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Regional advisory services in the field of energy

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I. Introduction

Documentation: ECE/EX/2006/L.22 - Decisions on Matters relating to the Committee on Sustainable Energy, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Executive Committee.

1. In the Decisions on Matters relating to the Committee on Sustainable Energy, the UNECE Executive Committee established the Programme of Work for 2007–2008 and Terms of Reference of the Committee on Sustainable Energy and its Subsidiary Bodies requiring the Sustainable Energy Committee to monitor and coordinate the work of its subsidiary bodies and where possible to seek opportunities to consolidate and streamline the activities of these bodies. In view of this mandate, this paper reviews the work of the Regional Adviser which is an integral part of the Sustainable Energy Programme of Work. The main responsibility of the Regional Adviser on Sustainable Energy is to promote sub-regional cooperation and strengthen inter-state collaboration and partnerships among countries in Eastern Europe, South-Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia as well as other developing countries of the UNECE region in order to more fully integrate the energy systems and infrastructure of countries at the sub-regional and regional level. In his duties, the Regional Adviser provides senior Government officials with expertise and advice on energy issues, promotes capacity and institution-building aimed at raising the overall effectiveness and efficiency of energy sectors, as well as promotes effective sustainable energy policies. These activities, carried out by the Regional Adviser within the Sustainable Energy Division, are linked to UNECE's normative work, limited to those particular areas where the UNECE has recognized expertise, and aim at ensuring effective and efficient responses to the particular demands of UNECE member States.

2. The activities undertaken by the Regional Adviser are mandated by the General Objectives of the UNECE's Programme of Work on Energy outlined and adopted by the Economic Commission for Europe 60th Anniversary Session, Geneva, 25–27 April 2007 (Item 8: Promoting sustainable development in the UNECE region: Some decisive factors (a) Sustainable energy policies: the key to energy security).

3. During its Nineteenth session, the Committee on Sustainable Energy of the Economic Commission for Europe, Geneva, 24–26 November 2010 (Report ECE/ENERGY/84) took note of the work of the Regional Advisor during the reported period as well as of his contribution to the activities under the Committee’s energy security dialogue and of the Ad Hoc Group of Expert (AHGE) on Cleaner Electricity Production from Coal and other Fossil Fuels. The Committee recommended the Regional Advisor to take active part in implementation of the project “Mitigating climate change through attracting foreign direct investment in advanced fossil fuels technologies” financed by the Development Account and approved the Regional Adviser’s work orientation for the year 2011.

4. During the entire current year, the position of the Regional Advisor was vacant. The UNECE Sustainable Energy Division (SED) provided Regional Advisory services in the field of energy using its already stretched human resources. Apparently it created some limitations in implementation of the services. In particular Regional Advisory services were provided for different activities and projects implemented by the SED.

5. The funding for the Regional Adviser comes from the Regional Advisory Services budget (Section 21), and from extra-budgetary resources, in particular from the donor countries and countries with economies in transition. Due to limited staff resources, activities continue to be focused on a limited number of countries taking into account their priority areas for development, government support, as well as the availability of extra-budgetary financing.

II. Energy efficiency

6. The key advisory services and activities related to the EE21 Project can be outlined as follows:

7. In 2013, the Regional Advisory services contributed to implementation of the UNECE Project “Enhancing Synergies in CIS National Programmes on Energy Efficiency and Energy Saving for Greater Energy Security”:

(a) The project budget for the whole implementation cycle 2011–2013 was financed by the Russian Federation with USD 150,000. The UNECE provided an ‘in kind’ contribution, which includes the role of the staff member who performed the work of the Regional Adviser as a Manager of the project;

(b) CIS countries participating in the Project include Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan;

(c) The project is designed to enhance synergies in CIS countries national energy programmes to promote energy efficiency and energy saving (EE&ES) improvements, to support planning and implementation of various EE&ES initiatives by concerned stakeholders and as a result to strengthen countries' energy security;

(d) National Reports prepared by the National Experts have been submitted from all participating countries.

8. In 2013, the Regional Advisory services contributed, promoting ECE guidelines and training material developed by UNECE in 2012 and proposing to convert the manual under the e-learning platform, to the Project “Enhancing energy security and improving access to energy services through development of public-private renewable energy partnerships”, :

(a) The Project is led by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) with participation of all Regional Commissions and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) with UNECE contribution under SED Regional Adviser's management. The total project budget for the implementation cycle 2010-2013 is US\$ 1,006,500, of which US\$ 59,500 is allocated to the UNECE;

(b) The objective of the project is to improve access to energy services for the rural poor and promote the application of renewable energy through Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs). At the same time, it also promotes social inclusiveness (including gender responsiveness) as one of the key requirements for developing PPPs;

(c) The project builds the capacity of policymakers, civil society and the private sector for engaging PPPs to enhance and improve access to affordable energy services in an integrated manner utilizing locally available renewable energy resources;

(d) The project is implemented through learning by doing approach to increase awareness and understanding of the issues on widening access to energy services for the rural poor;

(e) A set of guidelines and training materials to build up PPPs for rural areas, which have been developed through regional advisory services, were presented during the UNECA Regional Training workshop on Pro-Poor PPPs in Renewable Energy on 4-6 December 2012, in Lesotho;

(f) Collaboration with existing regional and subregional institutions and centres of excellence is expected to sustain and enhance project impacts and ensure sharing of good practices at the regional and inter-regional levels.

III. Cooperation with subregional organizations

Energy Power Council of CIS

9. During the reviewed period the staff members on behalf of Regional Adviser continued cooperation with the Energy Power Council of the CIS countries (EPC CIS), in particular the new version of the concept of the Memorandum of Understanding between UNECE and EPC CIS was elaborated and respective document was prepared and reviewed by both sides.

IV. Future work orientation

10. Primary attention shall be given to cooperation with sub-regional organizations in the implementation of energy projects under sub-regional programmes.

11. When hired, the Regional Adviser shall continue cooperation with UN agencies and international organizations, in particular with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), UN ENERGY, UN Regional Commissions, the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), World Bank, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), EurAsEC Integration Committee Secretariat, Energy Power Council of CIS, CIS Executive Committee, Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC), the Regional Network for the Efficient Use of Energy and Water Resources (RENEUER) and other regional and sub-regional organizations as well as with the Commission of the European Union (EC).

12. The Regional Adviser on Energy shall continue to respond to the specific needs and priorities of countries with economies in transition in line with the initiative of the UN General Secretary “Sustainable Energy for All” and “A Global Action Agenda” aimed to SE4ALL implementation.

13. Assistance shall be provided to identify the needs in further development of the energy sectors of economies in transition, assisting national experts to prepare plans, programmes and projects to facilitate the implementation of their energy strategies, providing assistance in capacity and institution-building and in the realization of the SE4ALL initiative.

14. Special emphasis shall be given to transition to low-carbon technology development by supporting new business model and technology innovation, improve access to electricity through off-grid, micro- and mini-grid solutions, support the development of technologies that are suitable for specific countries, networking and information exchange, energy efficiency standards, and the development of business contacts.

15. With regard to specific projects that are currently being realized and newly-established projects to be implemented in the future, the following examples of the Regional Adviser activity can be noted:

- (a) 2013–2015 phase of the “Energy Efficiency 21 Programme”;
- (b) “Global Energy Efficiency 21” Project;
- (c) United Nations Development Account 7th Tranche: Enhancing and improving access to energy services through development of public-private renewable energy partnerships;
- (d) The Russian funded project Enhancing Synergies in CIS National Programmes on Energy Efficiency and Energy Saving for Greater Energy Security.
