

16 April 2024
English only

Economic Commission for Europe

Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents

Bureau

Small Group on the Industrial Safety of the Energy Transition

Second meeting

Online, 16 April 2024

List of Decisions

1. Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda

The meeting was held online, hosted by the Secretariat of United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents. The meeting was attended by the following members: Ms. Torill Tandberg (Norway), Mr. Martin Merkofer (Switzerland), and Ms. Gill Smart (UK).¹

The Small Group on the Industrial Safety of the Energy Transition (ISET-SG):

Decision 1: Adopted the agenda of the meeting.

2. Governance issues and selection of Chair of the Small Group on the Industrial Safety of the Energy Transition

Decision 2: Selected Ms. Torill Tandberg (Norway) as the Chair of the Group and thanked her for taking up this role.

3. Follow-up to Bureau decisions 33 – 36: Member States' Survey

Decision 3: Welcomed the results of the Member States' ISET Survey and **thanked the secretariat** for the timely organization and the survey analysis, as contained in Informal document No. 1.

Decision 4: Noted with interest that:

- All respondents see a need for action to address industrial safety concerns related to the energy transition,
- There is evidence that gaps exist in technical guidelines and other practical aspects of the industrial safety of the energy transition, rather than at the strategic level,
- These types of gaps render the Convention's ISET workstream a highly relevant platform for intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder participation, and

¹ The following members of the small group were not present: Michael Struckl (Austria); and Camille Siefriidt (European Union).

- The Long-term Strategy of the Convention until 2030 is considered broadly “fit-for-purpose”.

Decision 5: Came to the conclusion that:

- (a)** on the basis of the survey’s results, there is clear evidence that further work on ISET both at the national and international levels is needed,
- (b)** the survey would benefit from including countries from Central Asia where there are several ongoing and planned project activities related to the Convention, and encouraged the secretariat to send reminder communications to Central Asian countries to invite their participation through appropriate channels and subject to capacity constraints and
- (c)** therefore, the Bureau should be informed about the results of the survey and be invited to consider the potential submission of the updated paper with the survey results for consideration at COP-13.

Decision 6: Welcomed the draft concept note on the ISET seminar as contained in Informal document No. 2 and **thanked** the secretariat for its timely preparation.

Decision 7: Recommended to simplify the draft programme’s session 2, for example by removing the segments on “Land-use planning” and “Information to and participation of the public”, to allow more room for in-depth presentations and technical discussions to first better understand the risks associated with the energy transition.

Decision 8: Encouraged the Secretariat to include among the participants and speakers of the Seminar the private sector, including energy companies, and those engaged in battery energy storage and CO2 capture.

Decision 9: Requested to explain in the draft concept note that the seminar is linked to the Convention’s work and in particular its Long-term Strategy’s parts on addressing new and emerging risks, not limited specifically to Annex-I related work.

Decision 10: Invited its members to send any additional suggestions on the concept note to the secretariat until **Tuesday 30 April cob.**

4. Other deliverables for June Bureau and COP-13

Decision 11: Welcomed the options paper as contained in Informal document No. 3 and thanked the secretariat for its timely preparation.

Decision 12: Noted that according to the survey results:

- the envisaged scope of work under ISET according to the survey results appeared to be wide, multifaceted, highly technical, multidisciplinary and could be expected to remain a very high policy priority for member States in the medium to longer-term, and
- addressing this scope would most likely require visibility, scalability and leveraging the convening power of the Convention and attracting key players from several sectors

Decision 13: In light of the survey results, discussed and debated the advantages and disadvantages of in total three options:

- **Option 1 – Continue the Bureau’s Small Group on ISET** (proposed in the options paper),
- **Option 2 – Establish a formal ISET Working Group under the Convention** (also proposed in the options paper), and

- **Option 3 – Continue the work in an expanded Small Group on ISET under the Convention, as an interim step between options 1 and 2** (proposed by Switzerland during the meeting).

Decision 14: Noted that option 1:

- Is a viable option based on existing resources and also straightforward in terms of the decision path to be followed, and
- Is unlikely to cope as an appropriate forum for convening purposes and also for addressing the needs and developing the types of deliverables that ISET survey respondents identified.

Decision 15: Reached overall consensus that Option 1 was the least relevant of the available options, considering the importance and characteristics of the ISET issue.

Decision 16: Noted that Option 2 was a new type of proposed “thematic” workstream for the Convention that:

- Is better suited to the envisaged ISET scope of work, dynamic and fast-evolving needs by member States and more suitable than option 1 for the expected time horizon of the broader issue area,
- Due to its formal status would satisfy the requirements for visibility, scalability and convening power, with the possibilities to be more inclusive of all Parties, as well as other Member States and other stakeholders and experts, and to have official interpretation and translation for more accessibility, and
- Would reflect a serious level of commitment while necessitating also additional financial and human resources to ensure delivery of the meetings, guidelines and various knowledge products that are in demand, as evidenced by the survey.
- Depends on the willingness of several countries to support this workplan item with financial and in-kind contribution.

Decision 17: Noted that Option 3 was a tested approach that:

- Would be considerably smaller in size, with the participation of interested Bureau and WGI members, the possible participation of other member States, other stakeholders and experts on a voluntary basis, and less formal than Option 2 which could limit participation and accessibility without official interpretation and translation,
- Would be suitable for tasks like:
 - collecting best practices in a specific area,
 - developing a workshop for experience exchange in a specific area or
 - developing some standards in hazard and risk assessment for a decision by the COP, with the help of a consultant, focused on one or two areas per biennium (depending on the financial and in-kind contribution earmarked by some member States)
- Requires less resources than Option 2 and is more flexible; but also requires more resources than Option 1,
- Would require a decision by the Bureau, and
- Could be transformed later into a formal working group under the Convention

Decision 18: During the debate that followed, it was argued that the ISET workstream is a fast-paced, and multi-layered priority area, which is not limited to only one priority area for which best-practices could be relatively easily collected. It is also a fast-paced area meaning

that knowledge and related technologies may outpace the efforts to collect best practices. The Group also noted that it would be helpful to hear the views of other Bureau Member States and therefore suggested to reach decision on the options at the meeting of the Bureau in June.

Decision 19: Decided that:

- A paper with Options 2 and 3 should be presented to the June Bureau, and
- The paper should also include considerations on the objectives of the workstream, to facilitate the deliberations and decisions of the Bureau.

Decision 20: Invited its members to send any suggestions, especially on the “what” and “how” of the workstream, in addition to those outlined in the Options Paper to the secretariat until **Tuesday 30 April cob.**

5. Any other business

[No decisions]

6. Review and approval of draft decisions of the ISET SG

Decision 21: Decided to continue the reporting format followed at its previous meeting. In this regard, noted that the Secretariat would circulate the draft decisions within a few days from the second meeting of the ISET SG leaving a few days to the ISET members for their feedback. The principle “silence is consent” would also be followed for the adoption of these decisions.

7. Date of the next meeting & closure of the meeting

8. [No decisions]
