presentation of ToR of the Working Group for mid-2023–mid-2028 and the annual workplan for 2024 at the session of the Committee on Environmental Policy	November 2023	Renewal of mandate and ToR of the Working Group for mid-2023–mid-2028 by the Committee

<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>
		Annual session of the Working Group, including capacity development	May 2023	Report on the session
		Drafting of new mandate and ToR for the Working Group for mid-2023–mid-2028 and an annual timetable of activities for 2024	Second half of 2023	Approval of new mandate, ToR and timetable by the Working Group

Abbreviations: EEA, European Environment Agency; ITU, International Telecommunication Union; OECD, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development; SDG, Sustainable Development Goal; SEIS, Shared Environmental Information System; ToR, terms of reference; UNEP, United Nations Environment Programme; WHO, World Health Organization.

^a These objectives and activities are listed in the draft revised 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 mandate and terms of reference of the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment (ECE/CEP/2017/2, annex II).