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**Environmental monitoring, assessment and reporting****Renewal of the mandate and terms of reference of the Joint Task Force on Environmental Statistics and Indicators****Note by the secretariat\****Summary*

At its twenty-first session (Geneva, 27-30 October 2015), the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) Committee on Environmental Policy adopted the renewed mandate of the Joint Task Force on Environmental Indicators, including the new name "Joint Task Force on Environmental Statistics and Indicators", as presented in annex II to document ECE/CEP/2015/12, for two years until the Committee's twenty-third session in 2017 (ECE/CEP/2015/2, para. 93). The ECE Executive Committee approved the renewed mandate at its meeting in May 2016. At its twenty-second session (Geneva, 25-27 January 2017), the Committee considered the progress achieved and expressed its great appreciation for the work of the Joint Task Force (ECE/CEP/2017/2, para. 33).

At its meeting on 21 and 22 October 2015, the Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians approved the renewed mandate and terms of reference for the Joint Task Force for the period 2016-2021 (ECE/CES/2016/15/Add.7).

The present document contains the renewed mandate and terms of reference of the Joint Task Force (2018-2021).

The Committee is invited to consider the progress of work of the Joint Task Force and the renewed mandate and terms of reference of the Joint Task Force, with a view to its prospective adoption and transmission to the ECE Executive Committee for approval.

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\* This document was not formally edited

## I. Introduction

1. At its twenty-first session (Geneva, 27-30 October 2015), the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) Committee on Environmental Policy adopted the renewed mandate of the Joint Task Force on Environmental Indicators, including the new name “Joint Task Force on Environmental Statistics and Indicators”, as presented in annex II to document ECE/CEP/2015/12, for two years until the Committee’s twenty-third session in 2017 (ECE/CEP/2015/2, para. 93). The ECE Executive Committee approved the renewed mandate at its meeting in May 2016. At its twenty-second session (Geneva, 25-27 January 2017), the Committee considered the progress achieved and expressed its great appreciation for the work of the Joint Task Force (ECE/CEP/2017/2, para. 33).

2. At its meeting on 21 and 22 October 2015, the Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians approved the renewed mandate and terms of reference for the Joint Task Force for the period 2016-2021 (ECE/CES/2016/15/Add.7). Subsequently, at its sixty-fourth plenary session, the Conference of European Statisticians approved the report of the Bureau (Paris, 27-29 April 2016) (ECE/CES/91, para. 74).

3. At its thirteenth session (Geneva, 29-30 June 2017), the Joint Task Force agreed that a request would be submitted to the present session of the Committee to renew the mandate of the Joint Task Force for the period 2018-2021. In addition, the Joint Task Force agreed that its mandate would be reviewed, as necessary, in the light of the expected review of the current mandate of the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment, following the mid-term review of the main outcomes of the Eighth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference (ECE/CEP/2017/2, annex II, para. 7).

4. The annex to the present document contains the renewed mandate and terms of reference of the Joint Task Force for a period of four years (2018-2021) with a view to make it consistent with the mandate approved by the Conference of European Statisticians. In addition, for the same reason, the text of the mandate is only slightly modified to update the time frame and delete the obsolete text on the activities planned for 2016.

5. The Committee is invited to consider the progress of work of the Joint Task Force and the renewed mandate and terms of reference of the Joint Task Force, with a view to its prospective adoption and transmission to the ECE Executive Committee for approval.

## II. Main accomplishments by Joint Task Force on Environmental Statistics and Indicators during 2016-2017

6. The Joint Task Force will have held four meetings in the period 2016-2017, as follows: eleventh,<sup>1</sup> twelfth,<sup>2</sup> thirteenth<sup>3</sup> and fourteenth<sup>4</sup> meetings (Geneva, 30 June-1 July 2016, 17-18 November 2016 and 29-30 June 2017, and Rome, 5-6 October 2017, respectively). The results of the work of the Joint Task Force are included in the reports of its meetings (ECE/CEP-CES/GE.1/2016/2/Rev.1, ECE/CEP-CES/GE.1/2016/12, ECE/CEP-CES/GE.1/2017/2 and ECE/CEP-CES/GE.1/2017/6 (forthcoming), respectively). The work of the Joint Task Force was serviced by the ECE Environment and Statistical Divisions and supported by the European Environment Agency, the Organization

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<sup>1</sup> Meeting documents are available from [www.unece.org/index.php?id=35518](http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=35518).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. [www.unece.org/index.php?id=43450](http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=43450).

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. [www.unece.org/index.php?id=43950](http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=43950).

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. [www.unece.org/index.php?id=43952](http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=43952).

for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the United Nations Environment Programme.

7. The main accomplishments in 2016 include:
  - (a) The consideration of data quality;
  - (b) The identification of conceptual and methodological problems related to waste statistics;
  - (c) The use of United Nations Statistics Division's Environment Statistics Self-Assessment Tool for self-assessment of the progress in implementing the ECE core set of environmental indicators and their underpinning statistics;
  - (d) The mapping of ECE environmental indicators against a number of other indicators, such as indicators for measuring the Sustainable Development Goals and the OECD green growth indicators;
  - (e) The consideration of the measurement of the green transformation of economy by using the OECD green growth indicators;
  - (f) The consideration of the progress made in the production and online sharing of selected (energy and biodiversity) environmental indicators;
  - (g) The review of statistics and indicators on biodiversity.
8. To date in 2017, key accomplishments include:
  - (a) The development of a glossary for the assessment framework of the Shared Environmental Information System;
  - (b) The piloting of the assessment framework of the Shared Environmental Information System and its associated reporting application;
  - (c) The start of the revision of biodiversity and energy indicators in the ECE set of environmental indicators;
  - (d) The consideration of a nexus approach for possible future use in the work on indicators;
  - (e) The consideration of the pilot data collection on water quality by the United Nations Statistics Division and the European Union water indicators, trends and reporting;
  - (f) The consideration of developments:
    - (i) In the work of the ECE Conference of European Statisticians Task Force on Wastes Statistics;
    - (ii) Related to relevant indicators for the Sustainable Development Goals;
    - (iii) In the work of the United Nations Committee of Experts on Environmental-Economic Accounting and on the OECD green economy and green growth indicators.
9. The fourteenth meeting of the Joint Task Force, taking place in October 2017, will develop capacity for using the assessment framework of the Shared Environmental Information System and the on-line reporting application. The Joint Task Force will also consider statistics and indicators related to climate change and will continue working on the production tables for biodiversity and energy indicators. It will furthermore consider the results of the work accomplished thus far by the Task Force on Waste Statistics.

## **Annex**

### **Renewal of the mandate and terms of reference for the Joint Task Force on Environmental Statistics and Indicators**

#### **I. Mandate**

1. The Joint Task Force on Environment Statistics and Indicators shall serve under the oversight and guidance of the Committee on Environmental Policy and the Conference of the European Statisticians. It will report regularly to both the Committee and the Conference. These terms of reference are valid for the period 2018-2021. The Committee and the Conference will review the terms of reference of the Joint Task Force at their first regular meetings in 2021.

#### **II. Objectives**

2. The aim of the Joint Task Force is to assist the countries of the Caucasus, Central Asia and Eastern and South-Eastern Europe (target countries) in their efforts to: (a) correctly apply the Shared Environmental Information System data methodologies and in line with statistical standards; (b) analyse and communicate environmental data; (c) implement the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting; and (d) apply environmental indicators in the context of sustainable development and green economy initiatives. The Joint Task Force is also to assist the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment in evaluating the application of the internationally accepted methodologies and statistical standards in the Shared Environmental Information System data production.

#### **III. Planned activities and outputs**

3. The Joint Task Force shall:

(a) Provide advice to the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment on the application of the Shared Environmental Information System data production methodologies by the target countries;

(b) Address specific challenges related to methodology and data quality in producing environmental data and indicators in line with the ECE Online Indicator Guidelines, international statistical standards, the Shared Environmental Information System requirements and the recommendations made by the Working Group;

(c) Build capacity in the target countries for the compilation and integration of environmental data in support of measuring sustainable development and green economy initiatives;

(d) Provide a forum for sharing experience on the communication of environmental information to users, in line with the ECE recommendations on statistical communication and the recommendations made by the Working Group;

(e) Assist countries in developing the capacity for the implementation of the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting.

4. The following outputs will be achieved:

(a) Advice on the application of the Shared Environmental Information System data production methodologies is provided;

(b) Capacity in the target countries is gradually strengthened in applying the Shared Environmental Information System data production methodologies;

(c) Capacity in the target countries is gradually strengthened for the compilation and integration of environmental data in support of measuring sustainable development and green economy initiatives;

(d) Capacity in the target countries is strengthened for communicating environmental information;

(e) Implementation of the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting is gradually improved.

#### **IV. Timetable**

5. The Joint Task Force will prepare its annual time table of activities and regularly report to the Committee on Environmental Policy and the Conference of European Statisticians.

#### **V. Methods of work**

6. The Joint Task Force shall meet at least once annually. The Task Force will also communicate through e-mail and other electronic collaboration platforms, such as wikis, during the period between meetings.

#### **VI. Membership**

7. The Joint Task Force shall be composed of experts representing national statistical offices and ministries or agencies dealing with environment statistics and assessment from the countries of the Caucasus, Central Asia and Eastern and South-Eastern Europe. Representatives of ministries and agencies dealing with economic issues may be invited to participate in the meetings. Other ECE countries are welcome to participate in the work.

8. The Joint Task Force shall elect its Chair and Vice-Chair for a term of two years, and these officers shall be eligible for re-election for one additional term.

#### **VII. Secretariat support and resources**

9. The ECE Environment and Statistical Divisions will provide the joint secretariat for the activities of the Joint Task Force.

10. The work will be supported by the European Environment Agency, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and the United Nations Environment Programme.

11. Donors will be invited to provide support for the Joint Task Force's activities.