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Economic Commission for Europe

Committee on Environmental Policy

Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment

Twenty-fourth session

Geneva, 11 and 12 April 2022

Item 1 of the provisional agenda

Adoption of the agenda

Annotated provisional agenda for the twenty-fourth session

**To be held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, starting at 9.30 a.m.
on Monday, 11 April 2022**

I. Provisional agenda

1. Adoption of the agenda.
2. Adoption of the report of the twenty-third session.
3. Implementing the mandate and terms of reference.
4. Reporting on the Shared Environmental Information System to support a regular process of environmental assessment.
5. Regular pan-European environmental assessment supported by the Shared Environmental Information System.
6. Sharing and integration of economic, social and environmental data with regard to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
7. Progress in environmental monitoring and assessment, including institutional and regulatory mechanisms and infrastructure at the national level.
8. Other business.
9. Closure of the meeting.



II. Annotations

According to its terms of reference, the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment is open to all member States of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE). Members of the Working Group represent the national institutions responsible for environmental monitoring and assessment. The Working Group also involves representatives of programmes and policies and multilateral environmental agreements dealing with the collection of environmental data and information and the generation of environmental assessments – whether covering the environment as a whole, or only a specific theme – as well as expert teams.¹

Also invited to participate are representatives of international organizations, such as the European Commission, the European Environment Agency, the Global Earth Observation System of Systems, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Statistics Division, the International Telecommunication Union and the World Health Organization European Centre for Environment and Health.

The twenty-fourth session of the Working Group is expected to be held on 11 and 12 April 2022 in a hybrid format. The agenda and format of the session may need to be adjusted at a later stage given the ongoing coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

1. Adoption of the agenda

The Chair, Ms. Maia Javakhishvili (Georgia), will open the twenty-fourth session. The Working Group will be invited to adopt the agenda for the session, as set out in the present document.²

2. Adoption of the report of the twenty-third session

The secretariat will summarize the outcomes of the twenty-third session of the Working Group (Geneva (hybrid and online), 4–5 May 2021) as contained in the report of that session (ECE/CEP/AC.10/2021/2) and invite the Working Group to adopt the report.

The secretariat will inform the Working Group about the status of implementation of the decisions and recommendations made at the twenty-third session, including the consideration of the Working Group's activities by the ECE Committee on Environmental Policy at its twenty-seventh session (Geneva (hybrid), 3–5 November 2021).

3. Implementing the mandate and terms of reference

The Working Group's terms of reference require that it prepare an annual timetable of activities and achievements.³

The secretariat will report on the decisions made by the Committee on Environmental Policy, at its twenty-seventh session, regarding the activities of the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment in 2021 and the Joint Task Force on Environmental Statistics and Indicators, as set out in the report of the Committee's twenty-seventh session.⁴

¹ ECE/CEP/2017/2, annex II, paras. 10–11.

² Documentation for the meeting and other relevant information will be posted on the web page for the meeting on the ECE website: <https://unece.org/environmental-policy/events/twenty-fourth-session-working-group-environmental-monitoring-and>.

³ ECE/CEP/2017/2, annex II, para. 5.

⁴ ECE/CEP/2021/2, paras. 44–47, available at <https://unece.org/info/Environmental-Policy/Committee-on-Environmental-Policy/events/357297> (advance unedited copy).

The secretariat will present the draft timetable of activities for 2023 (ECE/CEP/AC.10/2022/3), which the Working Group will be invited to approve.

The members of the Working Group will be invited to present ideas on areas of work for the new terms of reference of the Working Group for the period mid-2023–mid-2028. The members of the Working Group will also be invited to discuss how to mainstream gender into the future work of the Working Group, with the aim of ensuring: (a) the participation of both women and men in environmental monitoring and assessment activities and decision-making; and (b) that improved monitoring benefits men and women equally.

The secretariat will provide informal information on the financial resources available to support meetings of the Working Group and its other activities.

In addition, representatives of international and regional organizations will be invited to report briefly on initiatives and projects that relate to the activities of the Working Group, as appropriate.

4. Reporting on the Shared Environmental Information System to support a regular process of environmental assessment

The terms of reference for the Working Group specify that it shall: (a) regularly evaluate the performance of ECE countries in establishing and implementing the Shared Environmental Information System against the Shared Environmental Information System targets and performance indicators adopted by the Committee; and (b) prepare a mid-term and a final report for the Committee on Environmental Policy on the establishment and implementation of the Shared Environmental Information System leading up to 2021.⁵

At its twenty-third session, the Working Group adopted the final review report on the establishment of the Shared Environmental Information System in Europe and Central Asia (ECE/CEP/AC.10/2021/6).

The Committee on Environmental Policy, at its twenty-seventh session, welcomed the final review report on the establishment of the System, prepared by the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment with the support of the secretariat and the United Nations Environment Programme, and expressed appreciation for the fact that, overall, a Shared Environmental Information System had been successfully established in Europe and Central Asia. The Committee also noted that countries still needed assistance in fully implementing the pillars and principles of the Shared Environmental Information System and in the regular production and sharing of relevant data flows associated with the ECE environmental indicators and forwarded the final review report to the Ninth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference.⁶

The secretariat will present draft key messages and policy recommendations to be forwarded to the Ninth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference together with the final review report. Member States will be invited to discuss and suggest recommendations and key messages, as well as next steps on the use of the System in the future.

5. Regular pan-European environmental assessment supported by the Shared Environmental Information System

The Working Group has been tasked with leading a process of consultation on the regular pan-European environmental assessment⁷ for consideration by the Committee on Environmental Policy and leading up to the next Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference.

⁵ ECE/CEP/2017/2, annex II, para. 3 (a) (iii) and (v).

⁶ ECE/CEP/2021/2, paras. 45 and 47 (e)–(g).

⁷ ECE/CEP/2017/2, annex II, para. 2 (b).

During the twenty-third session of the Working Group, the secretariat and consultants presented progress and draft elements of the next pan-European assessment (ECE/CEP/AC.10/2021/5), which were welcomed by the Working Group, while requesting the secretariat to provide an update on the assessment at its next session, for final clearance.⁸

During its twenty-seventh session, the Committee on Environmental Policy expressed its appreciation to those member States that had provided financial contributions to support the preparation of the next pan-European environmental assessment, and to the individual authors of the draft elements of the assessment, welcoming those. The Committee also took note of the progress, timeline and next steps for the completion of the assessment, requested the secretariat to submit the full draft of the pan-European assessment and the draft summary for policymakers for consultation with ECE member States at the latest by 15 February 2022 and decided to provide comments to the secretariat within one month of receipt. It also requested the secretariat to continue to inform the Bureau of progress made.⁹

The secretariat will provide an overview of the latest developments related to the assessment, including on feedback received from member States on the full draft and on next steps.

The Working Group will be invited to consider the information on the draft full assessment and discuss the assessment and next steps.

6. Sharing and integration of economic, social and environmental data with regard to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

One objective of the Working Group is to discuss interlinkages between environmental, economic and social considerations regarding the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the green economy and other related areas of work.

During the twenty-third session, members of the Working Group were invited to discuss:

(a) How the work on environmental information, data and indicators, including related to a green and circular economy, could support the development of the pan-European environmental assessment(s) and other activities related to the Working Group;

(b) Topics to consider for the twenty-fourth session of the Working Group.¹⁰

The secretariat will present any feedback received and recent developments.

International organizations and the European Environment Agency will be invited to present upcoming global and regional environmental policy events in 2022 relevant for the work of the Working Group.

International partners will be invited to present recent developments and key messages pertaining to circular economy.

International organizations and the European Environment Agency will be invited to report briefly on developments related to new technologies, big data, artificial intelligence and Earth observation and to make full use of the potential of data, technology and digitalization that will complement and potentially replace established monitoring practices and information sources for improved decision-making.

The Working Group will be invited to discuss how the work on environmental information, data and indicators, including related to a green and circular economy, gender mainstreaming and digitalization in the environmental field, can support the development of future pan-European environmental assessments and other activities related to the Working Group.

⁸ ECE/CEP/AC.10/2021/2, para. 39 (a) and (h).

⁹ ECE/CEP/2021/2, para. 27.

¹⁰ ECE/CEP/AC.10/2021/2, para. 46.

7. Progress in environmental monitoring and assessment, including institutional and regulatory mechanisms and infrastructure at the national level

Members of the Working Group, and especially those representing countries of the Caucasus, Central Asia and Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, will be invited to make a short presentation on major actions taken since the previous meeting regarding, as appropriate:

(a) The production of environmental reports, analyses and assessments based on environmental information and indicators, including through the use of the Shared Environmental Information System;

(b) The modernization and upgrading of national monitoring networks, in particular, those on air, water and soil;

(c) Improvements in data quality assurance and control, as well as in data management;

(d) Improvements in data policy and institutional and regulatory mechanisms and technical solutions for data exchange between various ministries and agencies (ministries of environment, environment agencies and ministries of agriculture, energy, health, industry, transport and water) and with other users, including the public;

(e) The implementation of recommendations regarding environmental monitoring and assessment made in national environmental performance reviews;

(f) Developments related to the use of new technologies, big data, artificial intelligence and Earth observation for environmental monitoring;

(g) Cross-cutting developments such as integrating a gender perspective into environmental monitoring and assessment activities.

The secretariat will prepare and circulate a template to support oral presentations, as needed.

8. Other business

The Working Group will be invited to discuss any other business that might be brought to its attention. Members of the Working Group wishing to propose items are invited to inform the secretariat as soon as possible.

9. Closure of the meeting

The Chair, with the assistance of the secretariat, will sum up the conclusions and decisions of the Working Group and close the meeting. The report of the meeting and the list of participants will be finalized by the secretariat for circulation to the Working Group after the meeting. These documents will be posted on the meeting web page.

III. Organization of work

Detailed information on the organization of work will be released closer to the meeting date and will be posted on the meeting web page.