

Conference of the Parties to the
Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents

Tenth meeting

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Item 14 of the provisional agenda
Prevention of accidental water pollution

**Workplan of the Joint Ad Hoc Expert Group on Water and Industrial
Accidents for 2019–2020**

Summary

The Joint Ad Hoc Expert Group on Water and Industrial Accidents (Joint Expert Group), at its sixteenth meeting (Dnipro, Ukraine, 18 May 2017) and when meeting in the framework of the small group of experts on fire-water retention (Edinburgh, United Kingdom, 19 January 2018), discussed possible activities that could be undertaken in the biennium 2019–2020. Based on the discussions, the secretariat prepared a draft workplan, in cooperation with the co-Chairs from the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents (Industrial Accidents Convention) and the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention).

The present document contains the proposed workplan for the Joint Expert Group for 2019–2020, as agreed with its co-Chairs, in accordance with the Joint Expert Group Strategy of 2010.¹ The Bureaux of the Industrial Accidents and Water Conventions approved the workplan, at their thirty-seventh meeting (Hernstein, Austria, 30–31 January 2018) and twenty-seventh meeting (Geneva, Switzerland, 31 May – 1 June 2018), respectively. The workplan was shared at the eighth session of the meeting of the Parties to the Water Convention (Astana, 10–12 October 2018) for information. The workplan was endorsed by the Second Joint Meeting of the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment and the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management (Geneva, 28–30 May 2018), and included in the draft programme of work for the Water Convention for 2019–2021 (ECE/MP.WAT/WG.1/2018/3-ECE/MP.WAT/WG.2/2018/3).

The Conference of the Parties will be invited to take note of the workplan for the Joint Expert Group for the biennium 2019–2020 and to include the Joint Expert Group's activities in the 2019–2020 workplan of the Industrial Accidents Convention. Please refer to the Priorities, workplan and resources for the Convention for 2019–2020 (ECE/CP.TEIA/2018/7).

¹ Available from: www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/teia/water/JEG/Strategy_JEG.pdf.

I. Workplan for the biennium 2019–2020

1. Since its establishment in 1998, the Joint Ad Hoc Expert Group on Water and Industrial Accidents (Joint Expert Group) has effectively supported countries in preventing accidental water pollution. This was mainly achieved by the development of safety guidelines and good practices on different topics (for instance, on tailings management facilities and pipelines), and it had been complimented with the facilitation of workshops, transboundary exercises and other related activities. In recent years, the Joint Expert Group had focussed its efforts on supporting operators and competent authorities, particularly from countries with economies in transition, in the practical application of the afore-mentioned safety guidelines and good practices, among others, by developing related checklists to facilitate the implementation of the guidelines at the national, regional and local levels.

2. With regard to the above, the following activities are envisaged by the Joint Ad Hoc Expert Group on Water and Industrial Accidents (Joint Expert Group) in the biennium 2019–2020, with the understanding that Parties would provide expertise and lead country support, including financial support, to support their implementation:

1. Disseminate, test and facilitate the application of the UNECE Safety Guidelines and Good Practices for Fire-water Management and Retention

3. In the biennium 2017–2018, safety guidelines and good practices for fire-water management and retention were developed by the Joint Expert Group. Different UNECE guidance documents developed previously under the framework of the Joint Expert Group had been used as a basis to set up practical checklists and measure catalogues for competent authorities and operators to facilitate their application and implementation, such as the safety guidelines and good practices for tailings managements facilities which were used to develop a related methodology – comprised of a tailings hazard index, a checklist and a measure catalogue. In the biennium 2019–2020, the Joint Expert Group would support competent authorities and operators from interested countries in testing the application of the safety guidelines and good practices for fire-water management and retention.

[Lead countries: Finland, Germany, Hungary, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom (tbc)]

2. Support the implementation of UNECE safety guidelines and checklists in countries with economies in transition and interested United Nations Member States beyond the UNECE region

4. Countries with economies in transition often face challenges in implementing the provisions of the Conventions. The Joint Expert Group will continue to provide assistance to such countries with regard to preventing accidental water pollution, mainly by supporting them in the implementation of the principles and recommendations in guidance materials produced within the framework of the Conventions, including the checklist for contingency planning for accidents affecting transboundary waters (2015) and the safety guidelines and good practices for fire-water management and retention (2018), oil terminals (2014), tailings management facilities (2008) and pipelines (2006). These guidance materials will be promoted at workshops and training events organized by the Joint Expert Group, in cooperation with international river commissions and other organizations, as appropriate and feasible. In the period 2019–2020, this could be achieved by, among others, providing support to the implementation of ongoing and possible future projects on improving the

safety of tailings management facilities in the Caucasus and on strengthening the safety of mining operations, in particular tailings management facilities in Central Asia.

[Lead countries: Germany and Switzerland (tbc)]

3. Promote transboundary response exercises

5. The promotion of response exercises, in particular in the transboundary context, is of utmost importance to be able to effectively prepare for and respond to industrial accidents, especially those that might cause transboundary water pollution. To this end, the Joint Expert Group could further promote the organization of transboundary response exercises, for example, by participating in and facilitating workshops, seminars or webinars on lessons learned from such exercises, relevant international forums and conferences.

[Lead countries: to be determined]
