

Economic Commission for Europe

Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context

Meeting of the Parties to the Convention serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment

Bureau

Geneva, 7– 8 February 2018

Provisional annotated agenda

**To be held at Salle VIII, Palais des Nations, Geneva, starting at 10 a.m.
on Wednesday, 7 February 2018***

I. Provisional agenda

1. Organizational matters
 - A. Adoption of the agenda
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3. Review of decisions by the Meetings of the Parties
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 - A. Compliance with and implementation of the Convention and the Protocol
 - B. Subregional cooperation and capacity-building
 - C. Exchange of good practices
 - D. Promoting ratification and application of the Protocol and the Convention
5. Budget, financial arrangements and financial assistance

* There are accreditation procedures for all delegates attending meetings at the Palais des Nations. Members of the Bureau are therefore requested **to register online at least two weeks before the start of the meeting, i.e. by 24 January 2018** through the following link: <https://www2.unece.org/uncdb/app/ext/meeting-registration?id=WAWYYM>. The use of Internet Explorer browser is recommended. In case of difficulty, please refer to the user manual (<https://www2.unece.org/wiki/display/OMR/Online+Meeting+Registration+Guidelines>) or contact the secretariat by e-mail (anelia.rambosson@unece.org). On their way to the meeting, delegates should obtain an identification badge at the Pass and Identification Unit of the United Nations Office at Geneva's Security and Safety Section, located at the Pregny Gate, 14, Avenue de la Paix (see map and other practical information available from the ECE website at <http://www.unece.org/meetings/practical.htm>). In case of difficulty, please contact the Convention secretariat by telephone at +41 22 917 2439.

6. Preparations for the seventh session of the Working Group on Environmental Impact Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment
7. Preparations for the “intermediary” session of the Meetings of the Parties and beyond
8. Related events
9. Other business
10. Presentation of the main decisions taken and closing of the meeting

II. Annotations to the provisional agenda

1. Organizational matters

Tentative timing: Wednesday, 7 February, 10.00-10.30

A. Adoption of the agenda

1. This provisional agenda was prepared by the secretariat in agreement with the Chair. The Bureau will be invited to adopt its agenda as set out in the present document.

B. Participation

2. The members of the Bureau are expected to introduce themselves.

2. Status of ratification of the Convention, its amendments and its Protocol

Tentative timing: Wednesday, 7 February, 10.30–11

Relevant documentation: ECE/MP.EIA/B/2018/INF.2 – Status of ratification

3. The secretariat will inform the Bureau of the status of ratification of the Convention, its amendments and the Protocol. The Bureau members from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus and Ukraine are expected to report on progress of their countries regarding ratifications of the amendments to the Convention and, as relevant, of the Protocol. The Bureau may also wish to discuss possible measures to further encourage ratification and accession, in particular to accelerate the entry into effect the first amendment to the Convention, allowing all United Nations member States to accede to that instrument.

3. Review of decisions by the Meetings of the Parties

Tentative timing: Wednesday, 7 February, 11–11.30

Relevant documentation: ECE/MP.EIA/B/2018/INF.3 – Tasks of the Bureau

4. The Bureau will review decisions taken by the seventh session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention and by the third session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol (Minsk, 13–16 June 2017), particularly with regard to tasks assigned to the Bureau, as included in the report of the two sessions (ECE/MP.EIA/23–ECE/MP.EIA/SEA/7, including Add. 1–3).

4. Implementation of the workplan 2017–2020

Tentative timing: Wednesday, 7 February, 11.30–13.00 and 15–16

Relevant documentation:

ECE/MP.EIA/B/2018/INF.4 – Workplan implementation status
 ECE/MP.EIA/B/2018/INF.5 – Timetable for the modification of questionnaires and the preparation of the draft reviews of implementation
 ECE/MP.EIA/B/2018/INF.6 – Proposed modifications to the Convention questionnaire
 ECE/MP.EIA/B/2018/INF.7 – Proposed modifications to the Protocol questionnaire
 ECE/MP.EIA/B/2018/INF.8 – Draft updated Guidelines on EIA in a Transboundary Context for Central Asian Countries
 ECE/MP.EIA/B/2018/INF.9 – Draft Terms of Reference for a guidance for the assessment of health impacts of plans and programmes

A. Compliance with and implementation of the Convention and the Protocol

5. The Chair of the Implementation Committee is expected to present briefly the main outcomes of the Committee's thirty-ninth and fortieth sessions (held on 5–7 September and 5–7 December 2017, respectively)¹ and the main objectives for the Committee's upcoming session (13–15 March 2018), in particular as regards the revision of draft decision VII/2.

6. The secretariat and, as relevant, the Bureau members representing the concerned countries will report on the implementation of activities in the workplan (decision VII/3–III/3) that relate to compliance with and implementation of the Convention and the Protocol, including:

(a) Modification of the questionnaires for the report on implementation of the Convention and the Protocol (in the period 2016–2018) and the timetable for the production of the sixth review of implementation with the Convention and the third review of implementation with the Protocol;

(b) Legislative assistance to support implementation or accession/ratification (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan);

(c) Work of the ad hoc working group for the preparation of draft terms of reference for possible guidance addressing the applicability of the Convention to life-time extension of nuclear power plants; and for the organization of a workshop on this topic during the meeting of the Working Group on Environmental Impact Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment in May 2018;

(d) Finalization of the development and update of the Guidelines on EIA in a Transboundary Context for Central Asian Countries

(e) Possible elaboration of a long-term strategy and action plan for the future of the Convention and the Protocol (requires in-kind contributions from a lead country or resources for consultants).

¹ Reports on the Implementation Committee's sessions held in 2017 are available at: <http://www.unece.org/environmental-policy/conventions/environmental-assessment/meetings-and-events.html#0/0/0/28089/19940>.

7. The Bureau is expected to note the information and provide advice on the implementation of or follow-up to the activities, as needed.

B. Subregional cooperation and capacity-building

8. The secretariat and the Bureau members concerned will report on the implementation of activities in the workplan that relate to subregional cooperation and capacity-building in the following subregions:

(a) South-Eastern Europe subregion, including a session on implementation of the Convention, the Protocol and the Bucharest Agreement (Vodice, Croatia, 14–15 September 2017);

(b) Baltic Sea subregion, (meeting to be organized by Finland and Sweden in autumn 2018);

(c) Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia, including a seminar on lessons learned from capacity building activities funded by European Union's EaP GREEN Programme and a subregional workshop on the draft updated Guidelines for Central Asian countries (held back to back in Kyiv, 31 October– 3 November 2017).

9. The secretariat will also report on relevant developments within and beyond the UNECE region (including China's Belt and Road Initiative).

10. The Bureau is expected to take note of the information and, as needed, to provide advice and agree on actions to ensure the implementation of or follow-up to these activities.

C. Exchange of good practices

11. The Bureau may wish to provide advice on the workshops or half-day seminars within the meetings of the Working Group specified in the workplan and relating to the exchange of good practices (seminars foreseen for 2019: on improving intersectoral cooperation and institutional arrangements for the application of the Protocol and the Convention; and (possibly) on synergies between transboundary EIA and SEA and the UN Convention on the law of the sea (UNCLOS) (articles 204–206).

D. Promoting ratification and application of the Protocol and the Convention

12. The secretariat will report on the implementation of activities specified in the workplan that relate to promoting ratification and application of the Protocol, including:

(a) National training workshop, pilot project and preparation of guidance on SEA for Kazakhstan;

(b) Development of guidance for the assessment of health impacts of plans and programmes, with proposed funding from the European Investment Bank;

(c) Preparation of two-page informal pamphlets or "FasTips", including on the Convention and the Protocol.

13. The secretariat will inform the Bureau on progress in its fundraising from the European Commission for promoting ratification and application of the Protocol (and the Convention) in 2018–2020/2021 in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, including for the following waitlisted activities (see annex II to the workplan):

- (a) Holding of workshops, including training on SEA;
- (b) Implementation of pilot projects;
- (c) Development of national guidance documents legislation on SEA;
- (d) Development of communication materials, such as a video to raise awareness about and promote the application of the Convention.

14. The Bureau is expected to provide its views on the information provided and, as needed, agree on actions to ensure the implementation of or follow-up to these activities.

5. Budget, financial arrangements and financial assistance

Tentative timing: Wednesday, 7 February, 16.00-17.00

Relevant documentation: ECE/MP.EIA/B/2018/INF.10 – Contributions to the Trust Fund

15. The secretariat will report on received contributions to, and on expenditure from, the Convention's trust fund. The first annual financial report in the period to be prepared by the secretariat is expected to cover the period until the end of June 2018.

16. In June 2017, the Meetings of the Parties to the Convention and the Protocol requested the secretariat to grant, subject to the availability of funds and in accordance with the agreed budget, financial assistance for the participation in meetings under the Convention and under its Protocol of designated experts from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) identified by its Bureau - unless otherwise decided by the Working Group on Environmental Impact Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment (decision VII/4–III/4, para. 26). The Bureau will be invited to consider which NGOs will receive financial support from spring 2018 (for the meetings of the Working Group and the sessions of the Meetings of the Parties). In the past, a maximum of five such experts were identified.

17. The Bureau is expected to consider proposing a budget for the “intermediary” session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention, which was not originally foreseen and therefore not included in the budget table annexed to decision VII/4–III/4. In absence of voluntary contributions for this purpose, the Bureau will be invited to consider authorizing the use of the operating reserve of the Trust Fund to cover the related exceptional expenditure (to cover the participation of representatives of eligible countries “with economies in transition” and of NGOs).

18. The Bureau may wish to discuss any further measures to encourage Parties that have so far not pledged anything to make contributions, and Parties that have so far only committed limited funds or in-kind contributions to raise their contributions, during the current and future budget cycles (decision VII/4–III/4, paras. 6-7).

6. Preparations for the seventh session of the Working Group on Environmental Impact Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment

Tentative timing: Wednesday, 7 February, 16.00-18.00

Relevant documentation: ECE/MP.EIA/WG.2/2018/1 – Draft provisional agenda: seventh session of the Working Group on EIA and SEA

19. The Bureau is expected to review and agree on the annotated provisional agenda of the seventh meeting of the Working Group on Environmental Impact Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment, to be held in Geneva from 28 to 26 May 2018 (ECE/MP.EIA/WG.2/2018/1, forthcoming).

7. Preparations for the “intermediary” session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention and beyond

Tentative timing: Thursday, 8 February, 9.30–12.30

Relevant documentation: ECE/MP.EIA/B/2018/INF.11 – Preparations for the “intermediary session” of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention

19. As requested by the Meetings of the Parties, the Bureau is invited to identify dates for the “intermediary” session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention “to be convened at a date to be determined but tentatively scheduled for late 2018 or early 2019” to finalize the deliberations and to reach consensus on draft decision VII/2 on the review of compliance with the Convention, and that could address additional issues that might arise (ECE/MP.EIA/23–ECE/MP.EIA/SEA/7, para. 27). In its decision-making, the Bureau should take into account that the Implementation Committee will last meet on 11–13 September 2018 to review and revise draft decision VII/2 for the intermediary session, and that, subsequently, a minimum of 12 weeks will be needed for that draft decision to be processed and translated as an official document. The Bureau should also take into account the limited availability of the meeting rooms in the Palais des Nations as of late 2018.

20. The Bureau was also mandated to prepare the draft agenda for the “intermediary” session. Consequently, it will be invited to discuss the provisional programme, and the chairmanship of the high-level segment of the “intermediary” session.

21. In June 2017, the Meetings of the Parties extended the mandate of Mr. Kremlis as the Chair of the Bureau at least until the next (“intermediary”) session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention. The Bureau may wish to put forward nominations for the chairmanship of the Bureau beyond the “intermediary” session for consideration of the Working Group.

22. The Bureau is expected to consider the provisional schedule of meetings that have been foreseen to take place in the intersessional period (sessions of the Implementation Committee, meetings of the Working Group in April–May and in early October 2019 and the “ordinary” eighth and fourth sessions of the Meetings of the Parties in 2020). It will be invited to consider possible dates for the next sessions of the Meetings of the Parties, and possible offers by Parties to host them.

8. Related events

Tentative timing: Thursday, 8 February, 14.30–15.30

23. The Chair inform the Bureau about the outcomes of the joint meeting of the Chairs of the bureau of the ECE multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) and of the Chair of the Committee on Environmental Policy that was held in Geneva on 13 and 14 November 2017.

24. The secretariat will also report on the next meeting of the Regional Forum for Sustainable Development to be organized by UNECE in early March 2018.

9. Other business

Tentative timing: Thursday, 8 February, 15.30–16

25. Members of the Bureau wishing to raise other business should contact the secretariat as soon as possible.

10. Presentation of the main decisions taken and closing of the meeting

Tentative timing: Thursday, 8 February, 16–17.30

26. The Bureau is expected to agree on the main decisions taken at the meeting and to confirm the date and location of its next session before the Chair formally closes the session.