



Workshop on Just Transition in Mining Communities and Potential for Development of Geothermal Energy

Tirana, Albania and online

Premises of the National Agency of Natural Resources of Albania (AKBN)

Street "Bajram Curri", Block "Vasil Shanto"

20 June 2023

Draft Agenda

CONTEXT

United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) is working on greening the energy sector in accordance with principles of carbon neutrality and just transition. In its efforts it recognizes, however, that the scope and pace of the transformation process must be aligned with the capabilities and needs of individual member States, taking into account their endowment of natural resources, technological base, cultural heritage, as well as the legal and regulatory structure.

In this context, Albania requested UNECE to assess its readiness for green and just transition in the selected post-coal mining areas and to identify regulatory, social, technical, and financial barriers that the country will need to address to be able to successfully reclaim and repurpose its post-coal mining areas in accordance with the principles of green economy and just transition.

DESCRIPTION

The first part of the workshop will introduce to the Albanian and foreign stakeholders two studies recently developed by UNECE: *Guidelines for Mine Closure Programme in Albania and Serbia* and *Assessment of the Geothermal Resources of Albania*. The findings and recommendations from the reports will be presented and discussed with the local experts and decision makers, giving a particular attention to obstacles to and opportunities for their implementation.

The study on mine closure was developed with the aim to identify principle-based guidelines for designing and implementing a programme for an efficient, safe, and environmentally conscious mine closure in Albania and Serbia. It offers a theoretical background for actions allowing to reclaim the mined land and mitigate hazards so that it becomes suitable for repurposing and sustainable development. The document provides directions on how both beneficiary countries can improve their national capacities to close coal mines in a manner that ensures that at the end of the process the sites are safe for the environment and population and that the reclaimed grounds are ready for further use unrelated to coal mining.

The study on geothermal resources indicates that utilizing these resources in Albania is cost-effective and can aid in diversifying energy sources, enhancing living standards, and addressing environmental concerns. The study advises adhering to the United Nations Framework Classification for Resources (UNFC) and the United Nations Resource Management System (UNRMS) guidelines to establish suitable geological models of geothermal aquifers and performing comprehensive assessments to assess their potential for further development. Additionally, conducting Environmental and Social Impact Assessment

(ESIA) studies and consulting with stakeholders is crucial for the project's socio-economic feasibility. To further advance geothermal utilization in Albania, efforts can be made to improve capacity, transfer technology, and disseminate knowledge.

The second part of the workshop will turn towards the future, providing an opportunity for brainstorming on how UNECE can best help Albania in its quest for transitioning its post-coal mining areas in accordance with the principles of green economy and just transition and ensuring a sustainable use of its natural resources. A new potential project on *Mapping Albania's Readiness for Green and Just Transition in Post-Coal Mining Areas* will be discussed. Through an open discussion involving all stakeholders, participants will try to identify what actions should be undertaken to implement that project in the most effective way, so that it gives Albania the necessary impetus for the needed change towards green and just transition of the post-coal mining areas. Participants from other countries in the UNECE region may also benefit from this discussion and develop ideas that would be applicable for them.

The workshop will be held in a hybrid format in person at the premises of the National Agency of Natural Resources of Albania (AKBN) with the possibility to connect online. It is intended for experts and decision makers from Albania, Serbia, and other countries interested in coal mine closure, post-coal mining land reclamation and repurposing, assessment of the local potential for development of geothermal energy, and just transition of the energy sector.

TIMELINE

9:00 Opening and welcome by Mr. Adrian Bylyku, Director, AKBN

9:05 Introduction to the workshop. Mr. Oleg Dzioubinski, Regional Adviser, UNECE Sustainable Energy Division (SED)

Part I: Mine closure and transformation of post-mining areas

9:15 Presentation of the study *Guidelines for Mine Closure Programme in Albania and Serbia*. Mr. Michal Drabik, Chief of Section, UNECE SED and a representative of GIG (TBC)

9:30 Open discussion on the findings and recommendations of the report

10:00 Presentation of the UNECE approach to just transition. Mr. Raymond Pilcher, Chair, UNECE Group of Experts on Coal Mine Methane and Just Transition, and Mr. Michal Drabik, Chief of Section, UNECE SED

10:15 Presentation on the situation in the selected coal mining area(s) in Albania, Mr. Edmond Goskolli

10:30 Presentation on the status of legislation and regulations related to post-coal mining land repurposing in Albania, Ms. Ilda Drizari

10:45 Presentation on the identified needs in the selected post-coal mining areas in Albania, Mr. Erald Breganaku

11:00 Presentation on existing plans for transformation of the selected post-coal mining areas in Albania, local aspirations, and existing opportunities, Mr. Hanri Caushi

11:15 Presentation about the challenges and needs in the Poromiv community in Ukraine, Mr. Oleg Savchuk, Mayor of Poromiv

11:30 Presentation of the potential project on *Mapping Albania's Readiness for Green and Just Transition in Post-Coal Mining Areas*. Mr. Raymond Pilcher, Chair, UNECE Group of Experts on Coal Mine Methane and Just Transition, and Mr. Michal Drabik, Chief of Section, UNECE SED

11:45 **Break**

Part II: Geothermal energy

12:45 Presentation of the study *Assessment of the Geothermal Resources of Albania*. Mr. Harikrishnan Tulsidas, Economic Affairs Officer, UNECE SED and Mr. Nevton Kodhelaj, UNECE Consultant

13:00 Open discussion on the findings and recommendations from the report

13:30 Experiences of the UNFC for Geothermal Projects in Central America (El Salvador and Costa Rica), Mr. Sulamith Kastl, BGR, Germany (Virtual)

13:45 Outlook for the UNFC in Geothermal Resources Classification in the SICA region, TBA (Virtual)

14:00 A new model for sustainable resource management: UNFC and UNRMS for a Just Transition. Mr. Harikrishnan Tulsidas, Economic Affairs Officer, UNECE SED

Part III: Open discussion

14:15 Conclusions of the International Labour Conference Committee on Just Transition, Ms. Cristina Martinez, ILO

14:30 Open Discussion. Objective: identifying what actions should be undertaken to implement that project in the most effective way, so that it gives Albania the necessary impetus for the needed change towards green and just transition of the post-coal mining areas. The goal is to identify the country's existing needs and capacities, challenges that the post-coal mining areas face or are likely to face in the near future, barriers that prevent central and local authorities from addressing them effectively, and opportunities for overcoming those obstacles.

15:20 Closing remarks. AKBN and UNECE

15:30 **End of the workshop**