Committee on Environmental Policy

Agenda item 6. Environmental monitoring, assessment and reporting

Proposal to convert the Joint Task Force on Environmental Statistics and Indicators to a Joint Working Group on Environmental Statistics and Indicators

Twenty-eighth session
1–3 November 2023
Palais des Nations, Geneva
Current situation (2009 - 2023)
Conversion into a standing body

- JTF has ad-hoc mandate which needs to be renewed every two years
- Its ad hoc nature results in lower priority for conference services

Conversion into a standing body would reflect the reality of a long-term challenge – not a short-term one; reduce the burden of processing extensions; maintain interpretation and translation languages; set a clear five-year cycle of review (it is not permanent)

- Tasks are increasing, e.g. the 7th Pan-European Environmental Assessment and other reports reveal many knowledge gaps
- Tackles emerging and frontier topics, increasing cross-cutting policy areas that require environmental statistics.
- Unique body, because of close cooperation between national statistical offices and environmental ministries/agencies
- More and more countries (in addition to SEE and EECCA) are interested and actively participating in its work, e.g., Austria, Ireland, Luxembourg, Mexico, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland participated in 2022/2023

Extend coverage of topics; extend membership
Implementing the new mandate and terms of reference (2024-2028)

- Secretariat
  - Statistical Division
  - Environment Division

- Intergovernmental bodies
  - UNECE and its Executive Committee
  - Conference of European Statisticians
  - Committee on Environmental Policy
  - Joint Working Group on Environmental Statistics and Indicators (former Joint Task Force on Environmental Statistics and Indicators)
  - Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment
CES support to conversion into a Working Group open for all CES Member Countries

- Currently, there is no Working Group/Expert Group open to all CES Member Countries on Environment Statistics.

- Such a group is needed, similar to other existing groups, related to economic and social statistics (on National Accounts, Consumer Price Indices, Population statistics, etc.).

- Strengthen the recognition of environment statistics as equally important as other statistical domains and allow for long-term planning and better securing of resources (e.g., within UNECE Secretariat: meeting rooms, interpretation, translation).

- Collaboration between NSOs and Ministries of Environment (or agencies) is crucial for the development of high-quality environment statistics.

- Converting the existing JTFESI instead of creating a new body is resource efficient and avoids duplication of work.
**Objectives:** Platform for experts from national statistical offices and ministries of environment (or responsible government agencies) for improving environmental statistics to strengthen environmental reporting and to inform related policy themes. Provide support to countries to:

- Correctly apply SEIS & open data methodologies in line with statistical standards
- Implement the SEEA and UN FDES
- Produce environmental statistics to inform environment-related policy areas
- Apply environmental indicators in the context of sustainable development, green & circular economy initiatives, climate change, the outcomes of the EfE Conferences and emerging policy themes
- Improve data quality and advise how to overcome data gaps
- Use new or alternative data sources (e.g., remote sensing, “big data” and citizen science)
- Communicate environmental data and policy-relevant information products.
Outputs include:

• Revised *Guidelines for the Application of Environmental Indicators* (and continuous review)

• Improved availability of harmonized and comparable statistics and indicators for emerging themes across the region and CES members

• Can establish thematic expert groups or task forces to focus on specific issues

• Strengthened capacity in EECCA and SEE countries (in using new data sources, applying indicator methodologies, integrated statistics, implementation of SEEA etc.)
Organizational arrangements

- The Joint Working Group shall:
  - **Meet at least annually**, be composed of experts from statistical offices & environmental ministries or agencies from countries of the ECE region & CES members
  - Elect its **Chair and up to two Vice-Chairs for a term of two years** (shall be eligible for re-election for one additional term)
  - **ToR shall be reviewed every 5 years**
  - **Joint secretariat** be provided by the ECE Environment and Statistical Divisions;
  - Work shall be **supported by EEA, UNEP and WHO. It will be coordinated with OECD.**
  - **Procedural change into a standing body does not imply additional costs:** as is the case now, donors shall be asked to provide support for the activities of the Working Group
Request to CEP

- Asking CEP to support:
  - Conversion of the Joint Task Force into a standing body - Joint Working Group on Environmental Statistics and Indicators
  - Opening up the membership to all countries members of CEP and CES
  - Endorse the mandate and TOR of the Working Group, and ask the Secretariat to forward them to the UNECE EXCOM for approval
Thank you!