

Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment

Twenty-fifth session, Geneva and online, 2-3 May 2023

Agenda Item 7: Regular pan-European environmental assessment supported by the Shared Environmental Information System and open data and streamlining reporting obligations in environmental policy

Overview on the assessment related outcomes of the Nicosia Conference and discussion on next steps



Background



The assessment was launched at the Ninth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference on 5 October 2022 in Nicosia

Summary for policymakers with key messages and policy recommendations and the full **pan-European environmental assessment publication** available at:

https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2022-08/ECE_NICOSIA.CONF_2022_9_E.pdf and

<https://unece.org/info/Environment-Policy/Environmental-Monitoring-and-Assessment/pub/370327>

UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE
UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME

Europe's Environment The Seventh Pan-European Environmental Assessment

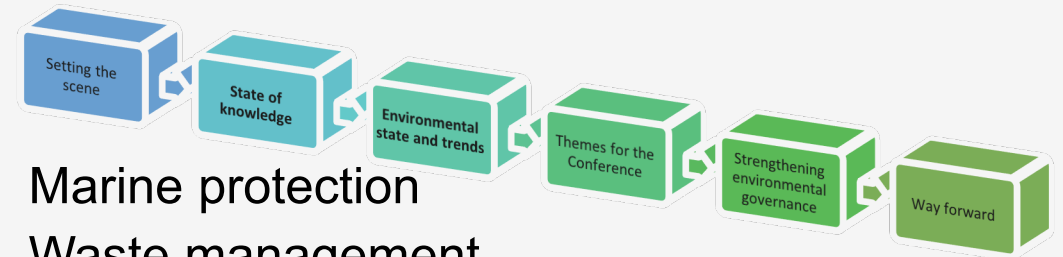


Key messages & recommendations



Key messages and policy recommendations available for all main thematic sections of the assessment covering areas of:

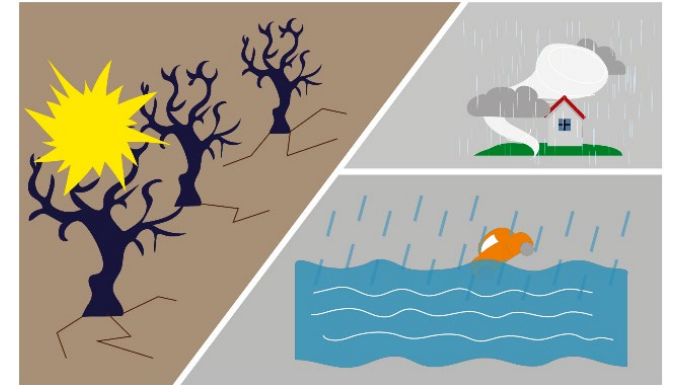
- Air quality
- Greenhouse gas emissions
- Decarbonization
- Fresh water quantity and quality
- Fresh water – financing
- IWRM & transboundary water cooperation
- Ecosystems
- Protected areas
- Land use & soil



- Marine protection
- Waste management
- Chemicals
- Minerals
- Disaster risk reduction
- Finance
- Sustainable infrastructure
- Sustainable tourism & circular economy
- Environmental governance
- **Monitoring & information management**

7th pan-European environmental assessment reports that:

- **Progress achieved in environmental protection in certain areas, but**
- **Significant shortcomings remain and pose a threat to the health of both people and the environment in the pan-European region**



Gaps & lessons learned



- Data gaps across the region in almost all areas (data available for some countries but not others or no recent data available)
- Data for some indicators used in assessment not routinely collected (incl. those for emerging policies such as sustainable infrastructure and circular economy in tourism)
- **A common set of policy relevant indicators produced by all countries in the region crucial to keep the pan-European environment under review**
- Monitoring and data gaps, in terms of both availability and quality, were identified during the assessment for the region.

MONITORING AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

Availability and access to information and knowledge to support Government decision-makers, industry and the public taking impact-oriented choices is improving but continues to be challenging in some sectors more than in others

Gaps & lessons learned



Examples

- **Air and climate change:** Gaps in measurement and analysis of PM2.5. Data quality varies widely for emissions and data sets on GHG emissions remain incomplete for some countries.

Table 2 Status and trends for selected indicator on greenhouse gas emissions

Indicator	European Union	Western Europe	Central Asia	Eastern Europe	South-Eastern Europe	Pan-European region
GHG emissions (2014–2019) (percentage change)	↗ (-4.3)	↗ (-10.8)	–	↘ (+2)	↘ (+10.2)	↗ (-1.2)

Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Statistics, "Global SDG Indicators Data Platform", SDG Indicators Database. Available at <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/unsdg> (accessed on 2 February 2022).

Note: Trend is ↗ improving (emissions falling), → stable or ↘ worsening. Insufficient data for Central Asia, where emissions are rising.

- **Noise:** Lack of data on noise across the pan-European region → to be addressed in next assessment (health relevance)

Gaps & lessons learned



Examples

- **Fresh water:** Use of GIS to be strengthened especially at transboundary level. Water statistics need to be enhanced. Capacity development on ecological water quality assessment and identification of hydromorphological pressures needed in the region as well as monitoring of emerging contaminants. Monitoring and data are incomplete for production of certain indicators
- **Coastal waters, marine ecosystems and seas:** Challenges regarding spatial and temporal data coverage and data gaps remain, e.g., for the amounts, composition and sources of beach and marine litter in parts of the region
- **Biodiversity, ecosystems and land:** Data gaps for the production of certain indicators, including the UNECE indicators “Terrestrial protected areas” and “Land uptake”, in particular for countries outside EU. Data comparability another issue.

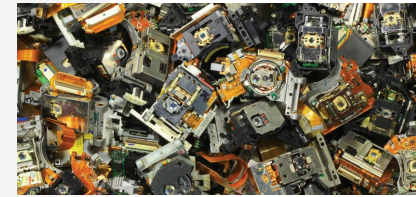


Gaps & lessons learned



Examples

- **Chemicals and waste:** No set of impact-oriented chemical indicators regularly monitored in region. Lack of information on impact of chemicals on efficiency and economic viability of circular economy schemes. Gaps in capacities and data availability for certain indicators, including “Total waste generation per capita”, “E-waste generation per capita” and “Recycling rate of municipal solid waste”
- **Environmental financing:** Lack of quantitative data on environmental financing for CA and SE Europe and urgent need to improve data-collection systems
- **Sustainable infrastructure:** Data gaps in social, environmental, institutional, economic and financial indicators proposed and when quantifying the contribution (positive or negative) of infrastructure development based on indicators. Common definition of term “sustainable infrastructure” lacking, with implications for quantifying progress in the region.



Gaps & lessons learned

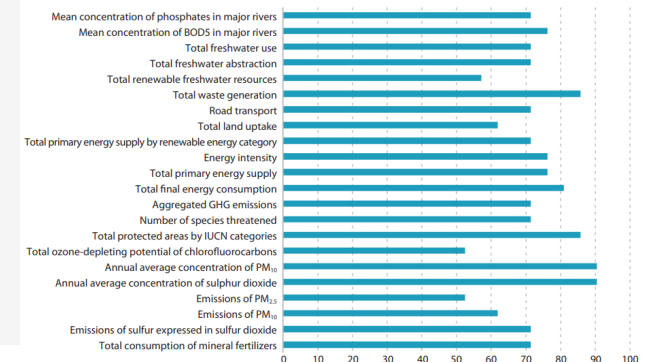


Examples

- **Circular economy (CE) and sustainable tourism:** Currently no indicators across the region on explicit information on tourism's uptake of CE principles and practices; for several general circularity aspects, classification definitions differ between States → UNWTO Statistical Framework for Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism (SF-MST) should help. Lack of availability of data even for mainstream tourism statistics, while detailed statistics needed for accurate circularity monitoring absent;
- **Shared Environmental Information System:** Gaps remain regarding full implementation of SEIS in line with all principles and pillars and the production and sharing of all data flows associated with revised ECE environmental indicators and other indicator frameworks, including SDGs.



Figure 3 Ready online availability and accessibility of data flows on a national platform, data flows with reply "yes" (Percentage)



Key messages and recommendations



Key messages & recommendations to governments from 7th pan-European Assessment already reflected in new Working Group mandate & ToR, for example:

- Bring policy & science together to develop & implement standardized methods and promote their use while strengthening cooperation & national investment to fill monitoring gaps in countries in transition
- Employ UNECE Revised Guidelines for the Application of Environmental Indicators
- Invest in data collection and information processing
- Continue digitization of environmental monitoring systems and use of new technologies
- Streamline environmental monitoring & reporting, reduce reporting requirements for countries
- Consider implementing PRTRs and SEIS in synergy
- Fully implement SEIS principles & pillars and production of revised UNECE indicators
- Employ, as appropriate, Recommendations on more effective use of electronic information tools developed under the auspices of the Aarhus Convention

Key messages and recommendations



Key messages & recommendations to governments from 7th pan-European Assessment already reflected in new Working Group mandate & ToR, for example:

More specifically ...

- Complement inventories of number of items of beach and marine litter with information on composition and sources of litter
- Establish a region-wide chemicals- and waste-impact-oriented monitoring scheme
- Improve data-collection systems on environmental financing
- Develop common definition of term “sustainable infrastructure”

Discussion on next steps – Mentimeter survey



Discussion on specific activities in support of pan-European assessment recommendations and outcomes of Nicosia EfE Ministerial Conference /

Обсуждение конкретных мероприятий в поддержку общеевропейских рекомендаций по оценке и итогов Никосийской конференции (неофициальный перевод)

Mentimeter Survey – How to connect:

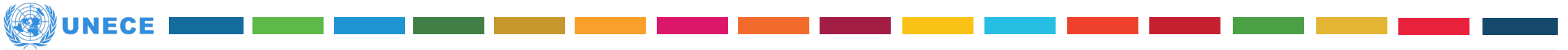
Option 1: <https://www.menti.com/bla6tpogykj6>

Option 2: Go to www.menti.com and use the code **9242 5066**

Option 3:



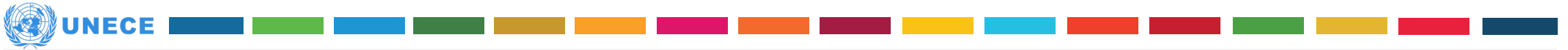
Discussion on next steps – Mentimeter survey



Mentimeter Survey Questions / Вопросы опроса Mentimeter

- **Which specific activities should the Working Group pursue to help close the identified gaps in the 7th pan-European assessment?** [open] / Какие конкретные действия должна предпринять Рабочая группа, чтобы помочь закрыть выявленные пробелы в 7-й общеевропейской оценке? [открыть]
- **Which activities should the Working Group prioritize to implement the recommendations from the assessment?** [open] / Какие виды деятельности следует отдать приоритет Рабочей группе для реализации рекомендаций оценки? [открыть]
- **Which specific activities does your country or organization implement or plan in support of the outcomes of the Nicosia Conference and the assessment?** [open]. **Please indicate the name of your country or organization** / Какие конкретные мероприятия ваша страна или организация осуществляет или планирует в поддержку результатов Никосийской конференции и оценки [открыто]. Пожалуйста, укажите название вашей страны или организации

Discussion on next steps – Mentimeter survey



Mentimeter Survey Questions / Вопросы опроса Mentimeter

- **Would you agree that countries annually report on activities implemented to support the outcomes from the Nicosia Conference and assessment? [yes, no] / Согласны ли вы с тем, чтобы страны ежегодно отчитывались о мероприятиях, проведенных в поддержку результатов Никосийской конференции и оценки?**
- **Should the Working Group's questionnaire on progress in environmental monitoring and assessment be updated in this regard? [yes, no] / Следует ли в этой связи обновить вопросник Рабочей группы о прогрессе в области экологического мониторинга и оценки?**
- **Please specify which identified monitoring gaps should be supported with priority in the area of biodiversity and ecosystems and air and climate change monitoring ? (priority themes as selected by the Working Group at its previous session) – subject to availability of resources [Select as many as apply] / Уточните, пожалуйста, какие выявленные пробелы в мониторинге рабочая группа должна поддерживать в приоритетном порядке в области биоразнообразия и экосистем, а также мониторинга воздуха и изменения климата? (приоритетные темы, выбранные Рабочей группой на ее предыдущей сессии) – при наличии ресурсов [Выберите столько, сколько применимо]**

Discussion on next steps – Mentimeter survey



1) **Gaps in Biodiversity and ecosystems monitoring:** / Пробелы в мониторинге биоразнообразия и экосистемы:

- Production of certain indicators, incl. UNECE indicators “Terrestrial protected areas” & “Land uptake” / Производство индикаторов, в т.ч. Показатели ЕЭК «Охраняемые районы суши» и «Использование земель»
- Comparability of data / Сопоставляемость данных

2) **Gaps in air and climate change monitoring:** / Пробелы в мониторинге воздуха и изменения климата:

- Measurement and analysis of fine particulate matter, PM_{2.5} / Измерение и анализ мелких твердых частиц
- Improve quality of data for emissions / Улучшить качество данных о выбросах
- Complete data sets on greenhouse gas emissions for some countries / Полные наборы данных о выбросах парниковых газов для некоторых стран.

Ministerial Declaration 9th EfE Ministerial Conference



We, the ministers and heads of delegation ...

... Acknowledge the importance of regular, indicator-based environmental assessments, and confirm our commitment to keeping the pan-European region under regular review in support of sustainable development and the transition to a circular, green and sustainable economy. We take note of the key findings of the seventh pan-European assessment, produced by UNECE and UNEP, and the urgent need in particular to:

... Develop and implement appropriate and common pan-European methods and systems for monitoring and information management, employ the revised UNECE Guidelines for the Application of Environmental Indicators, and adopt indicators to cover important emerging policymaking themes, also with a view to improving the availability of quality data for the SDG indicators ...

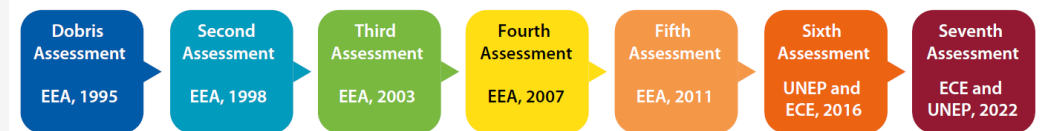
8th pan-European environmental assessment



Possible approaches based on lessons learned from the latest assessment:

Approaches and ideas on content:

- Indicator-based assessment (use similar set of indicators to track progress but also include new ones to monitor emerging themes) – proved to be useful and welcome in 7th assessment
- Closure of gaps needed as revealed in 7th assessment
- Besides traditional themes addressed (states and trends of air, biodiversity, water ...) also integrated chapters (health, nexus..)?
- Monitoring of progress towards policy targets and 7th assessment
- Foresight chapter (scenario building)



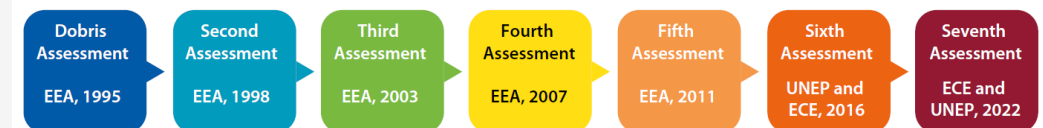
8th pan-European environmental assessment



Possible approaches based on lessons learned from the latest assessment:

Approaches and ideas on process:

- Early fundraising needed as very limited resources for 7th assessment, preventing having more integrated chapters, foresight chapter etc.
- Timeline: Next Ministerial Conference scheduled for about 2027? Preparation of the assessment should start in 2025?
- Involvement of Working Group experts in drafting and review?
- Organizations to be involved: UNECE, UNEP. Also, EEA? OECD?
- Links with GEO 7?
- Digital product only?



8th pan-European environmental assessment



Discussion on ideas and suggested approaches

Thank you!



Proposed Decisions



UNECE



Proposed Decisions:

The Working Group:

- a) Suggests to prioritize following activities to support the implementation of assessment related outcomes of the 9th Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference: xxx, xxx, xxx, xxx, subject to the availability of funding
- b) Agrees to provide regular updates on the activities implemented by countries and organizations to support the environmental monitoring and assessment related outcomes of the Ministerial Conference
- c) Welcomes ideas and approaches for the planned 8th pan-European environmental assessment and requests the secretariat to develop together with the Working Group a draft concept to be presented at the next session of the Working Group