

Strengthening national capacity in applying sustainable energy policies and practices based on the recommendations of the Environmental Performance Reviews

Online Workshop
30 June 2021

Concept Note

Background

The Environmental Performance Reviews (EPR) Programme has been mandated by the [Eighth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference](#) (Batumi, Georgia, 2016) to assist UNECE member States in supporting the achievement and monitoring of environment-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the pan-European region. Addressing SDGs in the EPRs facilitates further incorporation of non-binding EPR recommendations into national policy documents, thereby contributing simultaneously to the implementation of EPR recommendations and the achievement of SDGs. While an EPR is considered instrumental in providing an overall assessment of the progress achieved in meeting international commitments, countries still face challenges in implementing recommendations and in reporting on progress in implementation for the subsequent cycle of EPR. Therefore, since 2017 and based on the request from countries, several regional and subregional workshops have been organized, focusing on specific topics addressed in the EPRs (e.g., on environment and transport, environment and energy, integration of SDG targets in ongoing and future EPRs and implementation of the environment-related targets of the 2030 Agenda), to assist countries in their efforts to implement EPR recommendations.

The Committee on Sustainable Energy, at its [twenty-seventh session](#) on 26-27 September 2018, endorsed the alignment of the Committee's work with not only SDG 7 but also with SDGs 9, 11, 12, 13 and 17. It also acknowledged the important work of its six subsidiary bodies (Groups of Experts) to achieve the energy-related SDGs ([ECE/ENERGY/119](#)).

The Environment and Sustainable Energy Divisions organized a workshop in November 2017 with a view to strengthen the capacity of experts and government officials in the energy sector to identify and apply best practices, measures and procedures of sustainable energy in order to adapt policy and practices that support transition to sustainable energy. The participants included experts from Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) and the Caucasus (Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia). The workshop increased understanding of Government officials, experts and other stakeholders of SDG 7, and in particular how to create favorable regulatory frameworks and incentives for renewable energy development, diversify energy supplies, tackle the GHG emissions from the energy sector, enhance the energy efficiency of buildings, use waste for the production of energy and promote public awareness of energy efficiency and energy saving. As such, the workshop also contributed to the effective implementation of SDG 7 in concerned countries. The workshop participants evaluated positively the format and content of the workshop and suggested to UNECE to continue organizing such workshops in the future.

In 2019, a UN Development Account project [Sustainable Energy for All \(SE4All\) for Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, and Central Asia](#) was completed by UNECE (lead agency) and ESCAP. Its objective was to strengthen the national capacity of selected countries with economies in transition in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia to develop national sustainable energy action plans. Five beneficiary countries of the project – Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan – represent three subregions. For each country, a draft National Sustainable Energy Action Plan (NSEAP) was developed.

Objectives and Methodology

The workshop aims to strengthen the national capacity of countries of the Caucasus, Central Asia, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe in applying sustainable energy policies and practices, based on recommendations from recently concluded EPR chapters on energy and environment, as well as other good practices in sustainable energy. It will be the second workshop dedicated to the theme of energy and environment.

The main objectives of the workshop:

- Review and analysis of the recent EPR recommendations on energy and environment
- Sharing of experiences by selected countries on the implementation of recommendations drawn from EPR chapters on energy and environment
- Assessment of tools and instruments to support sustainable energy, including draft National Sustainable Energy Action Plans (NSEAPs)
- Identification of common priorities for technical assistance
- Discussion of the way forward

The workshop participants will discuss and identify key issues that are priorities in these countries, as identified by the EPRs and through initiatives undertaken by the Sustainable Energy Division to support the transition to sustainable energy. These include draft NSEAPs, outcomes of the work of the Joint Task Force on Energy Efficiency Standards in Buildings, including work on High Performance Buildings, and outcomes of the Hard Talks on Renewable Energy in selected countries. Good practice examples related to key systemic issues for implementation of the 2030 Agenda will be presented and discussed at this capacity-building event.

The workshop will be held online and consist of presentations and panel discussions with participation of Government officials, international and national experts, representatives of the business community, civil society, academia, international organizations and other stakeholders.