

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, 17–18 June 2019

Annotated provisional agenda for the meeting

**To be held in salle IX, Palais des Nations, Geneva, starting at 10 a.m.
on Monday, 17 June 2019 (and closing at 1 p.m. on Tuesday, 18 June)***

1. Organizational matters.
2. Review of decisions by the Meetings of the Parties
3. Status of ratification of the Convention, its amendments and its Protocol.
4. Implementation of the workplan 2017–2020.
 - 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. Preparations for the eighth session of the Working Group on Environmental Impact Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment
6. Budget, financial arrangements and financial assistance
7. Preparations for the next sessions of the Meetings of the Parties
8. Related events.
9. Other business.
10. Presentation of the main decisions taken and closing of the meeting.

* There are accreditation procedures for all delegates attending meetings at the Palais des Nations. Members of the Bureau are therefore requested **to register online by 3 June 2019** through the following link: <https://uncdb.unece.org/app/ext/meeting-registration?id=BKQOLg>. 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 (elizabeth.james@un.org) and (eia.conv@un.org) or by telephone at +41 22 917 6307. 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 UNECE website at <http://www.unece.org/meetings/practical.htm>).

II. Annotations to the provisional agenda

1. Organizational matters

Tentative timing: Monday, 17 June, 10–10.30 a.m.

Relevant documentation: (The present) annotated agenda (ECE/MP.EIA/B/2019/INF.1)

1. This provisional annotated 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.

2. Review of decisions by the Meetings of the Parties

Tentative timing: Monday, 17 June, 10.30–11 a.m.

2. The Bureau will take stock of the outcomes of the intermediary sessions of the Meetings of the Parties to the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo Convention), and the Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment (Protocol on SEA) (Geneva, 5–7 February 2019) and review decisions, as included in the report of the two sessions (ECE/MP.EIA/27–ECE/MP.EIA/SEA/11, including Add. 1). It may wish to discuss any lessons to be learned and recommendations to be made for the future. The Bureau is invited to keep its discussions in mind when considering the preparations for the next sessions of the Meetings of the Parties under the item 7 of the present agenda.

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

Tentative timing: Monday, 17 June, 11–11.30 a.m.

Relevant documentation: Status of ratification (ECE/MP.EIA/B/2019/INF.2)

3. The secretariat will inform the Bureau on 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 their countries' progress regarding ratifications of the amendments to the Convention and, as relevant, of the Protocol. The Bureau is invited also to consider the written progress reports that the Meeting of the Parties, at its intermediary session, requested Armenia, Azerbaijan, North Macedonia and Ukraine to provide by the end of May 2019 with respect to the first amendment to the Convention. These written reports were originally due in January 2019. The Bureau may also wish to discuss possible measures to further encourage ratification and accession to ensure that:

(a) The first amendment to the Convention produces its effect without further delays, allowing any United Nations Member States to accede to the Convention;

(b) All the signatories to the second amendment to the Convention ratify it, to allow a unified application of the Convention by its Parties;

(c) All the signatories to the Protocol and, in particular, countries having benefited from technical assistance on SEA, ratify/accede to the Protocol to widen its membership.

4. Implementation of the workplan 2017–2020

Tentative timing: Monday, 17 June, 11.30–12.30 p.m. and 3–4 p.m.

Relevant documentation:

Workplan implementation status (ECE/MP.EIA/B/2019/INF.3)

Draft guidance addressing health impacts in strategic environmental assessment (Draft ECE/MP.EIA/WG.2/2019/3)

Note on the possible elaboration of a strategy and an action plan for the future application of the Convention and the Protocol (ECE/MP.EIA/2019/INF.6 of 11 January 2019)

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

4. The Chair of the Implementation Committee is expected to present briefly the main outcomes of the Committee's forty-fourth session (Geneva, 11–12 March 2019)¹ and the main objectives for the Committee's upcoming, forty-fifth, session (Geneva, 10–13 December 2019).

5. The Bureau member nominated by Ukraine will be invited to present the proposals that its country put forward at the intermediary sessions of the Meetings of the Parties regarding the procedure for drafting decisions on compliance for the Bureau to consider, if necessary, together with the Working Group on Environmental Impact Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment and the Implementation Committee. The Ukrainian delegation suggested, among other things, that the Bureau provide its opinion on the draft decisions prior to their submission to the Meetings of the Parties and that the Parties involved be afforded additional opportunities to comment on those draft decisions that followed up on previous compliance decisions taken by the Meeting of the Parties. It also recommended avoiding references to paragraphs contained in previous/other decisions of the Meetings of the Parties, which, in turn, contained references to previous decisions. The Meetings of the Parties invited the secretariat to submit the proposals of Ukraine for consideration by the Bureau and the Implementation Committee.

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

(a) Information on the status of Parties' reporting on their implementation of the Convention and the Protocol in the period 2016–2018 (the reporting deadline was 31 March 2019) and on the preparation of the draft sixth review of implementation of the Convention and the draft third review of implementation of the Protocol that are to be submitted to the Working Group at its next, eighth, meeting (Geneva, 26–28 November 2019). The Bureau will be invited to consider proposals for improving the reviews of implementation to be prepared based on the present reporting round and the questionnaires for the next reporting round;

¹ See the advance English copy of the report on the Implementation Committee's forty-fourth session (ECE/MP.EIA/IC/2019/2) available at: <http://www.unece.org/environmental-policy/conventions/environmental-assessment/meetings-and-events.html#/0/0/0/28089/19940>. The reports on the Committee's earlier sessions can also be accessed there.

(b) An update on the preparation of guidance on the applicability of the Convention to the life-time extension of nuclear power plants by the ad hoc working group, including the outcomes of the group's meeting held in Geneva on 25 and 26 March 20 and to be held in Lisbon, on 3 and 4 June 2019 as well as the conclusions of the workshop on environment and health impacts of the lifetime extension of nuclear power plants that IAIA will organize in Lisbon, on 5 June;

(c) Planned legislative assistance in 2019 to support the implementation or accession to/ratification of the Convention and/or the Protocol, e.g. in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, with funding from Germany, in Kazakhstan, with funding from Switzerland and OSCE office in Astana, and possibly in Azerbaijan, financed by the European Union for Environment (EU4Environment) programme;

7. The Bureau is expected to take note of the information and to provide advice on the implementation of or follow-up to the activities, including for consideration by the Working Group at its next meeting.

8. The Bureau may also wish to provide guidance and suggestions regarding the possible strategy and an action plan for the future application of the Convention and the Protocol foreseen in the workplan for the period 2017–2020. The Meetings of the Parties recommended that the discussion on this matter should continue inviting all Parties to contribute. The Bureau's input would be particularly helpful in that regard.

B. Subregional cooperation and capacity-building

9. The secretariat and the concerned Bureau members will be invited report on the implementation of activities foreseen in or related to the workplan regarding subregional cooperation and capacity-building in the following subregions:

(a) Baltic Sea subregion, including any initial plans for a meeting to be organized by Denmark, Finland and Sweden in Denmark in spring 2020;

(b) South-East Europe, with the fourth Regional Conference on Environmental Impact Assessment that Croatia would host in Vodice, Croatia, from 18 to 21 September 2019 – an event that would also cover the implementation of the Convention and the Protocol.

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, including for consideration by the Working Group their intermediary sessions.

C. Exchange of good practices

11. The secretariat will inform the Bureau about the plans for the workshop on the assessment of health impacts and health sector involvement in strategic environmental assessment to be organized during the next meeting of the Working Group, in connection with the preparation of guidance on the assessment of potential health impacts foreseen in annex II of the workplan (see also para. 13 (a) below) and which will serve as a forum for presenting the draft guidance and selected good practice.

12. As relevant, the Bureau will be informed of any initial plans for the seminar on synergies between environmental impact assessment and strategic environmental assessment in a transboundary context and the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, which the European Union will organize during the intersessional period (the remaining slot being the ninth meeting of the Working Group in June 2020).

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

13. The secretariat will report on the implementation of recent and planned activities foreseen in or related to the workplan as regards promoting ratification and application of the Protocol and the Convention, including:

(a) Development of guidance for the assessment of health impacts of plans and programmes with funding from the European Investment Bank. The Bureau will be invited to review and comment on the first draft of the guidance document (Draft ECE/MP.EIA/WG.2/2019/3), to allow the consultants to the secretariat to finalize the draft document for consideration of the Working Group at its next session;

(b) Preparation of two-page informal pamphlets or “FasTips”, including by the secretariat, on the Convention and the Protocol;

(d) Activities to promote the implementation strategic environmental assessment funded by the EU4Environment Programme, which, subject to the agreement of the beneficiary countries, could include in 2019 the following: pilot projects in Ukraine and in Belarus, training workshops in Armenia, Belarus, Georgia and the Republic Moldova, and development of implementation guidance for Belarus.

14. The secretariat will also inform the Bureau on the status of fundraising and schedule of implementation of the planned activities to raise interested Central Asian countries’ awareness of the Protocol’s benefits, with funding from Germany (the Environment Ministry’s Advisory Assistance Programme) and implemented in cooperation with the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE).

15. 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, including for consideration by the Working Group at its next meeting.

5. Preparations for the eighth meeting of the Working Group on Environmental Impact Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment

Tentative timing: Monday, 17 June, 4–5 p.m.

Relevant documentation:

Preliminary version of the annotated provisional agenda of the eighth meeting of the Working Group on Environmental Impact Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment (ECE/MP.EIA/WG.2/2019/1).

16. The Bureau is expected to review and agree on the annotated provisional agenda of the eighth meeting of the Working Group to be held in Geneva from 26 to 28 November 2019.

6. Budget, financial arrangements and financial assistance

Tentative timing: Monday, 17 June, 5–6 p.m.

Relevant documentation:

Elements of a second annual financial report in the period between seventh/third and eighth/fourth sessions of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention/Protocol: period to 30 June 2018 (ECE/MP.EIA/B/2019/INF.4)

17. As mandated by the Meetings of the Parties at their intermediary sessions, the Bureau, in consultation with the secretariat, is invited to put forward a proposal, for approval by the Working Group, on how to fill the budgetary hole and ensure the functioning of the secretariat during the intersessional period that was extended until December 2020 (the budget in June 2017 adopted through decision VII/4-III/4 covers only three years). To supplement the expected additional pledges, the Bureau should consider using any savings made to date, as well as the operating reserve.

18. The secretariat will also report on recently received contributions to, and on expenditure from, the Convention's and Protocol's trust fund as well as on its fund raising

7. Preparations for the next sessions of the Meetings of the Parties to the Convention and the Protocol

Tentative timing: Tuesday, 18 June, 10–11 a.m.

Relevant documentation:

Preparations for the next sessions of the Meetings of the Parties (ECE/MP.EIA/B/2019/INF.5)

A. Practical arrangements

19. The secretariat will provide information on the time schedule for the preparation of the documentation and other preparatory steps for the eighth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention and the fourth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol, preliminarily scheduled for 8–11 December 2020.

20. The secretariat will also inform the Bureau about possible host country candidates.

B. Programme and documentation

21. The Bureau is invited to consider and guide the substantive preparations of the next sessions of the Meetings of the Parties that are to be initiated by the Working Group at its next meeting. It is expected to discuss elements of a draft programme, including the optimal duration of the sessional period, possible activities for the draft workplan 2021–2023 and to agree on an initial list of draft decisions and documents to be prepared for consideration of the Meetings of the Parties. It may consider, for example, whether to recommend the preparation of a draft declaration for the next sessions, and, if so, reflect on its main messages.

22. The Bureau is invited to suggest topics for a thematic seminar and/or a panel, to be organized during the sessions. Possible topics raised during the intermediary session of the Meetings of the Parties were the role of strategic environmental assessment for “sustainable cities and climate change”, and, as suggested by the delegation of Switzerland, for greening large infrastructure projects in the ECE region and beyond, including in relation to the Sustainable Development Goals.

C. Outstanding issues:**(a) Officers for the next intersessional period 2021-2023**

23. The Bureau may wish to initiate discussions and to put forward proposals on officials for the treaty bodies whom could be elected at the next sessions of the Meetings of the Parties, including identifying Parties that have not or not recently been represented, and whom the secretariat could informally approach.

(b) Tentative sequence of meetings in the next intersessional period

24. Considering that at their intermediary sessions, the Meetings of the Parties decided to extend the present intersessional period until December 2020, and to alter the schedule of the meetings of the Bureau and the Working Group held during the period, the Bureau is expected to discuss how the meetings of the treaty bodies should best be scheduled in the next intersessional period that will start in January 2021 and is likely to extend until December 2023.

8. Related events

Tentative timing: Tuesday, 18 June, 11–11.30

25. The secretariat will report on the outcomes of any relevant events, including:

(a) Regional Forum on Sustainable Development for the UNECE region (Geneva, 22–23 March 2019);

(b) A workshop on regional cooperation to enhance transboundary consultation on nuclear power plant development in South-East Asia (Singapore, 8–9 May 2019), where the secretariat was invited to present the Convention and the Protocol and experience in their application in the UNECE region;

(c) Events held under the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents (Industrial Accidents Convention) on land-use planning and industrial safety.

9. Other business

Tentative timing: Tuesday, 18 June 11.30–noon

26. 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: Tuesday, 18 June, noon–1 pm

27. 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.