Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment

Twenty-fourth session, Geneva and online, 11-12 April 2022

Agenda Item 3: Implementing the mandate and terms of reference

Draft elements for a new mandate & ToR for the Working Group from mid-2023 until mid-2028

Context

26th session CEP (November 2020) approved extension of mandate & ToR (2017–2021) of the Working Group until mid-2023 (ECE/CEP/2020/2, para. 38 (c)).

Proposed revised draft mandate & ToR will be finalized in 2022 and be discussed at 25th session of the Working Group tentatively scheduled for 2-3 May 2023

Renewed Mandate and Terms of Reference of the Working Group mid-2023 – mid 2028

| November 2020 | 2022 | May 2023 | 2023 |

24th session of WGEMA – Discussion of first elements of new ToR for the Working Group for the period mid-2023 - mid-2028

Forwarding final mandate and ToR for approval to CEP and UNECE Executive Committee (EXCOM)

Renewal of mandate & terms of reference

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Renewed mandate & ToR to take into account:

Recommendations made during recent meetings of Working Group and Committee on Environmental Policy

Current mandate and terms of reference

2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Outcomes of 9th Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference

Other relevant policies such as MEAs incl. UNECE Conventions, Paris Agreement, Sendai Framework for DRR & transition to a circular economy

Digital agendas

Questionnaire & publication Sharing our vision for pan-European region: Setting strategic goals & objectives for the Working Group, up to 2030

Feedback received by UNECE member States and international partners in 2022

Common approach of UNECE-EEA-UNEP

Renewal of mandate & terms of reference

Mandate:

Working Group shall serve as the environmental knowledge and assessment network for whole UNECE region, to aid informed decision-making in support of the transition to sustainable development and a green & circular economy in the UNECE region.

Overall Objective (in cooperation with partners):

To enable informed environmental decision-making through regular monitoring, assessment and reporting to support sustainable development and a green and circular economy.

Renewal of mandate & terms of reference

Specific objectives: Working Group to support development of:

- Environmental monitoring and information systems in line with SEIS principles and pillars
- Regular environmental assessments including the pan-European and State-of-the-environment reports
- National capacity to tackle specific challenges in environmental monitoring & assessment (e.g. improvement of monitoring systems, their technical specifications, financing, data & knowledge production, application of new technologies, enhancement of data disaggregation etc.)
- Provide an inclusive platform for ECE member States, partner organizations and other institutions and networks to share knowledge & exchange experiences
- Strengthen partnerships including with UNEP, its network and other organizations and programmes within the UN, institutions of the EU, including European Commission & EEA & EIONET, OECD, WHO, UNITAR and the Group on Earth Observations.

Planned programme areas, activities and outputs

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> **Programme area 1: Support the development of environmental monitoring and information systems** in support of regular environmental assessment and reporting in line with SEIS principles and pillars, and in particular:

- Support institutional strengthening and legislative improvement
- Promote use of new technologies & tools and the integration of official statistics and administrative data with both environmental data from new sources and data for other sectors, including health and transport
- Regularly evaluate the performance of environmental monitoring and information systems in line with the principles and pillars of SEIS and provide recommendations on how environmental monitoring and information systems can be further strengthened
- Contribute to the process of implementing the main outcomes of the Ninth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference in 2023–2028

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Contribute to implementing main outcomes of the Ninth EfE Conference

UNECE

Close monitoring gaps, both in terms of data availability and quality, including on:

- **Air and climate change:**
  - Measurement and analysis of fine particulate matter
  - Improve quality of data for emissions
  - Complete data sets on greenhouse gas emissions for some countries
- **Fresh water:**
  - Use of geographic information systems needs, in particular at the transboundary level
  - Water statistics
  - Knowledge on ecological water quality assessment & identification of hydromorphological pressures
  - Monitoring of emerging contaminants
  - Monitoring and data are incomplete for production of certain indicators;
  - Invest in data collection and information processing, as knowledge is instrumental for decision-making and water policy design (e.g., water accounts, ecosystem assessment and indicators).
- **Coastal waters, marine ecosystems and seas**:
  - Spatial and temporal data coverage and data gaps remain, for example, for the amounts, composition and sources of beach and marine litter

Contribute to implementing main outcomes of the Ninth EfE Conference

UNECE

Close monitoring gaps, both in terms of data availability and quality, including on:

- **Biodiversity and ecosystems:**
  - Production of certain indicators, including the ECE indicators "Terrestrial protected areas" and "Land uptake
  - Comparability of data
- **Land and soil:**
  - Fill gaps for indicator "Prevalence of stunting among children aged under 5 years, per cent"
- **Chemicals and waste:**
  - Establish a region-wide chemicals & waste impact-oriented monitoring scheme & address the adverse impacts of chemicals on human health & the environment;
  - Monitor a set of impact-oriented chemical indicators across the region
  - Enhance information on impact of chemicals on the efficiency and economic viability of circular economy schemes
  - Enhance capacities and data availability for certain indicators including "Total waste generation per capita", "E-waste generation per capita" and "Recycling rate of municipal solid waste"
- **Environmental financing:**
  - Enhance quantitative data on environmental financing
  - Improve data-collection systems (e.g. for environmental expenditures etc.)

Contribute to implementing main outcomes of the Ninth EfE Conference

UNECE

> **Close monitoring gaps, both in terms of data availability and quality, including on:**

- **Sustainable infrastructure:**
  - Enhance data for social, environmental, institutional, economic and financial indicators proposed incl. for quantifying the contribution (positive or negative) of infrastructure development based on the indicators
  - Develop a common definition of the term "sustainable infrastructure" to allow quantifying progress in the region
- **Circular economy and sustainable tourism:**
  - Evolve Indicator development for sustainable tourism, & monitoring circularity (currently no indicators across the region that give explicit information on tourism's circular state and for several general circularity aspects, classification definitions differ between States
  - Select some specific key-impact tourism indicators to be included in ECE statistical databases.
  - Enhance statistics needed for accurate circularity monitoring
- **Shared Environmental Information System**
  - Enhance full establishment of the system in line with all principles and pillars of the System
  - Provide assistance to fully implement the System's pillars and principles and for the full production and sharing of all data flows associated with the ECE environmental indicators
  - Employ the ECE Revised Guidelines for the Application of Environmental Indicators, provide the ECE set of environmental indicators in line with SEIS principles & pillars & adopt indicators to cover emerging policymaking themes of importance;

Planned programme areas, activities and outputs

UNECE

Programme area 2: Support the development of the regular pan-European environmental assessment and the streamlining of regular state-of-the-environment reporting, to support the transition to sustainable development and a green and circular economy and in particular:

- Bring together experts from partner organizations and other interested parties to discuss and oversee the regular pan-European environmental assessment;

- Discuss and detail regional priorities concerning the streamlining of regular state-of-the-environment reporting, also involving other thematic networks, including those under the multilateral environmental agreements, in the discussion;

- 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;

Planned programme areas, activities and outputs

UNECE

Programme area 3: Strengthening of Partnerships

Continue the process of consultation between ECE member States, partner organizations and other institutions and networks, incl MEAs, IFIs etc.:

- Cooperate with the Joint Task Force and relevant bodies under other ECE sectoral subprogrammes, including those of Housing and Land Management, Population, Sustainable Energy and Transport, to ensure that activities are synergetic and streamlined;

- Engage with other communities and networks to discuss how environmental, social and economic information and data can be integrated and utilized in decision-making and how to present environmental information on geospatial platforms;

- Publish outcomes from the Working Group's collaborative activities (for example, best practices, guidelines and lessons learned) to share outputs and guide future activities in the area;
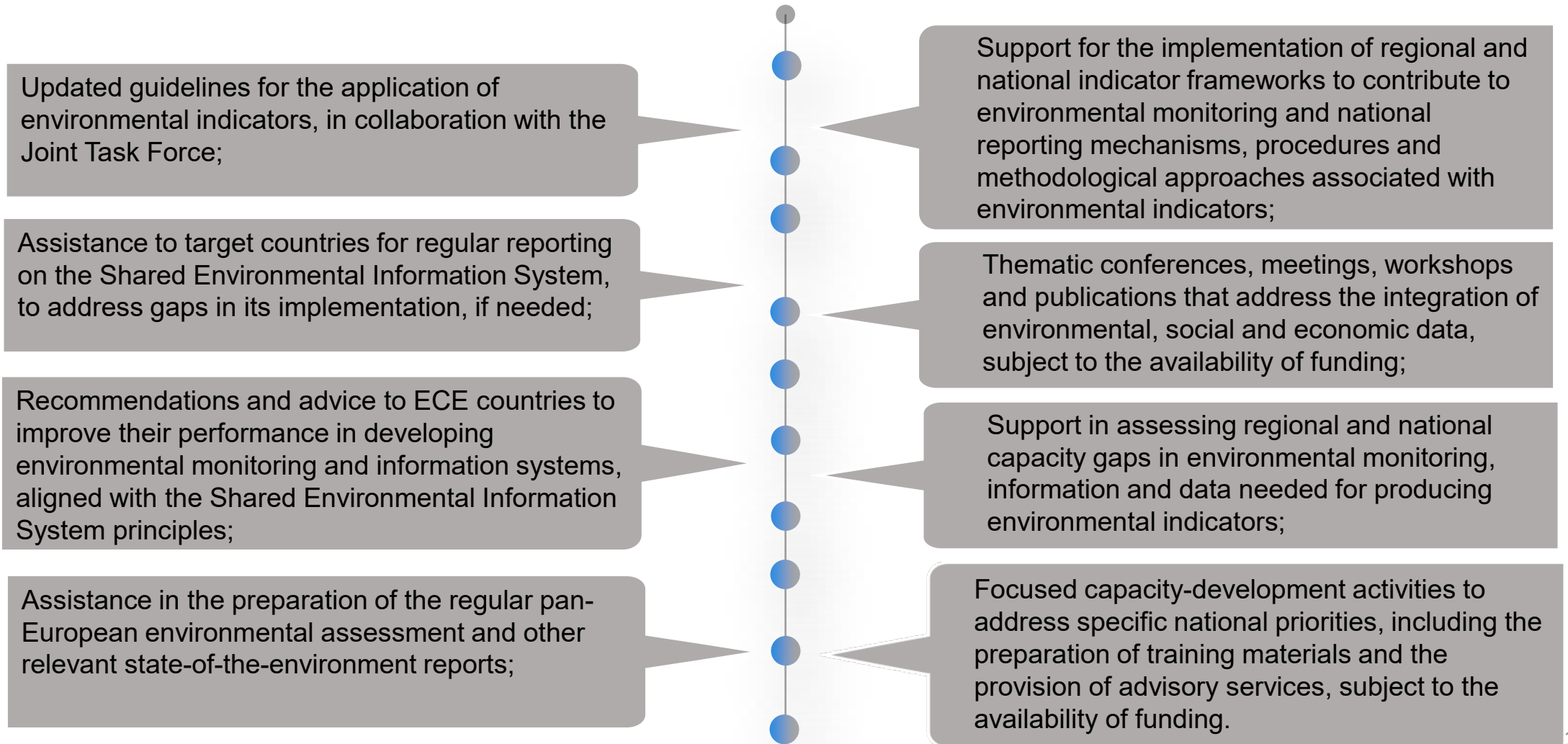
Planned programme areas, activities and outputs

UNECE

Programme area 4: Engage in **capacity-development assistance** addressing specific challenges related to environmental monitoring and assessment and environmental knowledge:

- Detail regional & national capacity gaps (incl. legal, institutional, monitoring, data), in collaboration with the JTF, in environmental monitoring, information & data needed for producing environmental indicators and assessments.
- Support countries in the development and implementation of regional and national indicator frameworks to monitor relevant environmental policy developments to support their implementation, including the review and establishment of national reporting mechanisms, procedures and methodological approaches
- Engage and liaise directly with other relevant knowledge-sharing actors working on capacity-development in related areas of work;
- Implement capacity-development activities to provide assistance in accordance with priority areas of action identified for targeted ECE countries

Updated guidelines for the application of environmental indicators, in collaboration with the Joint Task Force;

Support for the implementation of regional and national indicator frameworks to contribute to environmental monitoring and national reporting mechanisms, procedures and methodological approaches associated with environmental indicators;

Assistance to target countries for regular reporting on the Shared Environmental Information System, to address gaps in its implementation, if needed;

Thematic conferences, meetings, workshops and publications that address the integration of environmental, social and economic data, subject to the availability of funding;

Recommendations and advice to ECE countries to improve their performance in developing environmental monitoring and information systems, aligned with the Shared Environmental Information System principles;

Support in assessing regional and national capacity gaps in environmental monitoring, information and data needed for producing environmental indicators;

Assistance in the preparation of the regular pan-European environmental assessment and other relevant state-of-the-environment reports;

Focused capacity-development activities to address specific national priorities, including the preparation of training materials and the provision of advisory services, subject to the availability of funding.

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1. Do you agree that the Working Group`s main objective should be to serve as the environmental knowledge and assessment network for the UNECE region to aid informed decision-making in support of the transition to sustainable development and a green and circular economy in the UNECE region? – yes / no
    If no please explain why
2. Do you agree to the specific objectives of the Working Group? Please select from the below options.
3. Would you suggest any other objective, if yes which? (Open question)
4. Do you agree to the proposed future programme areas? / Please select all programme areas that the Working Group should support.
5. Should the Working Group support the following activities? Please choose from the list below.
6. Which monitoring gaps (identified by pan-European assessment & SEIS) should the Working Group help to address? / Please prioritize/rank the theme.
7. If other, please specify the theme.
8. Should the new terms of reference include activities on? Please select:
9. Do you have any other suggestions where the Working Group should engage? (Open question)

Mentimeter Poll

This short poll aims at collecting your feedback on draft elements that should be contained in the renewed mandate and terms of reference of the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment for the period mid-2023 until mid-2028. A more detailed survey may be conducted at the end of 2022.

How to connect:

Option 1: https://www.menti.com/dtxkimmjzc

Option 2: www.menti.com and voting code: 1385 5014

Option 3: with QR code:

Thank you!

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Proposed Decision:

The Working Group:

- Welcomes the draft elements presented for the renewal of the mandate and ToR for the Working Group for mid-2023 until mid-2028
- Requests the secretariat to integrate the results from the survey and present a final version at its next meeting