

Evaluation of the project “Evidence-based environmental governance and sustainable environmental policies in support of the 2030 Agenda in South-East Europe” (April 2022)

Progress report as of 30 June 2023

#	Recommendation	Management response	Responsibility	Target date/deadline	Date of implementation/comments
1	Project design: UNECE may consider developing a Theory of Change for projects in the future to describe the processes through which change comes about for individuals, stakeholder groups, ministries, industry or communities. The Theory of Change should provide an assumption (or series of assumptions) about how change will happen in a country, regardless of what a donor or project does or does not do.	<p>UNECE partially accepts the recommendation.</p> <p>A request that project managers develop a Theory of Change for project proposals is included in the ECE Concept Note and Project Document template, namely under sections 1. Context (development challenges), 10. Country level situation analysis and 11. Stakeholder analysis and capacity assessment. UNECE Programme Management Unit (PMU) will continue to monitor that such elements are adequately addressed in projects Concept Notes and Documents.</p> <p>PMU will also share with ECE project managers existing UN guidance on how to develop a theory of change when designing projects.</p> <p>Furthermore, PMU will bring this recommendation to the attention of DESA-Programme Management Team, the UNDA project Manager.</p>	Programme Management Unit	31 Dec 2022	<p><b>Implemented as of 30 June 2023</b></p> <p>PMU updated the ECE Concept Note and Project Document template and included a section recommending the development of a project-wide theory of change for projects at or above USD 250,000 and requiring it for projects at or above USD 1 million.</p> <p>PMU shared with ECE directors and project managers existing UN guidance on how to develop a theory of change when designing projects on 30 January 2023, together with the updated ECE Concept Note and Project Document template.</p> <p>PMU shared with DESA-Programme Management Team, the UNDA project Manager, the revised ECE Concept Note and Project Document template and the UN guidance on how to develop a theory of change when designing projects on 15 February 2023, after distribution to ECE directors and project managers.</p>
2	Regional information sharing:	UNECE accepts the recommendation.	Environment Division	31 Dec 2023	<b>Not started</b>
	2.1: Acknowledging that sharing information is already ongoing, continued sharing clean industry practices or step by step approaches for overcoming negative consequences of	The Environmental Performance Reviews (EPR) unit will address environmental risks/hazards and waste in reviews of countries at their request and to share information on reviews and recommendations with all countries in the region (2.1).			

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	environmental hazards and waste across countries in the region.				
	<b>2.2: Depending on funding available, organise a workshop for all project countries inviting representatives of governments, CSOs/ UN system and EU active in those countries, to share experiences, network, and develop partnerships for future needs. Alternatively organise workshops at national level.</b>	Subject to the availability of resources, the EPR unit will organize a regional workshop for EPR countries on environmental risks/hazards and/or waste (2.2).			
3	<b>Climate change: Consider how to best mainstream climate change considerations into all projects, linking with the UNECE Climate Task Force/ Regional Advisors, whilst also ensuring linkages to relevant results groups of UN Country Teams.</b>	<p>UNECE accepts the recommendation.</p> <p>The Environment Division, in consultation with PMU, the ECE Climate Action Task Force and ECE Regional Advisors, will discuss how to best mainstream climate change considerations into future projects, subject to member States concurrence, to ensure that they contribute to member States' attainment of their UN global commitments, namely those contained in the Paris agreement. The consultation with PMU and ECE Regional Advisors will among others aim at ensuring linkages to relevant results groups of UN Country Teams.</p>	Environment Division and Programme Management Unit	31 Dec 2023	<p><b>In progress</b></p> <p>The Environment Division has arranged discussions with PMU, the ECE Climate Action Task Force and ECE Regional Advisors on how to best mainstream climate change considerations into future projects. Following a review of the climate change mainstreaming strategies by the UN and other international organizations, UNECE aims to update its project preparation template. To foster understanding of these new requirements and ensure their smooth implementation, a workshop will be carried out for UNECE project managers. The workshop aims to raise their awareness of the new requirements and to facilitate an exchange of experiences regarding ongoing efforts in this critical field.</p> <p>The Water Convention has supported mainstreaming of climate change and water among its work programme 2022-2024 and this issue was discussed at the Water Convention 13<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Task Force on water and climate on 19 October in Geneva.</p>

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					<p>The UNECE secretariat to the Industrial Accidents Convention has supported mainstreaming climate change and industrial safety considerations, by developing its work on Natech (natural hazard triggered technological accidents). A joint UNECE/OECD Seminar on Natech risk management was organized on 29 November 2022 as part of the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP-12). The development of OECD/UN/EU JRC Guidance on Natech risk management was initiated in 2022 and will be pursued actively in 2023, aiming to finalize it by end-2023, to publish in 2024. Natech risks are also being considered in the majority of the assistance activities in EECCA and SEE countries. More specifically, UNECE supported Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan in addressing industrial accident including Natech risk in national DRR documents under a joint UNECE-UNDRR project during the period 15 August 2022 - 15 Jan 2023.</p> <p>The Environmental Monitoring and Assessment Programme has supported countries in the past to enhance their environmental monitoring and statistics including in the area of climate change. In 2023 a regional training on the revised UNECE indicators on air and related to climate change will be conducted under the programme with funding from the EU.</p> <p>UNECE is a leading member of the UN inter-agency Issue-based Coalition (IBC) on Environment and Climate Change. UNECE worked with UNEP and UNESCO to issue <i>Guidance on integrating the Environment and Climate Change in Processes for UNSDCFs</i> in July 2021, and follow-up training in December 2021-January 2022. UNECE led the preparation of an IBC policy brief on <i>the importance of a continued focus on</i></p>

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					<i>climate action in support of UNCT engagement with Governments in Europe and Central Asia, issued in October 2022.</i>
<b>4</b>	<b>Capacity building:</b>	UNECE accepts the recommendation.	Environment Division	31 Dec 2023	<b>In progress</b>
	<b>4.1 Continue to develop projects where UNECE provides support in prioritizing recommendations arising from EPRs. Continue to work with staff in ministries who understand the SDGs and have energy and enthusiasm to move the agenda forward.</b>	The EPR unit, and other units in the Environment Division, will continue to develop project proposals to provide support to UNECE member States in prioritizing recommendations arising from EPRs (4.1).			Under the Air Convention, a recent project proposal for consideration by the EU Delegation in Uzbekistan takes the recent EPR recommendations for the country into account.
	<b>4.2: Encourage countries to develop their own environmental training programmes including systems where training of trainer capacity building becomes systematic and reaches inspection authorities responsible for environmental enforcement.</b>	The Environment Division will encourage countries to develop their own environmental training programmes including systems where training of trainer capacity building becomes systematic and reaches inspection authorities responsible for environmental enforcement (4.2).			Under the Environmental Monitoring and Assessment Programme support is provided to UNECE member States in transition to enhance their environmental monitoring and assessment systems and to follow-up on EPR recommendations. In 2022 the programme has for example, initiated support for the development of a National State of the Environment report in Uzbekistan which will be finalized in 2023.  Moreover, the Air Convention recently developed a project proposal on air quality monitoring and management, including training, in Uzbekistan, which took the recommendations on air protection in the 3 <sup>rd</sup> Cycle EPR of Uzbekistan (2020) as a basis.
	<b>4.3 Apart from technical environmental issues, UNECE should also unpack related aspects of governance where member States require support—e.g. transparency, accountability aspects; how to develop an</b>	The Environment Division will unpack related aspects of governance where member States require support (4.3).			

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	accountability chain; or how to be inclusive and unlock citizens participation.				
	<b>4.4 The UNECE nexus approach must continue to be shared with member states. During UNECE missions hold workshops on the nexus approach in a concrete way. Continue to encourage ministries to engage on the SDGs across sector silos, using projects such as these as a means.</b>	The Environment Division will continue to share with member States the UNECE nexus approach and to encourage ministries to engage on the SDGs across sector silos, including through workshops and projects, subject to the availability of resources (4.4).			UNECE has, among others, pursued a nexus approach, by supporting the establishment of inter-institutional working groups on mine tailings safety and the prevention of accidental water pollution in Kazakhstan and Tajikistan and continuing to pursue the engagement of relevant institutions and their cross-sectoral considerations in 2023. A National Policy Dialogue (NDP) on Industrial Safety in Serbia, initiated since 2021, also engages various institutions and serves as a platform to address respective cross-sectoral concerns and gaps. The discussions as part of the NPD and development of a comprehensive Industrial Safety Programme will be pursued in 2023.
5	<b>EU Accession focus: Any new projects that support Western Balkans countries to implement the SDGs should also try to align (somewhat) with the EU Green Agenda. Highlight how the EPR methodology also facilitates EU law and how EU law is built on and references major UNECE Conventions.</b>	<p>UNECE partially accepts the recommendation, while recalling that UNECE does not promote the instruments of regional economic integration organizations.</p> <p>The Environment Division will, in any new projects that support Western Balkans countries to implement the SDGs, take into consideration the EU Green Agenda. The EPR Unit will continue to recognize links with EU law in its reviews of countries that are EU members, candidates or partners.</p>	Environment Division	31 Dec 2023	<b>Not started</b>
6	<p><b>Politics and advocacy</b></p> <p><b>6.1: At policy level, UNECE must continue to work with high level representatives from member</b></p>	<p>UNECE accepts the recommendation.</p> <p>The Environment Division will work with member State ministries of environment to convey messages of commitments made to</p>	Environment Division	31 Dec 2023	<b>Not started</b>

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	State ministries of environment to convey messages of commitments made to SDGs, climate change agreements and human rights.	SDGs, climate change agreements and environmental human rights (6.1).			
	6.2: Linking to UN information campaigns (twitter cards or other social media methods) may be useful to push the 2030 Agenda and environmental governance issues.	The Environment Division will continue to push the 2030 Agenda and environmental governance issues, through social media (6.2).			
	6.3: CSOs should be considered a stronger part of the environment advocacy coalitions. More encouragement could be placed on member States to consult and work closely with CSOs in projects that deal with environmental governance. This means government provides adequate time for others to comment and agree action plans and roadmaps. Preparations for UNECE country missions should ensure that they leave time to engage early with many stakeholders including CSOs and encourage national coordinators to ensure their voice to be brought to the table.	The Environment Division will continue to encourage member States to consult and work closely with CSOs in projects that deal with environmental governance and ensure that country missions engage early with many stakeholders including CSOs (6.3).			
7	Implementing legislation	UNECE accepts the recommendation.	Environment Division	30 June 2023	<b>In progress</b>
	7.1: Follow up on what was approved and how it was implemented in a year or so. Find out which EPR	The EPR Unit will continue to monitor which EPR recommendations are not being implemented, through requests for updates sent to member States, and encourage civil			The EPR unit is preparing workshops on waste, climate change and disaster risk reduction. In order to prepare the workshop, EPR related recommendations will be assessed including the

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	recommendations are not yet being implemented and encourage civil society organisations to continue to play a 'watchdog' role.	society organisations to continue to play a watchdog role when meeting them during EPR country missions (7.1).			participation of CSOs. The workshops will be carried out in September and October 2023.
	7.2: Continue efforts to locate sources of finance to demonstrate and pilot what can be achieved to improve the environment. Funding for conveying meetings that help build environmental advocacy coalitions is also suggested, so results/innovations are shared more widely. Consider whether resources can be obtained from the Western Balkans Investment Framework	The Environment Division will continue to raise funds to demonstrate and pilot what can be achieved to improve the environment and will consider whether resources can be obtained from the Western Balkans Investment Framework (7.2).			Under the Air Convention, a project proposal for two workshops on emission inventory development in the Western Balkans was recently submitted for consideration by the Nordic Council of Ministers.
8	Learn and draw lessons from the collaborative gender mainstreaming process that took place in Serbia. The need to continue capacity building on gender mainstreaming as it relates to environmental policy and at local level implementation is important. A regional workshop to share experience may be useful.	<p>UNECE accepts the recommendation.</p> <p>The Environment Division will learn and draw lessons from the collaborative gender mainstreaming process that took place in Serbia, and use the lessons learned in further capacity building on gender mainstreaming in environment policy at national and local levels.</p>	Environment Division	31 Dec 2023	<p><b>In progress</b></p> <p>Following a series of training sessions organized in Serbia in 2021 and at the request from countries in the Western Balkan region, an experience sharing workshop on the integration of gender aspects into environmental policies in the Western Balkan region was held on 9 February 2022, bringing together participants from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia. The main objective of the online workshop was to share experiences and discuss challenges and opportunities on gender equality policy frameworks and practical approaches to gender mainstreaming in environmental policy amongst national institutions.</p> <p><a href="https://unece.org/info/Environmental-Policy/Environment-and-Gender/events/365077">https://unece.org/info/Environmental-Policy/Environment-and-Gender/events/365077</a></p> <p>Gender has been mainstreamed in the new guidance document "Updated Strategies for</p>

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					<p>Monitoring and Assessment of Transboundary Rivers, Lakes and Groundwaters” prepared in the framework of the Water Convention in 2022. <a href="https://unece.org/environment-policy/publications/updated-strategies-monitoring-and-assessment-transboundary-rivers">https://unece.org/environment-policy/publications/updated-strategies-monitoring-and-assessment-transboundary-rivers</a></p> <p>A webpage was created to disseminate information on activities related to gender mainstreaming into environmental policies under MEAs and policy programmes, <a href="https://unece.org/environment-policy/environment-and-gender">https://unece.org/environment-policy/environment-and-gender</a></p> <p>Under the Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme (THE PEP) a representative from the Serbian Ministry of Environment presented, in a seminar on gender mainstreaming, the experience from the process that took place under the EPR UNDA project. Further work on gender issues is to be undertaken under THE PEP.</p>