

External evaluation of the **Environment Performance Review process in the period 2015–2019** (September 2019)

**Final Progress Report as at 31 December 2020**

#	Recommendation	Management response	Responsibility	Target date/ deadline	Date of implementation/comments
1	<b>The EPR unit should continue to align the future EPRs with the specific needs and priorities of the beneficiary countries, by integrating sectors, such as agriculture, energy and transport.</b>	<p>UNECE accepts the recommendation.</p> <p>Environmental Performance Reviews (EPRs) have always been geared to serve needs of the beneficiary countries and the EPR unit will continue to align the EPRs with the needs and priorities of the beneficiary countries. In particular, the EPR unit will sensitize the countries to design the structure of the respective review to further integrate economic sectors, such as agriculture, energy and transport.</p> <p>As a voluntary programme the EPR has to be responsive and support the needs and requests of the countries willing to have their environment management reviewed. The EPR unit will continue to respect this mutual understanding and will ensure that the country representatives understand and will be informed about the importance of integrating environment into sectoral policies, such as agriculture, energy and transport. When an EPR report is launched, the EPR unit will also explore with the respective country the initiation of a national process to monitor and assess progress in the implementation of EPR recommendations, including the establishment of an inter-ministerial working group necessary to support the integration of sectors, such as agriculture, energy and transport.</p>	EPR Unit	<b>Implemented, September 2020</b>	<p>One feature and advantage of the EPR programme is to be flexible to meet specific needs of the beneficiary countries. During the preparatory mission, the EPR unit agrees with the environmental authorities to include chapters that are of priorities for the country under review.</p> <p>The recommendation was implemented in preparation for the EPR of Morocco.</p>

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2	<p><b>The EPR unit should increase the role of EPRs in supporting the achievement and monitoring of EPR-relevant SDGs.</b></p>	<p>UNECE partially accepts this recommendation.</p> <p>The EPR unit has organized capacity-building activities to support the achievement and monitoring of EPR-relevant SDGs. Several events supporting these efforts were organized in the framework of EPR Programme (e.g. 4 peer-learning workshops in Minsk, Astana, Tbilisi and Budva) and the UNDA Project 1819AE “Evidence-based environmental governance and sustainable environmental policies in support of the 2030 Agenda in South-East Europe”, which supports five countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia) in formulating actions on the basis of their EPRs in order to achieve relevant SDGs.</p> <p>The EPR unit will work with the ECE Expert Group on EPRs at the 31st meeting of the EPR Expert Group on EPRs (22-23 Oct. 2020) to start revising the structure of the chapters in order to integrate the SDGs more deeply and coherently and, based on the availability of funds including from RPTC, to design capacity-development activities and materials to support countries in their implementation of the relevant recommendations.</p>	EPR Unit		<p><b>Implemented, January 2020</b></p> <p>New guidance has been given to experts drafting the EPR of Romania in December 2019–January 2020 to further integrate SDGs into the text of the review, including directly into recommendations, instead of reflecting relevant SDG targets in separate boxes in the text.</p>
3	<p><b>The EPR unit should seek advice from the Expert Group on EPRs on the need and modalities for deeper coverage of human rights and environment in EPRs in future EPRs.</b></p>	<p>UNECE accepts the recommendation.</p> <p>The EPRs have concentrated on the state of the environment, environmental management, health and measurable environmental issues such as emissions. Human rights issues related to environment have not been covered by EPRs and the EPR unit will seek advice from the Expert Group on EPRs and OHCHR colleagues dealing with environment and human rights how and to</p>	EPR Unit		<p><b>Implemented, August 2020</b></p> <p>A workshop was organised 19 August 2020 with the EPR Expert group to discuss the integration of human rights into the EPRs. The Procedural Aspects were already in the EPRs in the chapter on environmental democracy.</p> <p>The EPR unit drafted a paper to share with the experts how to integrate substantive human rights in the relevant chapters: air protection, water management, waste and chemical management, health and environment and agriculture and environment.</p>

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		<p>what extent to address these issues.</p> <p>The EPR unit will invite OHCHR colleagues to raise the issue of human rights connected to environment in the next meeting of the Expert Group on EPRs. The EPR unit will then analyse and subsequently implement the recommendations that the Expert Group will give on how to cover and integrate human rights in the general structure of EPRs at the 31st meeting of the EPR Expert Group on EPR (22-23 Oct. 2020).</p>			
4	<p><b>UNECE should extend cooperation with other UN entities and other international organizations for organization of the future EPRs since the EPR Programme covers several fields that are beyond the expertise of UNECE, such as industry, health, agriculture, waste management and environmental risk management. This should include WHO, UNEP, UNIDO.</b></p>	<p>UNECE accepts this recommendation.</p> <p>The EPR Programme by its nature is a wide ranging and multi-faceted and therefore needs expertise on very diverse and specified issues – such as biodiversity, protected areas management, waste and chemical management and climate change adaption and mitigation. The five staff of the EPR unit does not and cannot have all this expertise. Therefore, the EPR unit has had hundreds of UN system, in-kind or outside experts contributing to EPR reviews over the course of the past 23 years. For example, during the period from 2015 to 2019, 162 experts worked on EPRs out of which 41 were either from the EPR unit or ECE. The EPR unit has collaborated with UNEP, OCHA, WHO and OECD.</p> <p>The EPR unit will continue its long-standing policy of using the best available experts on specific issues and continue and, if possible, expand its contacts with WHO, UNIDO, UNEP, UNDP, FAO, OECD and others for the best possible expertise on all environmental issues for the next review that will take place spring 2020.</p>	EPR Unit		<p><b>Implemented, October 2020</b></p> <p>The practice has been extended to relevant organisations, depending on the structure of the review.</p> <p>After a preparatory mission, the EPR unit contacts other international organizations to ask them to provide expertise or to share information on related topics based on the agreed structure.</p> <p>During the consolidation of the report, the EPR unit also contacts relevant international organisations, if needed.</p> <p>In October 2020, the European Investment Bank was invited for the first time, and accepted, to join the team for the EPR of Morocco, as well as the UNEP Regional Office for Africa.</p>

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5	<b>Future EPRs need to continue supporting the beneficiary countries in developing/refining legal and policy framework for green economy together with putting in place specific green economy initiative and financing.</b>	<p>UNECE accepts this recommendation.</p> <p>As responses to the emerging global and regional concerns, new concepts and approaches, such as green economy, have been developed. In 2011, the seventh Ministerial Conference “Environment for Europe” requested the EPR Programme in its third cycle to include amongst others, financing in a green economy context. However, in some reviewed countries, the legal and policy framework for green economy and specific green economy initiatives are lacking.</p> <p>The Pan-European Strategic Framework for Greening the Economy provides guidance to an inclusive green economy that will bring investment in innovation, foster the transfer of green technology and products and stimulate sustainable consumer behaviour. To respond to the identified challenge and based on the Pan-European Strategic Framework for Greening the Economy, the EPR unit will work with the Expert Group on EPRs and UNEP, and in cooperation with OECD, to design and increase capacity-development activities and materials to support countries in integrating green economy approaches at the 31st meeting of the EPR Expert Group on EPR (22-23 Oct. 2020). These actions will be undertaken in order to reduce environmental risks and ecological scarcities, create green jobs and minimize negative consequences for enterprises and vulnerable groups.</p>	EPR Unit	<b>Implemented, October 2020</b>	<p>Two chapters are linked to green economy: Chapter 1 is reviewing policies on Green economy and chapter 3 on Green economy goes further into details. Moreover, each chapter covers measures to green the environment.</p> <p>For instance, in October 2020, in a meeting of the Expert Group on EPRs, Romania accepted recommendations refining the legal and policy framework for green economy.</p>
6	<b>UNECE in collaboration with CEP, EPR Expert Group, donors and relevant UN and other</b>	The availability of data has been problematic throughout the time of the EPR Programme. The voluntary nature of the Programme sometimes hinders the enthusiasm of the country under review to provide the necessary data.	EPR Unit	<b>Implemented, September 2020</b>	The EPR unit in all forums and in all phases of the EPR process, consistently reminds countries under review to submit to the EPR review team accurate information and data in particular those

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	<p><b>international organizations should increase the awareness and readiness of reviewed countries to provide all necessary data and information facilitating a smooth incorporation of relevant SDGs into the reviews.</b></p>	<p>There are several, sometimes overlapping, reasons for non-provision of data. These include: institutional practices of ministries and statistical offices; data are considered confidential; or data for specific environmental area not being collected at all. In communications with the countries under review, the EPR Programme has always emphasized the importance of the availability of good, reliable and timely data. The rationale for having data for EPRs has been that good data enables better analysis of the environmental problems leading to good recommendations best suited for the needs of the country, including the incorporation of SDGs in the reviews.</p> <p>The EPR Programme will continue to underline the need for reliable data and to increase awareness of the reviewed countries of the importance of data availability. The EPR unit will seek support from the Executive Secretary and the Statistical Division to obtain the necessary data for future countries under review. The next review is expected to take place spring 2020.</p>			<p>related to the structure of the review.</p> <p>Morocco was the last country to be reviewed and during the virtual preparatory meetings in September 2020, the need of accurate data and information facilitating a smooth incorporation of relevant SDGs into the review was raised.</p>