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# UNFC and UNRMS Road Map: A Framework for Updating Documents

## Draft Note for Discussion

Prepared by the Technical Advisory Group of the Expert Group on Resource Management

### Summary

The road map aims to establish a clear and consistent framework for updates and accompanying timelines for the United Nations Framework Classifications for Resources (UNFC), the United Nations Resource Management System (UNRMS), related Specifications, Guidelines, and other documents. By setting out 5 to 7-year timelines for updates, the road map ensures that these important documents are regularly reviewed and revised to keep pace with changing circumstances and evolving best practices. This approach will enable stakeholders and users to plan and adapt their activities to align with the latest principles, specifications, and guidance, resulting in greater consistency and clarity across applications of UNFC and UNRMS. Ultimately, this will enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the application of UNFC and UNRMS and support the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) they were designed to advance.

### Introduction

This document presents a road map for the updates and revisions of the United Nations Framework Classifications for Resources (UNFC), the United Nations Resource Management System (UNRMS), and related documents. The purpose of this document is to establish a clear and consistent framework for keeping these documents up to date with changing circumstances and evolving best practices. The scope of this document covers the 5 to 7-year timelines for the updates and revisions, as well as the rationale and implications of each change.

UNFC and UNRMS are two interrelated systems developed by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) to support the sustainable management of natural resources. UNFC is a globally applicable standard for classifying resource projects based on their environmental, social, and economic viability, technical

feasibility, and confidence in estimates. UNFC covers a broad range of activities such as, such as minerals, petroleum, renewable energy sources, nuclear resources, anthropogenic resources, geological storage, and groundwater. UNRMS is a comprehensive resource management system that builds on UNFC and provides a framework for integrated and sustainable resource management. UNRMS aims to help countries, organizations, and companies address sustainability challenges and advance the SDGs. UNFC and UNRMS are developed and maintained by the Expert Group on Resource Management (EGRM), a subsidiary body of the ECE Committee on Sustainable Energy.

The main objectives of the road map are to establish a clear and consistent framework for updates and revisions of UNFC, UNRMS, and related documents and to ensure that these documents are regularly reviewed and revised to keep pace with changing circumstances and evolving best practices. The road map's benefits will enable stakeholders and users to plan and adapt their activities to align with the latest principles, specifications, and guidance, resulting in greater consistency and clarity across the UNFC-UNRMS system. Ultimately, this will enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the application of UNFC and UNRMS and support the attainment of the SDGs that they were designed to advance.

## Methodology

The Technical Advisory Group (TAG) and the UNRMS Sub-group developed the road map following consultations with the Working Groups (WGs) and Task Forces. TAG is responsible for updating and maintaining the UNFC documentation and the UNRMS Sub-group for the UNRMS documentation. The road map is based on a comprehensive analysis of the status and future needs of UNFC, UNRMS, and related documents.

UNFC and UNRMS updates will be strongly guided by selected UNFC and UNRMS case studies that will be available.

## The UNFC and UNRMS Road Map

### UNFC

UNFC and generic specifications are updated as at 2019.

Sectoral specifications complement UNFC (2019). Some specifications are already updated to be aligned with UNFC (2019). All remaining updates, including the ongoing development of new specifications, will be completed by April 2024. When there is a misalignment between Specifications and UNFC (2019), UNFC (2019), as amended from time to time in its entirety or through individual decisions by EGRM, shall prevail.

The key future updates are:

1. **UNFC Principles and Generic Specifications Update:** One of the key components of the roadmap is the update of UNFC principles (definitions) and generic specifications, which is scheduled to take place every seven years. The last update of the UNFC was completed in 2019 and endorsed by the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). The next update is proposed to start in 2025 and will be presented to the Expert Group on Resource Management (EGRM) in April 2026. The update process will take one year and will be initiated at the beginning of 2025. A task force under TAG will be set up to lead the update process and ensure the representation of all relevant disciplines. The task force will consult with various stakeholders and incorporate their feedback into the revised version of the UNFC.
2. **Specifications for applying UNFC to various resources:** The specifications update will start the same year that the UNFC update is approved by EGRM approved, i.e., just after April 2026, and will be presented to EGRM in April 2027. If the update is substantial, the endorsement of the Committee on Sustainable Energy is required. Such a sequence is required as sectoral specifications can be updated only after the UNFC principles and generic specifications are updated. This will be done by each Working Group under EGRM and steered by the Working Group Chair. The Working Group Chair may decide to form a subgroup with relevant expertise to ensure that the required update is captured promptly. For operational efficiency, the specifications update will be submitted in two batches over 2027 and 2028.
3. **Bridging documents:** The bridging documents from UNFC to other systems will be updated on an ad hoc basis, depending on the timing of updates by other entities.

## UNRMS

4. The UNRMS Sub-group will be responsible for updating the UNRMS principles and requirements. UNRMS is a comprehensive resource management system that builds on UNFC and provides a framework for integrated and sustainable resource management. The document outlining the principles and requirements of UNRMS was published in 2022. However, several modules of UNRMS are still being developed and tested according to needs. The next major update of UNRMS principles and requirements is proposed to be started in 2027 and finalized in 2028. The updates will be based on case studies that are currently ongoing and will reflect the lessons learned and best practices from applying UNRMS to a range of resources.

## Priorities and actions for the short-term

The key focus for the next 2 to 7 years will be:

**Case Studies:** Case studies and applications of UNFC and UNRMS demonstrate their value and encourage their uptake. These need to be expanded considerably

regionally and globally. Developing and disseminating those case studies that demonstrate the application and benefits of UNFC and UNRMS to various resources is critical to ensure the global uptake of these systems. This should be the major focus of all Working Groups under EGRM, as they have the expertise and experience in different resource sectors. Applications of these systems are essential to ensure balanced decisions are made in the energy transition, considering the environmental, social, and economic aspects of resource management. In the future, case studies should be the highest priority for TAG and the Working Groups. They should focus on developing and disseminating more case studies and applications of UNFC and UNRMS across different sectors and regions.

International Centres of Excellence on Sustainable Resource Management (ICE-SRM): These Centres promote the global deployment of UNFC and UNRMS to support the sustainable management of the resources needed for development in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Climate Agreement<sup>1</sup>. Establishing these centres needs to be pursued with an enlightened global vision, as they can provide policy support, technical advice, education, training, and dissemination for stakeholders involved in the sustainable development of national resource endowments. The set-up of these centres has already started and progressed significantly in some countries.

Finance: One of the major challenges for achieving the desired objectives of the road map is the need for adequate financial resources. Raising funding through extrabudgetary resources will remain a priority in the near term.

## Intelligence

TAG, the Working Groups, and the UNRMS Sub-group will keep track of the issues raised in the case studies and the experience in the application of UNFC and UNRMS to various resources. Special attention will be given to the emerging social, environmental, and governance requirements. They will identify and address any gaps or challenges in the application of the systems and propose solutions or improvements.

Blockchain technology and artificial intelligence can improve resource management by tracking and tracing resources, inducing transparent and secure record-keeping, using automated smart contracts, enabling decentralized decision-making, and incentivizing recycling and sustainable resource management practices. This can lead to greater transparency, efficiency, and accountability in resource management. Emerging development in this area needs to be monitored.

The Working Groups will also monitor the updates of other classification systems and methodologies used by different entities and sectors.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://unece.org/ice-srm-0>

## Discussion

UNFC is a well-established and widely accepted system for classifying resources that have been reviewed and agreed upon by a range of stakeholders. It has been endorsed by ECOSOC and adopted or promoted by many countries. Therefore, UNFC does not require major revisions in the future but only minor evolutionary updates to ensure consistency with the overarching frameworks, such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, emerging priorities, and any other changes deemed appropriate to the environmental-social-economic viability axis (E axis) of UNFC. UNRMS requires alignment with UNFC according to the same timeline to ensure the capture of key changes (if any).

The road map has the strength of providing clear and consistent updates and timelines for UNFC, UNRMS, and related documents. This will enhance their relevance and applicability. All Working Groups must work together and align their activities with the goal of promoting UNFC and UNRMS worldwide. This will ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of the application of UNFC and UNRMS and support the attainment of the SDGs they were designed to advance.

Implementing the road map offers the opportunity to improve the quality and consistency of UNFC, UNRMS, and related documents. This will help the users of UNFC in supporting the alignment of resource management with the SDGs. However, implementation also needs attention, such as facilitating adoption by UN and its Member States, industry, and capital allocators. The update process should ensure the participation and feedback of all relevant stakeholders, manage the expectations and needs of different users and sectors, and address the technical and operational issues that may arise during the update process.

The road map has some limitations and assumptions that must be acknowledged and addressed. One limitation is that the road map may cover only some possible scenarios or changes that may affect UNFC, UNRMS, and related documents in the future. Therefore, the road map should adapt to new circumstances and needs. One assumption is that the road map will be followed and supported by all the stakeholders involved in UNFC and UNRMS and related document development. Therefore, the road map should be communicated and consulted widely and regularly to ensure its legitimacy and feasibility.

## Conclusions

This document presents a road map for updates and accompanying timelines for UNFC, UNRMS, and related documents. The road map aims to ensure that these documents are regularly reviewed and revised to reflect the changing circumstances and best practices in resource management. The road map also seeks to enhance the consistency and clarity of UNFC and UNRMS and support the attainment of the SDGs. The document also emphasizes the importance of case studies and applications of UNFC and UNRMS to demonstrate their value and encourage their uptake.

The document recommends that EGRM should:

- Follow and support the road map for updates and accompanying timelines for UNFC, UNRMS, and related documents.
- Collect feedback and input to the update process and ensure the participation and representation of all relevant sectors and regions.
- Adapt their activities and plans to align with the latest principles, specifications, and guidance of UNFC and UNRMS.
- Develop and disseminate select case studies and applications of UNFC and UNRMS to showcase their benefits and challenges, especially with the involvement of ICE-SRMs.
- Communicate and collaborate with other stakeholders to promote the acceptance and adoption of UNFC and UNRMS worldwide.

The road map is expected to improve the quality and consistency of UNFC, UNRMS, and related documents. This will facilitate better management and governance of resources and support the transition to a low-carbon and circular economy. The road map will also increase the relevance and applicability of UNFC and UNRMS to different sectors and regions, fostering greater collaboration and integration among stakeholders. The road map will ultimately enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of UNFC and UNRMS as tools for advancing the attainment of the SDGs, especially those related to energy, climate, environment, social, and economic aspects.

## References

UNFC documentation - <https://unece.org/sustainable-energy/sustainable-resource-management/unfc-documents>

UNRMS documentation - <https://unece.org/sustainable-energy/unfc-and-sustainable-resource-management/unrms>

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