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Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment

Twenty-third session

Geneva, 3 and 4 May 2021

Item 4 of the provisional agenda

Implementing the mandate and terms of reference

Draft annual timetable of activities for 2022

Note by the secretariat

Summary

At its twenty-sixth session (Geneva, 9 and 10 November 2020), the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Committee on Environmental Policy approved the extension of the mandate and terms of reference (2017–2021) of the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment until mid-2023 (ECE/CEP/2020/2, para. 38 (c)). The terms of reference require the preparation of annual timetables of activities, taking into account the financial and human resources available (ECE/CEP/2017/2, para. 32 (b), and annex II, para. 5 and ECE/CEP/AC.10/2021/4).

The present document provides a draft annual timetable of activities for 2022 for consideration by the Working Group at its twenty-third session. The annual timetable of activities for 2022 will be submitted to the Committee on Environmental Policy for consideration at its twenty-seventh session (location and dates to be confirmed).



Introduction

1. The present document sets out a timetable of activities (see table below) to be carried out by the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment in 2022.
2. The timetable is based on the extended mandate and terms of reference of the Working Group (ECE/CEP/2017/2, annex II and ECE/CEP/AC.10/2021/4), the revised outline of the Working Group's activities leading up to 2021 (ECE/CEP/AC.10/2019/3), which is still valid given the postponement of the Ninth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference to October 2022 and the postponement of deliverables to be prepared for the conference, and feedback received from member States in 2020.
3. The Working Group will implement the activities in close collaboration with national and international governmental and non-governmental stakeholders, including youth organizations, research institutes and academia, and with other relevant United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) bodies, such as the Joint Task Force on Environmental Statistics and Indicators.
4. With the assistance of the ECE secretariat, member States and organizations that agree to lead any of the activities outlined below will need to facilitate their implementation and report to the Working Group on the progress made and challenges faced.
5. The Working Group will support the secretariat in its continuing efforts to mobilize resources and assistance from regional and international organizations and member States in order to enable the Working Group to operate fully.

Timetable of activities in 2022

<i>Main overall objective and activity^a</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Task or event</i>	<i>Timing (to be confirmed)</i>	<i>Indicator of achievement</i>	<i>Other activities^a</i>
A. Assist in the establishment and operation of national information systems in line with SEIS in Europe and Central Asia					
A.1. Continue supporting the establishment of SEIS with regard to its specific content and principles in support of regular environmental assessment processes and reporting	High	Capacity-building activities at annual sessions of the Working Group and Joint Task Force in support of SEIS implementation and regular monitoring and assessment, including on environment-related SDGs	May and October 2022	Holding of the capacity-building activities	B.3
		Maintain the SEIS e-learning and knowledge-sharing platform (ECE with UNEP)	Throughout 2022	SEIS e-learning and knowledge-sharing platform	–
A.2. Continue cooperating with the Joint Task Force in its work on environmental statistics and indicators, associated data sets and	High	Review and amendment of the ECE Guidelines for the Application of Environmental Indicators	Throughout 2022	ECE Guidelines for the Application of Environmental Indicators	–

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accompanying environmental information and data necessary to establish SEIS				reviewed and amended as appropriate	
		Annual session of the Joint Task Force	October 2022	Report on the session	A.1, A.5, C.2, D.1, D.2, D.3
A.3. Regularly evaluate the performance of ECE countries in establishing and implementing SEIS against the SEIS targets and performance indicators adopted by the Committee	High	Annual sessions of the Working Group and Joint Task Force	May and October 2022	Compilation of completed questionnaires on the establishment of SEIS and report of member States on progress in implementation	A.4
A.5. Prepare a mid-term and a final report for the Committee on the establishment and implementation of SEIS leading up to 2021	High	Presentation of the final review report on the establishment of SEIS at the Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference in Nicosia	October 2022	Welcoming of the final report by ministers	–
A.6. Provide annual recommendations on how SEIS can be further strengthened in European and Central Asian countries	Medium	Annual sessions of the Working Group and Joint Task Force	May and October 2022	Recommendations and advice provided to ECE countries in order to improve their SEIS performance	A.1, A.2, A.5
B. Lead a process of consultation on the regular pan-European environmental assessment and the streamlining of regular state-of-the-					

<i>Main overall objective and activity^a</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Task or event</i>	<i>Timing (to be confirmed)</i>	<i>Indicator of achievement</i>	<i>Other activities^a</i>
environment reporting by 2020					
B.1. Bring together experts involved in the UNEP Global Environment Outlook process and the EEA European Environment Information and Observation Network to discuss and oversee the regular pan-European environmental assessment	High	Annual sessions of the Working Group and meetings between ECE, EEA and UNEP, as appropriate Support the preparation of a pan-European environmental assessment, supported by SEIS, with its nature, scope and leadership to be determined by the Committee on Environmental Policy	First half of 2022 First half of 2022	Oversight described in the report on Working Group session Pan-European environmental assessment supported by SEIS	C.3, D.3
B.2. Discuss and detail regional priorities concerning the streamlining of regular state-of-the-environment reporting	High	Annual session of the Working Group	May 2022	Regional priorities described in the report on the Working Group session	–
B.3. Oversee the implementation of proposed recommendations and guidance provided through the consultation process on the regular pan-European environmental assessment and the streamlining of regular state-of-the-environment reporting	Medium	Annual session of the Working Group and preparation of an overview of recommendations made and how they were addressed Implementation of capacity-building and provision of advisory services in order to	May 2022	Implementation of recommendations supported, including through capacity-development activities and guidance	–

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		assist in the streamlining of regular state-of-the-environment reports	Throughout 2022	Capacity-building activities implemented, and advisory services provided	
C. Initiate a process of consultation on the development of a regional environmental information and assessment network of networks					
C.2. Cooperate with the Joint Task Force to ensure that all planned and future activities are synergetic and streamlined	High	Annual sessions of the Working Group and Joint Task Force	May 2022 and October 2022	Progress on environmental statistics and indicators described in the reports on Working Group and Joint Task Force sessions	–
C.3. Develop capacities to engage other communities and networks to discuss how environmental, social and economic information and data can be integrated and utilized in decision-making	Medium	Annual session of the Working Group	May 2022	Participation by other communities and networks described in the reports on Working Group sessions	–
C.4. Operationalize proposed recommendations and guidance provided through the consultative process to ensure the sustainable implementation of a	Low	Annual session of the Working Group	May 2022	Participation by other communities and networks described in the reports on Working	–

<i>Main overall objective and activity^a</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Task or event</i>	<i>Timing (to be confirmed)</i>	<i>Indicator of achievement</i>	<i>Other activities^a</i>
regional network of networks (optional)				Group sessions	
C.5. Publish outcomes from the Working Group's collaborative activities	Low	Publication of other guidelines as appropriate	2022	Guidelines, lessons learned	–
D. Engage in capacity-building assistance addressing specific challenges related to environmental monitoring and assessment					
D.1. Detail regional and national capacity gaps in information and data needed for producing the ECE set of environmental indicators, the EEA core set of indicators, the OECD green growth indicators and the SDG indicators	Medium	Annual sessions of the Working Group and Joint Task Force	May and October 2022	Progress described in the reports on Working Group and Joint Task Force sessions	–
D.2. Support countries in the development of regional and national indicator frameworks to monitor the SDGs and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and activities to support its implementation	Medium	Capacity-building and advisory services in support of SEIS implementation and regular monitoring and assessment, including on environment-related SDGs Annual sessions of the Working Group and Joint Task Force	Throughout 2022 May and October 2022	Holding of the workshops or sessions Progress described in the reports on Working Group and Joint Task Force sessions	B.3
D.3. Engage and liaise directly with other relevant actors working on capacity-building in related areas of work	Medium	Annual sessions of the Working Group and Joint Task Force	May and October 2022	Progress described in the reports on Working Group and Joint Task Force sessions: participation	–

<i>Main overall objective and activity^a</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Task or event</i>	<i>Timing (to be confirmed)</i>	<i>Indicator of achievement</i>	<i>Other activities^a</i>
		ECE secretariat engagement with other actors, for example, EEA, OECD and UNEP	Throughout 2022	of the ECE secretariat in meetings of other actors and vice versa. Reports on joint activities, for example, capacity-building workshops	
D.4. Implement capacity-building activities to provide assistance in accordance with priority areas of action	High	Capacity development activities during the Working Group and Joint Task Force sessions	May and October 2022	Holding of the sessions	–
Cross-cutting		Presentation of the terms of reference of the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment for mid-2023–2029 and the annual workplan for 2023 at the first special session of the Committee on Environmental Policy in 2022	May 2022	Expressions of support for the renewal of the mandate and terms of reference of the Working Group for mid-2023–2029 by the Committee	–
		Presentation of the terms of reference of the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment for mid-2023–2029 and the annual workplan for 2023 at the second special session of the Committee on Environmental Policy (back-to-back with the Ninth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference)	October 2022	Renewal of the mandate and terms of reference of the Working Group for mid-2023 – 2029 by the Committee	–
		Annual session of the Working Group, including capacity-building and support for the development of regional and national indicator frameworks	May 2022	Report on the session	A.1, A.2, A.5, B.2, C.2, C.3, C.4, D.1, D.2

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		Drafting of an annual timetable of activities for 2023	Second half of 2022	Approval of the timetable by the Working Group	C.2

Abbreviations: EEA, European Environment Agency; OECD, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development; SDG, Sustainable Development Goal; SEIS, Shared Environmental Information System; UNEP, United Nations Environment Programme.

^a These are listed in the draft revised outline of activities of the Working Group leading up to 2021 (ECE/CEP/AC.10/2018/3), which is based on the objectives and activities set out in the mandate and terms of reference of the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment (ECE/CEP/2017/2, annex II).