

**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE**

**COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY**

**Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment**

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**DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS  
ON THE ADAPTATION OF NATIONAL SYSTEMS OF ENVIRONMENTAL  
MONITORING AND DATA COLLECTION PURSUANT TO THE GUIDELINES  
FOR THE APPLICATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL INDICATORS IN EASTERN  
EUROPE, CAUCASUS AND CENTRAL ASIA<sup>1</sup>**

To adapt national monitoring and data collection systems to the requirements of the Guidelines for the Application of Environmental Indicators, it is recommended that public authorities that are responsible in countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA) for environmental monitoring and information should implement the measures as follows:

*Policy context*

1. Use the Guidelines:

- (a) To improve national environmental reporting for the purpose of environmental decision-making and public information;
- (b) To make national environmental assessments comparable with those of other UNECE Member-countries; and
- (c) To facilitate data gathering for future pan-European environmental assessment reports.

2. Use environmental indicators contained in the Guidelines:

- (a) To identify driving forces of environmental changes;
- (b) To measure pressure on the environment;
- (c) To assess the state of the environment and its individual components;
- (d) To assess the impact of environmental pollution on human health and biota;
- (e) To evaluate the effectiveness of environmental response measures.

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<sup>1</sup> Prepared with the assistance of Alexandre Shekhovtsov (Russian Federation), rapporteurs on this agenda item.

### *Institutional framework*

3. Develop legal and regulatory basis relating to the collection and handling of data for the Guidelines' environmental indicators as well as to their use for environmental protection activities.

4. Define and designate ministries, departments and organizations responsible for the collection of primary data on each Guidelines' indicator and the publication of indicators in national and territorial (city, Oblast etc) stat-of-the-environment reports and statistical compendiums.

5. State statistical services in those countries, that have not done so yet, should develop and introduce into practice categories of economic activities that correspond to those of the International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC) of all Economic Activities of the United Nations. Collect and treat data and publish State statistical reports in accordance with ISIC.

6. Public authorities responsible for monitoring and control of the environment and sanitary and epidemiological conditions; sustainable use of water, land, forest and other biological resources; housing and communal services; and for energy and transport policies should ensure, in full coordination, the adaptation or development of monitoring programmes providing for measuring and calculating as well as annual collection of data for each Guidelines' environmental indicator.

7. Ensure continuous observations as a basis for developing environmental indicators and regularity in their application in environmental policy.

8. Spread the use of the Guidelines' environmental indicators to the territorial level by adapting indicators, where necessary. Central governmental authorities should provide consultative assistance and support to territorial bodies.

9. Conduct regular expert training on the application of environmental indicators for environmental assessments, environmental policy development and environmental publications for the general public.

10. Organizations, responsible for data collection and treatment and management of databases with the application of environmental indicators, should ensure for a regular transmission of the information collected to institutions designated for the publication and dissemination of national and territorial state-of-the-environment reports. Improve national and territorial state-of-the-environment reports on the basis of environmental indicators for better use by environmental policy-makers, academic community and the general public.

11. Ministries responsible for environmental policy should initiate regular publication of data collections on the Guidelines' indicators.

12. Set up national electronic data banks (databases) on environmental indicators and ensure free access to these by using modern information technologies, including Internet.

### *Follow-up*

13. Review regularly the lists of indicators that are applied at the national level to enlarge these lists beyond those indicators covered by the Guidelines. In selecting additional indicators apply the criteria, as follows:

(a) Relevance to national environmental priorities: indicators should be assessed in terms of their relevance to the goals and objectives of national strategy documents on environmental protection and sustainable use of natural resources (national strategies of environmental protection, sustainable development, biodiversity, and national environmental action plans);

(b) Relation to international environmental policy: indicators should be assessed in terms of their relation to the implementation of international agreements and obligations and to their comparability at international level;

(c) Measurability: indicators should be assessed in terms of the availability of (preferably internationally-agreed) cost-effective methods and methodologies for the data necessary (measurements and/or calculations);

(d) Predictive ability: indicators should be assessed in terms of their capacity to track the effectiveness and efficiency of pursued environmental policy;

(e) Role as a means of communication for public awareness: indicators should be assessed by their clarity for general public and ability to raise awareness about the state of the environment;

(f) Reliability.

14. When selecting additional indicators, aim to ensure, first of all, that they provide for the objective reflection of processes in the form that is easy to understand and that they demonstrate trends.

15. Participate actively in the international cooperation in the field of indicator-based environmental monitoring and reporting that assist in cross-country comparisons.