

Economic Commission for Europe

Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context

Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment

Bureau

Geneva, 9–10 June 2022

Item 1 of the provisional agenda

Organizational matters

Provisional agenda for the Bureau meeting

**To be held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, (H-207), starting at 10
a.m. on Thursday, 9 June 2022 and closing by Friday, 10 June at 5
p.m.***

I. Provisional agenda

1. Organizational matters.
2. Status of ratification of the Convention, its amendments and its Protocol.
3. Financial arrangements.
4. Implementation of the workplan 2021–2023
 - (a) Management, coordination and visibility of intersessional activities;
 - (b) Compliance with and implementation of the Convention and the Protocol;
 - (c) Promoting practical application of the Convention and the Protocol;
5. Preparations for the eleventh meeting of the Working Group on Environmental Impact Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment.
6. Preparations for the next sessions of the Meetings of the Parties.
7. Related events.
8. Other business.

* The meeting will be held in-person, but remote participation (via WebEx) will be possible for reasons preventing travelling. All the delegates are requested to register online, indicating their intended mode of participation. Please do so as soon as possible but no later than by 19 May 2022, through the following link: <https://indico.un.org/event/1000552/>. Delegates who do not have a long-duration badge, should obtain an identification badge at the Pass and Identification Unit of the United Nations Office at Geneva's Security and Safety Section, located at the Pregny Gate, 14, Avenue de la Paix (see map and other practical information available from the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe website: www.unece.org/meetings/practical.html). Please collect your badge well in advance. In case of difficulty, please contact the Convention secretariat by telephone at +41 22 917 26 82 or by e-mail (maricar.delacruz@un.org).

9. Presentation of the main decisions taken and closing of the meeting.

II. Annotations to the provisional agenda

1. Organizational matters

Tentative timing: Thursday, 9 June, 10.00–10.15

1. The Chair of the Bureau for matters under the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo Convention), Mr. George Kremlis, and the Chair of the Bureau for the Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment matters, Ms. Vesna Kolar-Planinšič, will open the meeting.
2. The Bureau will be invited to adopt its agenda as set out in the present document prepared by the secretariat in agreement with the Chairs.

Documentation

(The present) Provisional annotated agenda (ECE/MP.EIA/B/2022/INF.1)¹

2. Status of ratification of the Convention, its amendments and its Protocol

Tentative timing: Thursday, 9 June, 10.15–10.45

3. The secretariat will inform the Bureau on the status of ratification of the Convention, its amendments and the Protocol. The Bureau members from Belarus, Greece, Switzerland and Ukraine are invited to report on their countries' progress regarding ratifications of the amendments to the Convention and/or ratification of/accession to the Protocol. The Chair of the Bureau for the Convention matters, representing Greece, is also invited to report on progress of his country in the ratification of the Multilateral agreement among the countries of South-Eastern Europe for implementation of the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (the Bucharest Agreement). The Bureau may wish to comment the information and discuss possible measures to further encourage ratification and accession, in particular to accelerate:

(a) The operationalization of the first amendment to the Convention, allowing all United Nations member States to accede to that instrument, which will require its ratification by the following five countries: Armenia, Belgium, North Macedonia, Ukraine and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland;

(b) The 10 missing ratifications of the second amendment (by Armenia, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ireland, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, North Macedonia, Ukraine and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) to ensure unified application of the Convention by all its Parties.

4. The Bureau is also invited to continue encouraging further ratifications of the Protocol by its signatory States (Belgium, France, Georgia, Greece, Ireland and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland), and accessions to it by countries beneficiaries of technical assistance (Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) and other countries within and beyond the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) region.

Documentation

Status of ratification (ECE/MP.EIA/B/2022/INF.2)

¹ All meeting documentation will be made available on a dedicated (password protected) webpage for the meeting.

3. Financial arrangements

Tentative timing: Thursday, 9 June, 10.45–12.30

5. The Bureau is invited to consider the draft first financial report for the period 2021–2023, covering the year 2021, and agree on its publication on the Convention and the Protocol website.

6. The secretariat will report on contributions received or pledged by Parties since the last sessions of the Meetings of the Parties to fund the implementation of the workplan for 2021–2023 as well as on the secretariat resources. The Bureau will be invited to comment the resource situation and assess the implementation and effectiveness of decision VIII/1–III/1 on financial arrangements for 2021–2023 according to which all Parties had a duty to take part in the sharing of the workplan costs. It may wish to compare the agreed budgetary requirements for the present period and Parties' contributions and pledges to fund them; note which Parties have not contributed to the trust fund thus far despite the secretariat's reminders; and to discuss follow-up actions.

7. As requested by the Meetings of the Parties, and taking into account its assessment of the efficiency of the current financial scheme, the Bureau is invited to continue to explore possible solutions to the issue of the insufficiency, uneven distribution and unpredictability of contributions for the implementation of the workplan for 2021–2023. As appropriate, it is invited to agree on any possible new proposals to the Working Group on Environmental Impact Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment, at its next meeting (Geneva, 19–22 December 2022),² after consideration also of recent financial schemes of the other ECE multilateral environmental agreements.

8. Lastly, the Bureau is invited to continue considering the request by the Meeting of the Parties for it to develop a system "to recognize in-kind contributions in a proper manner within the financial scheme".³ At its last meeting (Geneva, 1–3 December 2021), the Working Group had noted document ECE/MP.EIA/WG.2/2021/INF.11 containing proposals and questions from the Bureau, but it provided no comments nor clarifications. The Working Group had agreed to consider the Bureau's document again at its next meeting, taking note of the Bureau's view that only Parties or stakeholders themselves could indicate the monetary values of their own in-kind contributions, and that they should be invited do so in United States dollars, well in advance of the adoption of the workplans. Such information would remain unverified and, in the financial reports, be reported separately from the contributions received to the trust fund). The Bureau may wish to review its previous document to the Working Group, and make any adjustments to it, if needed.

Documentation

Draft financial report in the intersessional period 2021–2023 (ECE/MP.EIA/B/2022/INF.3)

Contributions to the Trust Fund (ECE/MP.EIA/B/2022/INF.4)

Possible proposals on financial arrangements (ECE/MP.EIA/B/2022/INF.5)

Consideration of in-kind contributions (ECE/MP.EIA/B/2022/INF.6)

4. Implementation of the workplan 2021–2023

Tentative timing: Thursday, 9 June, 14.00–17.30 and Friday, 10 June, 10.00–11.00

9. The Bureau is invited to first continue considering the way forward for the finalization of one outstanding activity from the previous workplan (for the period 2017–2020), namely, the draft guidance on assessing health impacts in strategic environmental assessment. The Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol had urged Parties and stakeholders to finalize the draft guidance during the present intersessional period, subject to the availability of resources,⁴

² Decision VIII/1–IV/1, para. 13, ECE/MP.EIA/30/Add.1–ECE/MP.EIA/SEA/13/Add.1.

³ Decision VIII/2–IV/2, para. 12, ECE/MP.EIA/30/Add.1–ECE/MP.EIA/SEA/13/Add.1.

⁴ ECE/MP.EIA/30/Add.1–ECE/MP.EIA/SEA/13/Add.1, decision VIII/2–IV/2, preambular para. (f).

inviting Parties to contribute in-kind expertise for that purpose.⁵ Recalling also the statements by the delegations of Albania, Azerbaijan and Ukraine on the urgency for their countries to receive guidance on the topic in question, and the request by the Working Group to all the delegations, in advance of the Bureau meeting, to volunteer to contribute to the finalization of the draft guidance, the Bureau is expected to reassess the situation, discuss the way forward and provide its views and recommendations to the Working Group. During a tour-de-table, the Bureau members are invited to report on the steps taken and progress made this far. The Bureau may also wish to review and comment the proposed areas of improvement of the draft guidance that the delegation of the European Union had identified during the last meeting of the Working Group.⁶ Lastly, the secretariat will inform the Bureau of the related technical assistance activities requested by the beneficiary countries.

10. The Bureau will then be invited to review progress since the tenth meeting of the Working Group in planning and implementing activities foreseen in the workplan for 2021–2023 (decision VIII/2–IV/2), make proposals and provide advice on the implementation of or follow-up to the activities, as needed.

Documentation

Workplan implementation status (ECE/MP.EIA/B/2022/INF.7)

(a) Management, coordination and visibility of intersessional activities

11. With a view to providing possible further clarifications for consideration by the Meetings of the Parties at their next sessions (Geneva, 12–14 December 2023 (tbc)), the Bureau is invited to review the informal note on procedural matters of relevance to meetings with remote participation due to extraordinary circumstances, which it had prepared in 2020 with the secretariat's support, in consultation with the Treaty Section of the Office of Legal Affairs.⁷ Further to the importance attached by the delegation of the European Union to the coherent reading of the ECE notes,⁸ the Bureau is invited to consider the similar notes prepared under three other ECE Multilateral Environmental Agreements⁹ and make any relevant proposals. For example, the Bureau may consider proposing to the Meetings of the Parties to agree on an “advance circulation procedure” for decision-making on documents¹⁰ since such a procedure is currently not included in the note prepared under the Espoo Convention and its Protocol. As relevant, the secretariat will inform the Bureau of any new developments under the other ECE agreements.

Documentation

Observations on procedural matters of relevance to meetings with remote participation due to extraordinary circumstances (ECE/MP.EIA/B/2022/INF.8)

(b) Compliance with and implementation of the Convention and the Protocol

12. The Chair of the Implementation Committee is expected to present the main outcomes of the Committee's fifty-second and fifty-third sessions (Online, 29–31 March and 10–13

⁵ ECE/MP.EIA/30–ECE/MP.EIA/SEA/13, para. 33.

⁶ At the request of the European Union, the comments were not made available online but were circulated to the registered meeting participants of the tenth meeting of the Working Group by email. They will be forwarded to the Bureau members.

⁷ See the note of 10 November 2020, as revised on 27 November 2020, available at: <https://unece.org/environmental-policy/events/meeting-parties-espoo-convention-8th-session-and-meeting-parties> (under the tab “informal documents”).

⁸ Statement by the delegation of the European Union at the tenth meeting of the Working Group, see ECE/MP.EIA/WG.2.2021/2.

⁹ ECE/CP.TEIA/42/Add.1, available at: https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2021-03/AC_42%20Report%20Add1.pdf; ECE/MP.PP/2021/5, para. 14 (a)–(b), available at <https://unece.org/environment/documents/2021/08/item-2-draft-operating-procedures-facilitate-remote-participation-and>; ECE/MP.WAT/2021/1, available at: <https://unece.org/info/Environmental-Policy/Water-Convention/events/356707>;

¹⁰ ECE/CP.TEIA/42/Add.1, para. 25 (a)–(c); ECE/MP.PP/2021/5, paras 6 and 14.

May 2022, respectively)¹¹ and the main objectives for the Committee's upcoming, fifty-fourth session of 4–7 October 2022). The Committee Chair will also brief the Bureau on the Committee's schedule for preparing for the Meetings of the Parties' next sessions (Geneva, 12–15 December 2023).¹² The Bureau may wish to note and comment the information.

13. The secretariat will report on its distribution of the questionnaires for the implementation of the Convention and the Protocol in the period 2019–2021; on the receipt of the completed questionnaires by Parties¹³ and on the timetable for the preparation of the draft reviews of implementation of the Convention and the Protocol. The secretariat will also inform the Bureau of its finalization of the previous reviews of implementation.¹⁴ The Bureau may wish to comment the information, including regarding the timeliness and quality of Parties' reporting as well as the good practice that several Parties shared. It may also wish to provide any guidance to the secretariat for its preparation of the draft reviews of implementation, for example, regarding the consideration of the questionnaires received after the reporting deadline.

14. The secretariat and, as relevant, the Bureau members representing the concerned countries will report on the implementation of activities in the present workplan (decision VIII/2–IV/2) that relate to legislative assistance to support implementation and/or accession/ratification (Belarus, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine). It will also report on any follow-up activities to the technical assistance provided in cooperation with OSCE in 2018–2021 in Central Asia. The Bureau is expected to note the information and provide advice on the implementation of or follow-up to the activities, as needed.

(c) Promoting practical application of the Convention and the Protocol

(i) Subregional cooperation and capacity-building

15. The secretariat and, as relevant, the Bureau members concerned will report on workplan activities that have been planned or carried out regarding subregional cooperation and capacity-building in the following subregions:

(a) Baltic Sea subregion: a meeting to be organized by Poland (Warsaw, 14 and 15 June 2022);

(b) Eastern Europe and the Caucasus: a second subregional meeting funded by the EU4Environment programme, scheduled to be held online, on 29 June 2022.

16. The secretariat and the consultants to the secretariat will report on progress in the implementation of the activity funded by Italy for identifying synergies and possible cooperation activities with the following regional sea conventions: Convention for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution (Barcelona Convention); the Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area (Helsinki Convention); the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic (OSPAR Convention); the Framework Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Caspian Sea (Tehran Convention); as well as the Arctic Council and its Working Group on the Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment.

17. The Bureau is invited to consider the progress made and to provide advice on the further implementation of the activity. In particular, the Bureau may wish to comment a draft assessment report prepared in consultation with the secretariats of the selected regional sea conventions and the volunteering contact points under the Espoo Convention and its Protocol. Any feedback from the Bureau will be reported to the second joint technical meeting of representatives of Parties and secretariats of the various regional sea conventions and bodies to be held online on 16 June 2022 to discuss the draft document, proposals for cooperation activities and the way forward. (That meeting will be followed on 17 June 2022, by a meeting

¹¹ Reports on the Implementation Committee's sessions held in 2022 are available at: <https://unece.org/sessions-3>.

¹² See also agenda item 7 below.

¹³ Available at: <https://unece.org/environment-policy/environmental-assessment/review-implementation-national-reporting>.

¹⁴ See: <https://unece.org/publications/environmental-assessment>

in Geneva of the representatives of the secretariats for stock-taking and discussion on the next steps.)

Documentation

Draft assessment report for the identification of synergies and possible cooperation activities in the Marine regions (ECE/MP.EIA/B/2022/INF.9)

(ii) Exchange of good practices

18. The Bureau is invited to propose lead countries or organizations for organizing a workshop or seminar for the exchange of good practices focusing on one of the themes/topics in the workplan at the next meeting of the Working Group, and to note any information from the secretariat in that regard.

19. The Bureau is also invited to discuss the topics of the thematic workshops or seminars to be held in 2023, i.e. at the twelfth meeting of the Working Group (Geneva, 13–15 June 2023) and at the general and high-level segments of the next sessions of the Meetings of the Parties to the Convention and the Protocol (Geneva, 12–15 December 2023). These will include one event on promoting the application of strategic environmental assessment in development cooperation and the preparation of an information document on that topic both to be funded by Italy.

20. The Bureau members may also wish to consider any information from the secretariat and make proposals in relation to the following further workplan activities for the exchange of good practice:

(a) The preparation of fact sheets on the practical application of the Convention and the Protocol, to be presented during the meetings of the Working Group and posted on the website;

(b) The online database of Parties' good practice or collection and compilation of good practice, which will require identification of additional resources and funding for consultants.

(iii) Capacity-building

21. The secretariat and the countries concerned will report on planning and recent implementation of capacity building activities specified in the workplan, including:

(a) Pilot projects (in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine);

(b) Training workshops on treaty application (with a second workshop on the Convention's implementation for Ukraine in 2022 (tbc));

(c) National awareness-raising events (for Azerbaijan in 2022 tbc);

(d) National awareness-raising materials (for Azerbaijan and the Republic of Moldova and);

(e) National issue- or sector-specific guidelines (for Azerbaijan, the Republic of Moldova; and Ukraine);

(f) A model database on strategic environmental assessment – development delayed until the second half of 2022;

(g) Translating the video on the application of the Convention (all six national language versions completed for the countries in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus).

22. The secretariat will also report on any follow-up activities to the capacity building activities it carried out in cooperation with OSCE in 2018–2021 in Central Asia.

23. Lastly, the Bureau may wish to suggest topics for the preparation of two-page informal pamphlets or "FasTips" by the International Association for Impact Assessment foreseen in the workplan.

24. The Bureau is expected to provide its views on the information provided and, as needed, agree on actions to ensure the implementation of or follow-up to these activities.

5. Preparations for the eleventh meeting of the Working Group on Environmental Impact Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment

Tentative timing: Friday, 10 June, 11.00–noon

25. The Bureau is expected to review and agree on the annotated provisional agenda for the eleventh meeting of the Working Group on Environmental Impact Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment, to be held in Geneva, from 19 to 21 December 2022.

Documentation

Draft provisional agenda of the Working Group (ECE/MP.EIA/B/2022/INF.10)

6. Preparations for the next sessions of the Meetings of the Parties

Tentative timing: Friday, 10 June, noon–13.00

26. The Bureau is invited to initiate the preparations for the ninth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention and the fifth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol (MOP–9 and MOP/MOP–5) scheduled to be held in Geneva (in absence of volunteering host countries by the next meeting of the Working Group) on 12–15 June 2023. The Bureau is invited to consider and comment an indicative time schedule for the preparatory work and an initial list of draft documents and decisions to be submitted to the Meetings of the Parties. It may also wish to come forward with proposals and recommendations for consideration by the Working Group at its next meeting, including regarding: the draft programme of the Meetings of the Parties' general and high-level segments, the chairmanship of these segments; candidates for officers to be elected for the Bureau, the Implementation Committee and the Working Group for the next intersessional period 2024–2026, and possible activities for the workplan for the next period.

Documentation

Preparations for the 2023 Meetings of the Parties' sessions (ECE/MP.EIA/B/2022/INF.11)

7. Related events

Tentative timing: Friday, 10 June, 14.30–15.00

27. The Bureau is invited to take note of the information presented by the secretariat on events and activities, related to the Convention and the Protocol including:

(a) Relevant outcomes of the meeting of the Regional Forum for Sustainable Development organized by ECE (Geneva, 6–7 April 2022);

(b) Progress in the organization of the Ninth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference, including the Third High-level Meeting of Education and Environment Ministries (Nicosia), 5–7 October 2022;

(c) Progress in the establishment of a Global Working Group on Transforming the Extractive Industries for Sustainable Development coordinated by UNDP, UNEP and the UN Regional Economic Commissions, including UNECE.

8. Other business

Tentative timing: Friday, 10 June, 15.00–15.30

28. Members of the Bureau wishing to raise other business should contact the secretariat as soon as possible.

9. Presentation of the main decisions taken and closing of the meeting

Tentative timing: Friday, 10 June, 15.30–17.00

29. The Bureau is expected to agree on the main decisions taken at the meeting and to confirm the date and location of its next session before the Chairs formally close the session.
