

Committee on Sustainable Energy**Bureau Meeting/Call**

Geneva, 16 December 2019, 15.00-18.00, interruption for the Chair's report to the UNECE Executive Committee from 15.15-16.00

Bureau Report No. 2019/5

Attendance (in person and by phone)

Jürgen Keinhorst, Chair

Admir Softić, James Gannon, Pawel Pikus, Alexander Tolparov, Jarad Daniels, Raymond Pilcher, Aleksandar Dukovski, Rafael Guerra (for Francisco de la Flor), Vice-Chairs
Lea Bigot, Germany

From the secretariat:

Scott Foster, Charlotte Griffiths, Michal Drabik, Gianluca Sambucini, Igor Litvinyuk, Stefanie Held, Branko Milicevic
Observer: Iva Brkic

Apologies:

Jean-Christophe Füeg, Talgat Karashev, Barry Worthington, David MacDonald

SUMMARY AND ACTION POINTS**Actions:**

- Secretariat to organise follow up Bureau call on 23 January 2020
- Director to develop a concept note for a deep dive project on Central Asia in collaboration with UN ESCAP for discussion with the Bureau (next opportunity)

WELCOME

- The agenda was approved as distributed. All items were discussed with the exception of the topics under "other topics and when time allows"
- The Chair explained his vision for the next two years, alluding to the value added of UNECE and the Committee as a neutral body and the need to avoid a perceived bias of activities. Areas of focus: Just transition / energy sector transformation, resource efficiency and subregional deep dives. Of importance: priority setting, budget limitations, programme implementation and cooperation with other UN organisations, in particular UN ESCAP and UN Energy, UNDP, SEforAll, HLPF and its TA Group
- The subsequent Bureau exchange mentioned: the need for a broad definition of sustainable development; *all* technology options must be included in the work of the Committee, which should be science-based;; COP results could show the way; the topic of carbon neutrality should become central to the work of the CSE.
- Need to determine early on what the Bureau wants to achieve in the next two years, what it stands for so that it can lead the Committee towards practical policies and set the tone for the 29th session. First task could be to develop a common vision. How can we have impact? How can we produce more tools and products that are useful for countries? What is the role of the Committee in this context?

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EXPECTED PROJECT PROPOSALS AND DEADLINES

- The deadline for project proposals to be approved by the 17 February 2020 UNECE Executive Committee is 15 January 2020. The subsequent Executive Committee meeting will be on 6 May 2020, with an official submission deadline a month before
- In this context, the Bureau was informed of the following projects in the pipeline:
- Expert Group on Resource Management: Possible support through EU Horizon 2020 funding; an indication expected by mid-March (funding about EUR2 mio). If approved, funding may come through only in Q3 2020
- International centres of excellence: Funding expected for work in Poland and China; MoU for the Chinese ICE-CMM approved and in place. XB funding from the partners in China would need to be approved by the Executive Committee. Country consultations are ongoing
- High-Performance Buildings Initiative: Ireland has expressed an interest to sponsor a post in Ireland to support coordination of UNECE's high-performance buildings initiative
- Just transition/modernisation of energy infrastructure: [UNECE has not secured funding, so activities will be limited to official meetings of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies, while the search for a pilot country and possible funding continues
- Hydrogen: A project proposal is being developed in preparation for the Group of Experts on Gas meetings in March. A workshop will be dedicated to the topic with representatives of the World Economic Forum. Should potential donors materialise the Bureau will be informed
- Pathways to carbon neutrality: A project proposal is being developed under the Group of Experts on Cleaner Electricity Systems.
- Pathways to sustainable energy: The Bureau discussed expectations regarding a potential Phase II at length:

PATHWAYS TO SUSTAINABLE ENERGY PROJECT

- The Chair stressed the need for a neutral and unbiased approach to Phase II. In his view, donors should be from countries only and should link directly to work of UN ESCAP, who have a similar project on pathways to SDG7; possible coordination had been discussed during the 10th International Forum on Energy for Sustainable Development in Bangkok between the Chair, the UNESCAP Executive Secretary and the Director of the UN ESCAP energy subprogramme
- The secretariat informed that at the time of the Bureau call the first phase of the project had not yet been completed and that substantial information and data existed that merited a closer look. Secretariat advised to analyse the information at hand first to gain a real understanding of what is happening in the region and to include the opinions of the expert groups in the development for any phase II proposals; secretariat further stressed that seven regions are part of the modelling and that substantial subregional discussions were carried out in 2018 and 2019, namely in i) Caucasus and Central Asia, in ii) Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine (BMU), and iii) that there was a perceived need for more work in the Western Balkans (for information to the Bureau: the World Economic Forum approved a side meeting based on pathways findings in the Western Balkans at Davos meetings in January 2020 following the Bureau call, but the secretariat had to decline because of lack of funding for the event)
- Bureau stressed the need not to lose momentum with modellers and to use the up-to-date data and results for continuation of the project; in this context work should take on board energy intensive industries (US proposal) and modelling of all technologies
- The Chair proposed to pursue a subregional deep dive in Central Asia as the next step due to the political relevance of the subregion and in order to link to the work of UN ESCAP. All technologies (including nuclear and fossil fuels) could be considered in the subregional context. The Chair is open to other regional deep dives, depending on the availability of funding. Regarding the Western Balkans, the Chair suggested to get in touch with the Secretariat of the Energy Community Secretariat. Different bureau members expressed positive reactions to this proposal.

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- Director to draft a paper for a deep dive in Central Asia (including the issue of heavy industry / just transition) for discussion with the Bureau at the next opportunity and before funding is sought; the regional advisor of the sustainable energy subprogramme is to be consulted and the concept is to be coordinated with the Director of ESCAP's energy subprogramme
- Beyond such a subregional deep dive the Bureau agreed that the secretariat could pursue development of a more comprehensive Phase 2 project proposal.
- A Bureau member expressed concern that the Bureau's decisions regarding Pathways Phase 2 do not reflect consensus among its members and proposed the issue to be rediscussed.
- The Bureau confirmed that groups of experts do not have to consult the Committee Bureau about funding proposals for mandated projects, i.e. projects that are explicitly spelled out in approved work plans or for which the expert group has received a request by the Committee.

REPORT TO THE UNECE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

- The Chair reported activities and achievements of the Committee and its six subsidiary bodies to the Executive Committee as per Report circulated to Bureau prior to the call
- The Executive Committee approved all recommendations and requests by the Committee, including all requests for mandate extensions and work plans
- The minutes of the Executive Committee meeting will be distributed as soon as available
- Remarks by the Executive Committee mentioned a request for a comprehensive proposal for Phase II for the pathways to sustainable energy project (EU, Russian Federation, United States), the need for a practical platform to discuss energy issues that do not contradict national positions already taken elsewhere (including, e.g., in the G20), the request to include nuclear, clean coal and CCUS technologies and hydrogen pragmatically (United States), the wish to bring models, data and advanced monitoring of achievements (early warning system) towards sustainable energy to national experts (Russian Federation).

KICKING OFF THE WORK ON DECARBONIZATION/CARBON NEUTRALITY

- The secretariat informed that it will bring together experts from the Committee's subsidiary bodies to start work on carbon neutrality as requested by the Committee in its 28th session, under the leadership of the Group of Experts on Cleaner Electricity Systems, starting in January 2020.
- The Bureau is requested to provide guidance as per emails and documents sent to the Bureau earlier
- The secretariat suggested to have a dedicated project to meet the requirements in the programme of work regarding carbon neutrality.
- This discussion should continue in the next Bureau call and will also be the topic of the first call of the Group of Experts on Cleaner Electricity Systems in January 2020

OUTSTANDING TOPICS FROM THE CALL

- Approve Mr Garribba as observer to the Bureau
- TORs for the Bureau and the Committee and next steps (as per ECE/ENERGY/2019/12)
- Feedback from 28th session of the Committee and the 10th International Forum on Energy for Sustainable Development in Bangkok, in preparation for the next meetings
- *All* technologies and in particular nuclear energy as part of the work of the Committee (request from the Committee session)

WRAPPING UP AND DATE FOR NEXT CALL

- Next call of the Bureau: 23 January 2020 PM Geneva time. You will receive an invitation and dial in details early in the New Year

And a very good NEW YEAR to you!