

REPORT

Training Workshop on application of UNFC for sustainable resources management

15 November 2019, Kiev, Ukraine

Organized under the UNDA Project

“Integrated energy and water resource management in support of sustainable development in South-East Europe and Central Asia”

Resource development and production are often seen as a “drain industry” that leaves behind wastes and a broken planet, along with socio-economic concerns such as exposing a resource-dependent national economy to resource depletion, and other risks such as the so-called “Dutch disease” and vagaries of market volatilities. The activities also have the potential to cause negative impacts on the groundwater resources. In response to these challenges, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), summarized as “People, Planet, Prosperity”, have called for “integrated and indivisible” management and development of all aspects of society and the planet.

Participants from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Serbia, Ukraine and Uzbekistan shared the status of energy, mineral and groundwater resource inventories in their countries, and the potential for discoveries. Inputs were also provided by international experts from Canada, Germany, OECD, IAEA and UNECE and focused on the classification and sustainable management of resources.

The primary purpose of the training was to increase knowledge of national experts on relevant for each country’s best practices on collection and monitoring of national data on energy and water resources and monitoring in compliance with international standards such as System of Environment-Economic Accounting (SEEA).

Major topics that were discussed include:

- Total resource management
- Integrated assessments of energy-water resources
- SDG and SEEA alignment
- Social and environmental guidelines

The United Nations Framework Classification for Resources (UNFC) has embraced this overarching vision and is being transformed as the toolkit for sustainable management of all resources, the United Nations Resource Management System (UNRMS). In this context, assessments of energy, mineral and groundwater resources based on UNFC can make an essential contribution to achieving the SDGs.

UNFC-UNRMS is now directly aligned to the purpose of delivering the SDGs there has been a remarkable acceleration in its adoption and use worldwide. With this new momentum has come a new demand for training in how to use it and how to participate in its development.

The assessment of energy, mineral and groundwater resources using the UNFC-UNRMS framework and utilizing the data and information for policy formulation and strategic decision-making will be especially critical. The same inputs could also be the basis for national resource inventory management, company business process innovation and efficient capital allocation so that benefits will accrue to all stakeholders with an associated increase in shared prosperity.

The case studies presented from various countries demonstrate that they have a large amount of useful data on mineral, energy and groundwater resource statistics, but the data are not readily accessible due being scattered across various agencies. Several different classification systems are currently used in these countries to define mineral, energy and groundwater resources so the use of UNFC-UNRMS to establish a harmonized information-base will be able to assist in sustainable development efforts. The range of data available on energy and mineral resources in many countries is impressive, but more work is needed to improve the quality of the data, especially regarding accessibility, and their coherence with UNFC.

While groundwater resources have been assessed on the same level as other resources in some countries, such as Ukraine which uses a UNFC-based system, integrated reporting of all resources has not become mainstream in most countries. To facilitate this integration in the future, the UNFC-UNRMS will provide additional specifications and guidelines.

A bold and transformative engagement for climate action, including conserving groundwater resources, requires major stakeholders, governments, industry and academia to express their common purpose by adopting a standard system for mapping and measuring progress across the whole resource management spectrum. The fact that existing national systems can be bridged readily to UNFC means there are no real obstacles to adopting and implementing the new toolkit.

The training workshop concluded that the assessment of energy and water resources using the UNFC framework and utilizing the data and information for policy formulation and strategic decision-making would be especially crucial for policy- and decision-makers in the future. The same inputs could also be the basis for national resource inventory management, company business process innovation and efficient capital allocation so that benefits will accrue to all stakeholders with an associated increase in shared prosperity.

Often many of the social and environmental impacts associated with resource production could be transformed into opportunities for holistic development of the project area and the country. Along with energy and water security, this approach will also ensure food security and a balanced approach to reducing the impacts of the activities on the planet.

This training workshop was organized by UNECE under the framework of the United Nations Development Account (UNDA) project “Integrated energy and water resource management in support of sustainable development in South-East Europe and Central Asia”.
