

Committee on Environmental Policy

Agenda item 6. Environmental monitoring, assessment and reporting

Overview on recent work of the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment and main outcomes of its 25th session

Twenty-eighth session

1–3 November 2023

Palais des Nations, Geneva





- Recent work of the Working Group includes:
 - Enhancing environmental monitoring and information systems and reporting
 - Keeping pan-European under review / Ideas for the 8th pan-European assessment
 - Drafting of new mandate and terms of reference and outline of activities
 - Capacity development activities related to environmental monitoring, assessment and reporting
 - Regular convening of Working Group sessions
- Main outcomes of the 25th session
- Resources



Working Group – Recent work

Environmental monitoring



- **Sharing of good practices and experiences on environmental monitoring (including use of new technologies such as Earth observation)** during sessions of the Working Group and workshops
- Support to closure of monitoring gaps as identified in the 7th pan-European environmental assessment
- **Revision of the 2003 publication “Environmental Monitoring and Reporting : Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia”** to be started → Terms of reference for a consultant to support the revision under preparation



Nicosia Declaration:

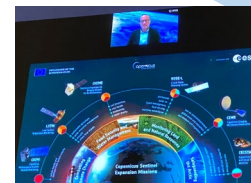
Rely on open data, big data & state-of-the-art digital technologies

Common pan-European methods & systems for monitoring & information management

Monitoring of air pollution

Broaden access to reliable, detailed information on chemicals and waste

Establish a resource-oriented, pan-European e-waste management partnership



Revision of 2003 publication “Environmental Monitoring and Reporting”

Possible support by CEP members



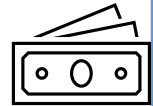
Revision of 2003 publication
“Environmental Monitoring and
Reporting”

How can your country or
organization contribute to
the updating
of the Guidelines?

Provision of expertise for
drafting of specific chapters



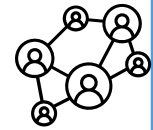
Financial contributions to
support hiring of
a consultant(s)



Review of updated document



Provision of case studies



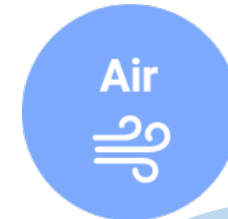
Working Group – Recent work

Environmental information systems



Support to implementation of SEIS and open data principles

- Working Group agreed in 2022 to review annually a limited number of environmental themes and indicators based on SEIS assessment framework & revised UNECE indicator guidelines
- Agreed to **review in 2023 the theme “air pollution and air quality” followed by the theme “waste” in 2024**
- Also supporting Nicosia outcomes on SEIS and open data
- **Invitation for SEIS reporting on theme air sent to all members of CEP on 4 September 2023**
- **To date (only) 12 country replies received**
- Guidance from CEP on next steps would be appreciated, e.g., whether to wait for more replies and about timing?
- In a next step the report compilation will start



Nicosia Declaration:
We invite countries to continue their efforts to implement all pillars of SEIS – content, infrastructure and cooperation – and to address any remaining gaps.

Make information available, findable etc. and encourage collection of citizen science & crowdsourced data...



Working Group – Recent work

Environmental reporting



Support to environmental reporting

- **Sharing of good practices on environmental reporting** during sessions of the Working Group and workshops
 - e.g., training / guidance sessions on reporting under Water Convention and SDG 6.5.2, Air Convention (emission inventories), monitoring and reporting under Convention on Biodiversity, specific training on air theme
- **Support to development of a National State of the Environment Report in Uzbekistan (together with UNEP)**
 - Methodology developed
 - Training held
 - Support to actual drafting of the report → soon to be finalized
 - Next steps: To develop an online version of the report (mainly by UNEP)



National State-of-the-Environment Reports

- Information on quality of the environment and environmental pressures, in the context of economic development and policy responses
- Provides timely information for decision-makers and the public
- Continuous process: setting targets, monitoring, data analysis, reporting, setting targets...



Inception workshop and training on the National State of the Environment Report (NSoER) development in Uzbekistan

1 February 2023, Frankfurt Hotel, Tashkent
4 Ne'mat Street, Tashkent 100160

Working Group – Recent work

Keeping pan-European region under regular review



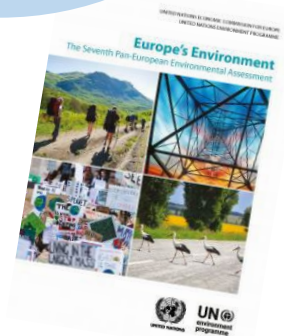
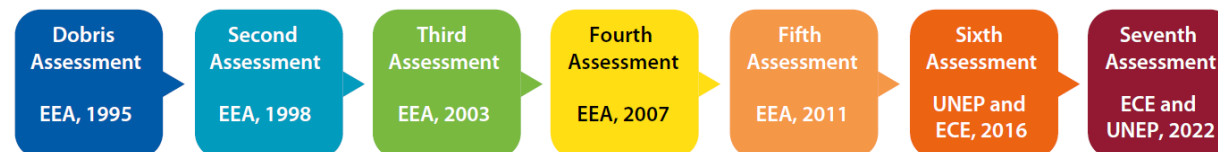
8th pan-European environmental assessment

Approaches and ideas on content:

- Indicator-based assessment proved to be useful and welcome in 7th assessment (use similar set of indicators to track progress but also new ones to monitor emerging themes)
- Closure of gaps needed as revealed in 7th assessment
- Besides traditional themes addressed (states and trends of air, biodiversity, water ...) also integrated chapters (health, nexus..)?
- Monitoring of progress towards policy targets and 7th assessment
- Foresight chapter (scenario building)
- Use should be made of SEIS and common set of indicators

Nicosia Declaration:

We acknowledge the importance of regular, indicator-based environmental assessments, and confirm our commitment to keeping the pan-European region under regular review



Working Group – Recent work

Keeping pan-European region under regular review



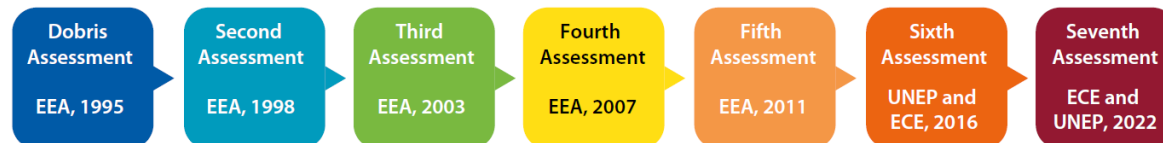
8th pan-European environmental assessment

Approaches and ideas on process:

- Sufficient funds needed at an early stage as very limited resources for 7th assessment, preventing having more integrated chapters, foresight chapter etc.
- Timeline: Next Ministerial Conference scheduled for about 2027? Preparation of the assessment should start in 2025?
- Involvement of Working Group experts in drafting and review?
- Organizations to be involved: UNECE, UNEP. Also, EEA? OECD?
- Links with GEO-7? – no
- Digital product only?

Nicosia Declaration:

We acknowledge the importance of regular, indicator-based environmental assessments, and confirm our commitment to keeping the pan-European region under regular review

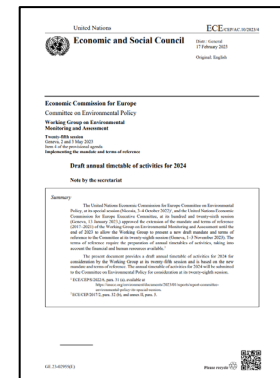
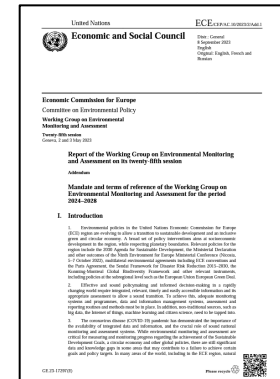


Working Group – Recent work

Drafting of new mandate & ToR, 5-year outline of activities & timetable of activities for 2024



- Mandate and terms of reference of the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment available under ECE/CEP/AC.10/2023/2/Add.1
- Draft five-year outline of activities (workplan) for the period 2024–2028 available under ECE/CEP/AC.10/2023/informal paper no.1
- Draft timetable of activities for 2024 available under: ECE/CEP/AC.10/2023/4
- Mobilization of resources & assistance from countries & organizations needed to support the implementation of its mandate and terms of reference
- Working Group will collaborate closely with national & international governmental & non-governmental stakeholders & other UN bodies to implement its activities.



Working Group – Recent work

Development of new mandate and ToR for 2024-2028



Mandate: Working Group to serve as environmental monitoring, knowledge and assessment network for whole UNECE region and as platform to exchange good practices & information, develop action plans and strengthen initiatives on environmental monitoring- and assessment-related areas

Programme area 1: Support development of environmental monitoring and information systems

Programme area 2: Support development of regular pan-European environmental assessments and regular state-of-the-environment reporting

Programme area 3: Strengthening of Partnerships

Programme area 4: Engage in capacity-development assistance

Cross-cutting activities:

Specific Objectives: To Enable informed environmental decision-making and to support implementation of outcomes of Nicosia Conference, implementation of multilateral environmental agreements and global policy frameworks

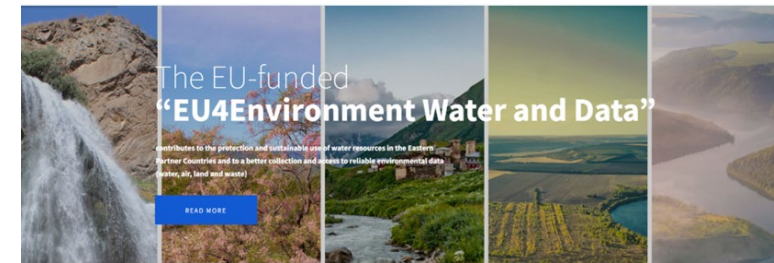
Working Group – Recent work

Capacity development activities



Support to International sharing of data and networking (UNECE, UBA, OECD)

- Review of status and gaps of international reporting
- Enhance cooperation of Eastern Partnership countries with Working Group and Joint Task Force
- Support SEIS implementation & SDG monitoring
 - 4-5 May 2023: Regional training on air quality and emissions to air statistics and indicators followed by the SEIS review on the theme “air”
 - 2024: Regional training on waste statistics and indicators followed by the SEIS review on the theme “waste”
 - Guidance on SDG reporting provided under Working Group and workshops



Two pillars:

- Water resources: support a more sustainable use of freshwater resources
- **Environmental data: extend and improve the use of sound environmental statistics**

Implementing partners



Co-funded by



Working Group – Recent work

Regular convening of Working Group sessions



- **25th session of the Working Group** took place on 2-3 May 2023 in Geneva and online
- **Topics included:**
 - Relevant outcomes of the Ninth EfE Ministerial conference & 7th pan-European environmental assessment
 - New mandate and terms of reference (2024-2028)
 - Recent developments related to environmental monitoring and good practices
 - Reporting (incl. under MEAs)
 - Capacity development activities
 - Progress in environmental monitoring and assessment at national level
- 85 registered participants (from 26 countries)



UNECE
Updated Strategies for Monitoring and Assessment of Transboundary Rivers, Lakes and Groundwaters



Benefits of regular National State-of-the-Environment Reports

- Providing an evidence base for informing national environmental policy and decision-making
- Development of robust systems supporting data collection, storage, analysis and dissemination of environmental information
- Raising public awareness and engaging the public in environmental action at the national level



Working Group

Outcomes of 25th session



The Working Group:

- Re-elected **Ms. Javakhishvili (Georgia)** as its **Chair** and **Ms. Nikolovska (North Macedonia)** and **Mr. Mayer (Austria)** as its **Vice-Chairs** for a period of up to **two years**.



Chair



Vice-Chairs

- Took note of the outcomes of the 9th EfE Ministerial Conference, confirmed its commitment to support the implementation of the outcomes subject to availability of resources, and decided to integrate the outcomes into its work

Working Group

Outcomes of 25th session



The Working Group:

- Approved **the new mandate and terms of reference** for the period **2024–2028 - now put before CEP**
- Welcomed the **expression of interest by** the representatives of **Austria** and of **Georgia** in **co-leading activities** related to air quality
- Invited other **members** of the Working Group to express their interest in **leading or co-leading an activity or area**
- Adopted the timetable of activities for 2024 (**ECE/CEP/AC.10/2023/4**)
- **Requested its members and the secretariat to continue fundraising** to enable the full implementation of activities planned for 2023–2024, including revision of the ECE Environmental Monitoring Guidelines and holding of next sessions
- Welcomed its five-year outline of activities for the period 2024–2028

Working Group

Outcomes of 25th session



The Working Group:

- Adopted the **outline of the report on the Shared Environmental Information System review of the theme “air”** (ECE/CEP/AC.10/2023/5)
- Agreed to review the theme **“waste and, as appropriate, circular economy” in 2024**
- Requested the secretariat to **assess the possibility of organizing a regional training event on the revised ECE waste indicators**, possibly within the framework of the EU-funded programme EU4Environment – Water Resources and Environmental Data
- Suggested sharing good practices, including on **open data platforms, the collection of local and Indigenous knowledge, citizen science and the use of crowdsourced data**, during regular sessions of the Working Group, and organizing training and guidance, subject to availability of resources

Working Group

Outcomes of 25th session



The Working Group:

- **Welcomed ideas and approaches for planned 8th pan-European environmental assessment** and requested the secretariat, together with the Working Group members, to **develop a draft concept** to be presented at the next session
- **Welcomed presentations on monitoring and reporting** by secretariats of **ECE Water Convention and Convention on Biological Diversity**
- **Supported the proposal to review the 2003 Guidelines on Environmental Monitoring and Reporting** and requested the secretariat to prepare the revised 2003 guidelines as an official publication in English, French and Russian

Next session: 18-19 April 2024, 26th session

Next steps: Follow-up on new mandate and terms of reference and 5-year outline of activities, subject to the availability of resources

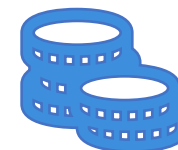
Environmental Monitoring and Assessment Programme

Resources



Current situation

- **Current donors:** Austria and Switzerland, and European Union via the EU4 Environment Water Resources and Environmental Data project
- **Sufficient resources** to support participation of experts from Central Asia in 26th WGEMA session in April 2024 and initiate a consultancy for reviewing the 2003 publication “Environmental Monitoring and Reporting”
- **Insufficient resources** for other activities including for participation of experts from other parts of the region in upcoming meetings of the Working Group and the Joint Task Force



Needs

- **Diversification of financial contributions needed** (programme currently dependent on generosity of two countries, outside of projects)
- **Member States urged to consider how they can provide financial contributions** including for the 8th pan-European environmental assessment to be developed starting from 2025



Thank you for your attention!



Proposed Decisions



The Committee on Environmental Policy:

- Takes note of the information provided and welcomes the activities of the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment, especially in support of the implementation of outcomes of the Nicosia Ministerial Conference
- Endorses the new mandate and terms of reference of the Working Group for the period 2024-2028 as set out in document ECE/CEP/AC.10/2023/2/Add.1 and forwards them to the ECE Executive Committee for approval
- Takes note of the timetable of activities of the Working Group in 2024 as set out in document ECE/CEP/AC.10/2023/4, as well as the five-year outline of activities
- Urges member States and organizations to provide in-kind and financial support to the Environmental Monitoring and Assessment Programme
- Thanks Austria, Switzerland and the European Union for their financial support;

Proposed Decisions



The Committee on Environmental Policy:

- Also thanks UNEP – including the Secretariat to the Convention on Biological Diversity – and the European Environment Agency, together with the United Nations Statistics Division, OECD, WHO and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research, for their substantive support to the Programme
- Encourages countries to submit to the secretariat their self-assessment reports under the Shared Environmental Information System review on the theme “air”
- Takes note of the information provided on the expected eighth pan-European environmental assessment
- Encourages its members to increase the use of the common set of ECE environmental indicators in state-of-the-environment reporting and to further harmonize data flows across the region.