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Item 8 (b) of the provisional agenda

**Assistance to countries in Eastern and
South-Eastern Europe, the Caucasus
and Central Asia: twentieth anniversary
of the Assistance and Cooperation Programme:
achievements, challenges and the way ahead****Twentieth anniversary of the Assistance and Cooperation
Programme: Highlights and progress made in 20 years of
assistance to countries with economies in transition****Prepared by the Chairs of the Bureau and the Working Group on
Implementation, in cooperation with the secretariat***Summary*

The year 2024 marks the twentieth anniversary of the Assistance Programme under the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents (hereinafter, the Convention), established at the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties (Budapest, 27–30 October 2004),^a to support countries of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia in addressing obstacles to accession and implementation of the Convention. The Programme was rebranded the Assistance and Cooperation Programme at the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (Geneva, 4–6 December 2018), as per the Long-term strategy for the Convention until 2030.^b

The present document presents the evolution of the Assistance and Cooperation Programme over the past 20 years, along with highlights of assistance activities and their impact. As such, it takes stock of progress achieved since 2004 by the beneficiary countries, with a greater focus on the last 10 years. It provides the basis for a panel discussion at the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, for which beneficiary and donor countries are invited to be prepared, taking into account the information contained in this document.

It additionally includes the progress report on the implementation of assistance activities in 2023–2024, presenting the activities carried out, their main focus and related achievements, as well as countries' progress in implementing the Strategic Approach. The Conference of the Parties is invited to endorse this progress report.

^a ECE/CP.TEIA/12, para. 39.

^b ECE/CP.TEIA/38/Add.1, para. 25.

Introduction

1. The present document was prepared to mark the twentieth anniversary of the Assistance and Cooperation Programme (hereinafter, the Programme) and is comprised of three sections.

2. Section I reviews the Programme's evolution over the past 20 years, highlighting key activities and their impact. Building on the 2014 report "A decade of assistance to countries in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia" (ECE/CP.TEIA/2014/5), it reflects on overall progress since 2004, while focusing in particular on the last decade. It is supported by information compiled in the annex:

(a) Table 1 (annex) lists the national assistance activities carried out from 2004 to 2024, by country, including and continuing the record from the 2014 report that marked the Programme's 10-year anniversary (ECE/CP.TEIA/2014/5, annex), and the respective progress reports prepared for the Conferences of the Parties;

(b) Table 2 (annex) lists the assistance activities carried out at the subregional level from 2004 to 2024, in chronological order;

(c) Table 3 (annex) lists the projects carried out under the Assistance and Cooperation Programme from 2004 to 2024, in chronological order;

(d) Table 4 (annex) summarizes indicators of progress of beneficiary countries towards implementation of the Convention during the period 2004–2024, including and continuing the record included in the 2016 report on the Programme's effectiveness (ECE/CP.TEIA/2016/15).

3. Section II includes the progress report on the implementation of assistance activities during the biennium 2023–2024, which is split into two subsections:

(a) Key focus and achievements of activities carried out under the Assistance and Cooperation Programme during the biennium 2023–2024;

(b) Implementation of the Strategic Approach in 2023–2024 and supporting accession efforts.

4. On the basis of the above, section III discusses the lessons learned, ongoing challenges, prospects and approaches for the delivery of future assistance, and introduces the questions that the Conference of the Parties is invited to consider.

I. Twentieth anniversary of the Assistance and Cooperation Programme: evolution, achievements and impact

A. Launch and evolution of the Programme

5. At its third meeting (Budapest, 27–30 October 2004), the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents (hereinafter, the Convention) adopted the Assistance Programme.¹ The Programme was developed to enhance the levels of industrial safety of countries with economies in transition in the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) region, in particular through support to their efforts to accede to and implement the Convention.

¹ ECE/CP.TEIA/12, para. 39.

6. From 14 to 15 December 2005, representatives of 34 ECE member States attended a High-level Commitment Meeting in Geneva at which delegations from 17 countries of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia signed a high-level Declaration (CP.TEIA/2005/12) and committed to making the necessary efforts to implement the Convention and regularly report on its implementation. According to the Declaration, the Assistance Programme comprises two phases: a preparatory phase – a high-level commitment followed by fact-finding and awareness-raising missions;² and an implementation phase focused on advancing implementation and accession.

7. The following countries have benefited from activities under the Programme in the last two decades and are currently considered its beneficiary countries:

- (a) Caucasus: Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia;
- (b) Central Asia: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan;
- (c) Eastern Europe: Belarus, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine;
- (d) South-Eastern Europe: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia.

8. The preparatory phase included over 15 fact-finding and awareness-raising missions aimed at supporting beneficiary countries in identifying their key needs and ways to address them in order to enhance industrial safety, improve implementation and progress towards accession. These missions prepared the ground for the submission of national self-assessments and action plans and the implementation of national and subregional projects, which supported countries in implementation and paved the way towards accession.³

9. At its fourth meeting (Rome, 15–17 November 2006), the Conference of the Parties reviewed the results achieved by the beneficiary countries in the preparatory phase and decided to initiate the implementation phase with dedicated activities, such as in-country missions, subregional activities and projects, practical exercises and workshops, responding to beneficiary countries' needs.

10. At its fifth meeting (Geneva, 25–27 November 2008), the Conference of the Parties adopted, and invited beneficiary countries to apply, the Strategic Approach for the implementation phase of the Programme (ECE/CP.TEIA/2008/5).⁴ This Approach uses a cyclic mechanism for identifying and addressing implementation gaps in the six areas⁵ that correspond to the main obligations under the Convention. It involves developing a self-assessment and creating a national action plan to address identified issues with support from the Convention's Working Group on Implementation and the secretariat, ensuring that assistance is needs-driven and sustainable. At its sixth meeting (The Hague, 8–10 November 2010), the Conference adopted the document Benchmarks for the implementation of the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents (ECE/CP.TEIA/2010/6), which provides indicators and criteria for progress assessment. In 2014, a user-friendly version of said document was developed,⁶ featuring enhanced graphics and clickable tables. In the interim, beneficiary countries have been encouraged to take advantage of this user-friendly version, as well as of an e-tool that automates the preparation of national self-assessments and action plans.

² More information on the preparatory phase is available at <https://unece.org/preparatory-phase>.

³ See tables 1 and 2 in annex for, respectively, a full list of national assistance activities and a full list of subregional level activities, all organized in the preparatory and implementation phases of the Programme since 2004.

⁴ ECE/CP.TEIA/19, para. 50 (a).

⁵ The six working areas are: identification of hazardous activities; notification of hazardous activities; prevention; preparedness; response and mutual assistance; and information to the public and public participation.

⁶ Available in English and Russian at <https://unece.org/environment-policy/publications/user-friendly-version-benchmarks-implementation-convention>.

11. At its eighth meeting, (Geneva, 3–5 December 2014), the Conference of the Parties celebrated the tenth anniversary of the Assistance Programme,⁷ acknowledging significant progress and the ongoing need for support for countries of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia. The Conference of the Parties also tasked the Working Group on Implementation, with the Bureau's and the secretariat's support, to conduct an analytical review of the Programme's effectiveness.⁸ In response, a note on the effectiveness, results and options for the further development of the Assistance Programme (ECE/CP.TEIA/2016/15) was prepared for review by the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (Ljubljana, 28–30 November 2016). This note identified several quantitative indicators to evaluate beneficiary countries' progress towards the implementation of the Convention. The Programme's structured approach was praised, while data gaps, particularly in Central Asia, were noted, prompting a recommendation for more rigorous monitoring.⁹ Subsequently, with updated terms of reference (ECE/CP.TEIA/32/Add.1), the Working Group enhanced its engagement with beneficiary countries and developed a corresponding strategy, which it has applied in the interim¹⁰ for a more systematic outreach to countries on implementation issues, offering teleconferences, meetings and contributions to in-country missions.

12. The effectiveness document also recommended a repositioning of the Programme to enhance its appeal.¹¹ At its tenth meeting (Geneva, 4–6 December 2018), the Conference of the Parties adopted a Long-term Strategy for the Convention until 2030, which included rebranding the Assistance Programme as the Assistance and Cooperation Programme to recognize the value of knowledge and experience that beneficiary countries increasingly share with each other, give credit to enhanced cooperation between them, and promote a culture of ownership of achievements and remaining needs.¹²

B. Achievements, impact and lessons learned in the last decade

13. Since the Programme's launch, around 100 assistance activities have been organized under the Programme, almost half of them subregional in scope, benefiting over 2,000 representatives of competent authorities, industry, civil society and academia. Participants have exchanged information and expertise on industrial safety norms and standards, strategies for managing technological disaster risks and methods for enhancing transboundary cooperation. In addition to the assistance activities, beneficiary countries have also been supported by events organized by partner organizations. Full lists of national assistance activities, subregional level activities and projects are included in, respectively, tables 1–3 (annex).

14. Thanks to the support provided, the number of Parties has consistently grown over the years. Montenegro (2009), Serbia (2009), North Macedonia (2010), Bosnia and Herzegovina (2013), and most recently Ukraine (2022) have joined the Convention (see table 4, annex). The recent accession of Ukraine was achieved following a high-level awareness-raising mission in 2018, organized with the financial support of Germany. This success builds upon the strong commitment and active efforts of Ukraine towards accession and enhanced implementation, which have been supported by the Convention's secretariat thanks to multi-year financial backing from Norway.

15. Out of the 16 beneficiary countries, 11 are now Parties to the Convention (see table 4, annex). Notably, this comprises all countries of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, which have enhanced the Convention's implementation and transboundary cooperation. Additionally, several countries have recently made significant progress towards accession:

⁷ To mark the tenth anniversary of the Programme, the Conference of the Parties issued an official report on "A decade of assistance to countries in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia: lessons learned and future prospects" (ECE/CP.TEIA/2014/5).

⁸ ECE/CP.TEIA/30, para. 14 (f).

⁹ ECE/CP.TEIA/2016/15, para. 24 (a).

¹⁰ ECE/CP.TEIA/2018/11, annex I.

¹¹ ECE/CP.TEIA/2016/15, para. 14 (e).

¹² ECE/CP.TEIA/38/Add.1, Long-term Strategy for the Convention until 2030, para. 25.

Tajikistan is preparing accession documents to be submitted to the Government for approval; Uzbekistan is developing a road map for accession; and Georgia is considering submitting a proposal for accession to the relevant national authority.

16. Assistance activities have supported beneficiary countries in complying with their basic tasks under the Convention, including:

(a) Submission of national implementation reports — 14 countries out of 16 have regularly submitted such reports during the last 10 years — ;

(b) Nomination of points of contacts — to date, 15 beneficiary countries have nominated points of contact, whereas only 11 countries had done so 10 years ago — ;

(c) Nomination of competent authorities — now all beneficiary countries have nominated competent authorities while only 13 competent authorities had been nominated 10 years ago — ;

(d) Better tracking of progress achieved in implementing the Convention and higher awareness of existing challenges to be addressed in this respect — around 36 submitted — updated — national self-assessments and action plans during current decade, compared with 20 a decade ago — ;

(e) Increased interest and involvement of the beneficiary countries in the work of the Convention — e.g., 13 countries participated in the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, while 16 countries participated in its twelfth meeting — .

17. The approach to assistance has evolved over time. With the initial focus on national challenges through in-country activities, the Programme increasingly supports countries through subregional multi-year projects as a more sustainable approach conducive to achieving results, in line with the Convention's Long-term Strategy.

18. Since the Programme's inception, in particular over the past 10 years, projects have been implemented with an increasing subregional focus (see table 2, annex), thanks to the support by donor countries and the engagement of beneficiaries. The projects carried out in the past decade focused, in particular, on enhancing governance and transboundary cooperation. Regionally, a strong focus of the activities was on Central Asia, aiming to support the progress of the four non-Parties towards accession. Thanks to the two projects for Central Asia financed by the Russian Federation, inter-institutional coordination was strengthened, and — updated — national self-assessments and action plans and national country reports containing analysis of national legislation and recommendations for harmonization with the Convention's requirements were prepared.

19. In addition, thanks to the support from Switzerland through the Swiss Federal Office for the Environment (FOEN) since 2017, four projects have been implemented to support strengthening the safety of tailings management facilities (TMFs) in Central Asia. Three of these projects had a national focus benefiting mainly Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, albeit with a subregional reach, and one subregional project supported all Central Asian countries. The implementation of these projects enhanced national and transboundary cooperation on mine tailings safety in Central Asia, both at the technical and the political level — including through the secretariat's engagement in the processes of the fifth (first part and resumed session, respectively, Nairobi (online), 22–23 February 2021, and Nairobi 28–February 2 March 2022) and sixth (Nairobi, 26 February–1 March 2024) sessions of the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) — , enabled the development of several knowledge products benefiting all Parties and the building of a strong alliance of partners. The continued support from Switzerland, through the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation (SDC) since 2023, mainly focusing on Uzbekistan, with a subregional reach, enables the carrying forward of the experiences from Kazakhstan and Tajikistan in strengthening tailings governance, namely through the establishment of Inter-institutional Working Groups (IIWGs) on Tailings Safety and Prevention of Accidental Water Pollution, and strengthening Natech risk management in the face of climate change.

20. The work to strengthen tailings safety built on projects implemented in-kind under the Convention's auspices over the course of many years, through implementing partners,

engaged by the German Environment Agency and the German Federal Ministry of the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection.¹³ These projects supported countries in the Caucasus, the Danube River basin, Kyrgyzstan and Ukraine.

21. Overall, the projects implemented under the Programme have supported countries in advancing their application of the Convention, improving industrial safety, managing related technological disaster risks and enhancing the prevention of accidental water pollution. Beneficiary countries have consistently noted that the implementation of these projects has facilitated knowledge and experience sharing, harmonized national procedures, and strengthened transboundary cooperation. For instance, at the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties (Geneva (hybrid), 7–9 December 2020), the representative of Kazakhstan praised the Programme for enhancing industrial safety in Central Asia and serving as a crucial platform for dialogue and cross-border collaboration.¹⁴ The Chair of the Conference also affirmed that the assistance activities were essential for building countries' capacities to implement the Convention, improve governance and policymaking, and foster stronger transboundary cooperation.¹⁵ Additionally, at the tenth meeting (Geneva, 4–6 December 2018), the Deputy Head of the International Affairs Division of FOEN highlighted the Programme's unique value and its significance not only for beneficiary countries but also for donor nations, commending the secretariat for its methodical and sustainable approach to Programme implementation.¹⁶

22. In addition, the implementation of assistance activities and projects provided a means to support all Parties, for example, through the development of: knowledge products such as the Online Toolkit and Training for Strengthening Mine Tailings Safety;¹⁷ and partnerships and engagement at the policy level, for example, through the United Nations Environment Assembly of UNEP processes. At the same time, the intergovernmental work naturally gave considerable impetus to the assistance activities, for example, through the decisions made by the Conferences of the Parties,¹⁸ or the guidance documents developed under the auspices of the Joint Expert Group on Water and Industrial Accidents.

23. Transboundary cooperation among countries of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia has been notably strengthened, largely due to subregional workshops. These workshops have served as valuable platforms for sharing experiences, best practices and lessons learned, bringing together key stakeholders and partners responsible for industrial safety, environmental protection, emergency response and cooperation.¹⁹ For example, practical knowledge on implementing the Convention was gained through subregional workshops focused on industrial accident prevention, including chemicals management and the identification and notification of hazardous industrial activities. These workshops, held across all ECE subregions from 2015 to 2017, were highly valued by participants for providing opportunities to consult with experts from other countries. Capacity for industrial accident prevention, preparedness and response was further enhanced through practical transboundary exercises, such as those conducted in the Danube Delta basin in 2015, thanks to financing from Germany, Finland and the Netherlands, and on-site training sessions at TMFs in Central Asia (2019, 2021 and 2024), organized with the financial support from Switzerland. Subregional workshops on land-use planning and industrial safety, held for Eastern Europe and the Caucasus in 2019 and for South-Eastern Europe in 2021, organized thanks to support of France, brought together experts from the respective fields

¹³ Further information on projects implemented by Germany under the Convention's workplan is available at https://unece.org/environment-policy/industrial-accidents/online-toolkit-and-training-strengthening-mine-tailings#accordion_2.

¹⁴ ECE/CP.TEIA/42, para. 43 (e).

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, para. 46.

¹⁶ ECE/CP.TEIA/38, para. 60 (a).

¹⁷ Available at <https://unece.org/environment-policy/industrial-accidents/online-toolkit-and-training-strengthening-mine-tailings>.

¹⁸ Recent Conference of the Parties decisions include 2020/1 on strengthening mine tailings safety in the ECE region and beyond (ECE/CP.TEIA/42/Add.1) and 2022/1 on strengthening Natech risk management in the ECE region and beyond (ECE/CP.TEIA/44/Add.1).

¹⁹ For a full list of assistance activities organized at the subregional level, see table 2 of annex.

and underscored the importance of interdisciplinary and transboundary cooperation in developing coherent policies for the siting of hazardous activities. Following these workshops, several countries advanced in their identification of hazardous activities, and informed neighbouring countries via notifications, using the notification form developed under the first Central Asian project, financed by the Russian Federation. These and other activities have fostered cooperation among competent authorities and industry operators, facilitating information exchange and the sharing of best practices.

24. Another significant achievement of the past decade has been the enhancement of inter-institutional cooperation and coordination. Notable examples include the establishment of a National Policy Dialogue (NPD) on Industrial Safety in Serbia, thanks to financing by the French Ministry of Ecological Transition, and the creation of IIWGs in Kazakhstan and Tajikistan,²⁰ which have been operating successfully since 2021, thanks to initial funding by the Swiss Federal Office for the Environment. Although initially launched and supported by the Programme, these inter-institutional processes are now fully owned and led by the respective countries. Through the NPD process, Serbia developed a National Programme for Industrial Safety, thanks to further support provided through the regular programme of technical cooperation.

25. Through continuous work on the national implementation reports, action plans and self-assessments, beneficiary countries have gained a deeper understanding of the Convention's requirements, identified implementation gaps, and explored ways to address them. Since 2015, 14 beneficiary countries have submitted 23 national implementation reports, 22 self-assessments and 14 action plans.²¹

26. Furthermore, beneficiary countries have significantly expanded their knowledge at both the technical and political levels, particularly in identifying, understanding and managing technological disaster risk, as well as the risk of natural hazard-triggered industrial accidents (Natech), including natural hazards, vulnerabilities and exposure and ways to mitigate these. A notable achievement of the latest round of self-assessments and action plans by Central Asian countries was their integration of tailings and Natech risks, this being the first instance of utilization of the Strategic Approach to address these issues comprehensively.

27. Evaluation questionnaires completed by participants after assistance activities indicate that they are highly valued for knowledge exchange, awareness-raising and capacity strengthening. However, there is an ongoing need for continued information- and experience-sharing to improve the Convention's implementation, particularly in the following areas:

- (a) Strengthening inter-institutional processes and multilevel cooperation among relevant national authorities, operators and stakeholders;
- (b) Enhancing transboundary cooperation;
- (c) Promoting multi-hazard, multi-risk approaches, including addressing the connections between natural, climate-related and technological hazards to prevent industrial accidents and water pollution, and to mitigate potential adverse effects.

28. Over the past decade, the Programme beneficiaries have made significant strides in enhancing industrial safety. The Programme's impact is evident in the strengthened regulatory frameworks at the national level, and greater cooperation among countries. Key lessons learned include the importance of tailored, needs-driven support, the value of robust monitoring mechanisms and the benefits of fostering a culture of collaboration and shared knowledge. These insights have been instrumental in refining the Programme's approach and setting the stage for continued progress through projects that deliver sustainable results and foster countries' ownership of inter-institutional coordination under the Convention's

²⁰ On 26 July 2024, Uzbekistan officially established a similar inter-institutional working group within the framework of the project on "Strengthening action in Uzbekistan on water and sanitation and protection of water resources from accidental pollution in the face of climate change".

²¹ For an overview of the main indicators of progress of beneficiary countries, including submitted implementation reports, self-assessments and action plans, see table 4 in annex.

umbrella, for example, through the creation of multi-stakeholder governance mechanisms at the national level and exchanges at the subregional level.

29. The Programme's evolution towards multi-year, and often multi-country, projects in the past decade has been made possible by growing financial contributions from an increasing number of Parties, which also made possible continuous engagement and support by the secretariat. The continued guidance by the Working Group on Implementation, through its review of national self-assessments and action plans, and the dedication of the members of the Bureau and the Working Group, including their contributions to numerous assistance activities, have also been instrumental in the successful delivery of assistance.

II. Progress report on the implementation of assistance activities during the biennium 2023–2024

A. Key focus and achievements of activities carried out under the Assistance and Cooperation Programme during the biennium 2023–2024

1. Strengthening mine tailings governance and the prevention of accidental water pollution at the national and subregional levels

30. In the 2023–2024 biennium, Programme beneficiary countries made continued progress in improving mine tailings governance and preventing accidental water pollution. This advancement is largely attributed to the effective operation of the IIWGs on Tailings Safety and the Prevention of Accidental Water Pollution in Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

Second and third meetings of the Inter-institutional Working Group in Tajikistan (Dushanbe, respectively, 4 April 2023 and 15 May 2024)

31. During this biennium, Tajikistan hosted the second (4 April 2023)²² and third (15 May 2024)²³ IIWG meetings in Dushanbe (hybrid), with over 80 participants in total, including high-level and technical representatives of national authorities and high-ranking managers from mining operators, as well as representatives of academia and international organizations.

32. At the meetings, participants addressed Natech accident prevention, assessed current measures to reduce TMF and water pollution risks, reviewed ECE tools, and shared best practices for TMF safety. Consequently, Tajikistan included in its 2023–2024 action plan a proposal for Government consideration of accession, which was submitted in March 2024 with a completion target by the end of 2024. Additionally, it was agreed that, in 2024, the State Supervision of Safe Work in Industry and Mining Service — competent authority under the Convention — would join the National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and report on IIWG activities.

33. Both meetings were led by the competent authority, with support from the Convention secretariat. Financial support was provided by FOEN and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Programme Office in Dushanbe for, respectively, the second and third meetings.

Second and third meetings of the Inter-institutional Working Group in Kazakhstan (Astana, respectively, 15 March 2023 and 26 August 2024)

²² More detailed information on the meeting, along with the press release, is available at <https://unece.org/info/Environmental-Policy/Industrial-Accidents/events/376295>.

²³ More detailed information on the meeting, along with the press release, is available at <https://unece.org/info/Environmental-Policy/Industrial-Accidents/events/390754>.

34. In the current biennium, Kazakhstan held the second IIWG meeting in Astana on 15 March 2023,²⁴ with over 50 participants representing national authorities, operators, scientific institutions, international and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The meeting, organized by the secretariat with financial support from FOEN and OSCE, and in cooperation with the Water Initiative Centre, highlighted the IIWG's role in enhancing the capacity of Kazakhstan to mitigate technological and industrial risks and harmonize policies on industrial safety and DRR. The third meeting took place on 26 August 2024 and was supported substantively by the International Water Assessment Centre (IWAC) and logistically by OSCE, with contributions from the secretariat. Ensuring the safe management of tailings and preventing accidental water pollution amid the challenges of climate change are top priorities for Kazakhstan.

Inception meeting on the establishment of the Inter-institutional Working Group in Uzbekistan (Tashkent (hybrid), 27 April 2023)

35. The meeting²⁵ was held as part of the two-year Project²⁶ on strengthening tailings safety and the prevention of accidental water pollution in Uzbekistan and beyond in Central Asia, funded by FOEN. Participants considered draft terms of reference for the IIWG in Uzbekistan, reviewed the Convention's tools for mine tailings safety and discussed the benefits, challenges and lessons learned from establishing IIWGs in Kazakhstan and Tajikistan. The meeting concluded with an agreement to finalize the terms of reference and explore options for formally establishing the IIWG.

High-level project launch event, including a press conference and a technical workshop in Uzbekistan (Tashkent (hybrid), 14 March 2024)

36. The high-level launch event was organized as a part of the three-year Project²⁷ on strengthening action in Uzbekistan on water and sanitation and protection of water resources from accidental pollution in the face of climate change, funded by SDC and implemented by the Convention secretariat and the Protocol on Water and Health. Running from 2023 to 2026, the project aims to address legislative and policy gaps, improve mine tailings management, and mitigate disaster and climate risks. Key beneficiaries include various Uzbek ministries, along with local partners, civil society and industry operators. The event outlined the project's objectives, activities and timeline, and comprised a press conference to raise awareness and a workshop to support accession endeavours, enhanced implementation and the establishment of the IIWG by approving its terms of reference. The secretariat will continue to assist in establishing the IIWG and organizing its first meeting, planned for the third quarter of 2024.

On-site training at a tailings management facility in Uzbekistan (Tashkent (hybrid), 24–26 September 2024)

37. On-site training at a TMF in Uzbekistan is scheduled for autumn 2024, funded by FOEN as part of a project to strengthen tailings safety and prevent accidental water pollution in Uzbekistan and Central Asia (2021–2024). The training aims to support Uzbekistan in applying ECE Safety Guidelines and Good Practices for TMFs, enhance its capacity to accede to the Convention, and improve TMF safety to prevent accidental water pollution. The activity will result in a report with conclusions, measures and recommendations for addressing TMF safety deficiencies.

²⁴ More detailed information on the meeting, along with the press release, is available at <https://unece.org/info/Environmental-Policy/Industrial-Accidents/events/376267>.

²⁵ More detailed information on the meeting, along with the press release, is available at <https://unece.org/info/Environmental-Policy/Industrial-Accidents/events/377698>.

²⁶ More detailed information on the Project is available at <https://unece.org/environment-policy/project-strengthening-tailings-safety-and-prevention-accidental-water-pollution> (English and Russian).

²⁷ More detailed information on the Project is available at <https://unece.org/environmental-policy/industrial-accidents/strengthening-action-uzbekistan-water-and-sanitation-and>.

2. Increasing the integration of technological hazards and disaster risks, including in river basins

38. The Project “Addressing technological/industrial accident risks in national DRR policies and plans of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan,”²⁸ completed in January 2023, was implemented by ECE under the auspices of the Convention, following a related agreement with the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) as a component of the Central Asia Initiative, with financing from the European Union. It helped enhance authorities’ awareness and knowledge regarding technological and industrial accident risks, supporting the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 and the Convention. The project integrated natural and climate-related risks and transboundary considerations into national strategic documents and produced country-specific reports with analysis and recommendations for managing the above-mentioned risks and considerations.

39. The Study on pollution sources and identification of accident risks in the Syr Darya basin,²⁹ completed in February 2023, was funded by the European Union and led by the ECE Water Convention, with significant contributions by the Industrial Accidents Convention and support by IWAC. Implemented within the European Union Water Initiative NPDs in Central Asia, the study benefited Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. It resulted in an inventory and map of 61 tailings facilities and 133 other hazardous sites in the basin. The study increased awareness of risks and potential transboundary water pollution from industrial accidents and TMFs, including climate change-related Natech risks, and enhanced understanding of mitigation strategies.

3. Managing natural hazard-triggered industrial accident risks for tailing management facilities

40. During this biennium, efforts focused on enhancing the beneficiary countries’ ability to understand and manage Natech risks, including through the Subregional workshop on tailings safety and the prevention of accidental water pollution in Central Asia (Dushanbe (hybrid), 25–26 May 2023).³⁰ With the increasing number of natural disasters in Central Asia, addressing Natech risks has become crucial for the region. The workshop recommended a pilot project to assess climate change impacts on TMFs and explore related adaptation measures. Consequently, the Convention secretariat, in collaboration with the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, will launch a new United Nations Development Account-funded Project on improving climate knowledge and disaster risk governance for mine tailings facilities in Central Asia in the next biennium. The Project will address needs identified at the above-mentioned 2023 Subregional workshop and aims to enhance climate adaptation of TMFs, promoting safer and more resilient communities in Central Asia.

41. The Project on strengthening action in Uzbekistan on water and sanitation and protection of water resources from accidental pollution in the face of climate change (2023–2026) will enhance the capacity of Uzbekistan to manage Natech risks driven by increasing extreme weather events that can adversely affect water quality and quantity. Uzbekistan has stressed on several occasions the need to improve understanding and management of these risks to prevent accidental water pollution. Hence, the Project envisages the development of a policy brief on the impact of climate change on mine tailings safety in Uzbekistan in the next biennium.

4. National Policy Dialogue for Industrial Safety in Serbia

42. In the current biennium, Serbia advanced its industrial safety efforts through the NPD for Industrial Safety, launched in 2021 with support from the Convention secretariat and funding from France. The NPD focuses on enhancing cooperation and policymaking, identifying gaps, adopting a multi-hazard, multisectoral approach to DRR, and aligning with

²⁸ More detailed information on the Project is available at <https://unece.org/environment-policy/industrial-accidents/addressing-technologicalindustrial-accident-risks-national>.

²⁹ See <https://unece.org/pollution-syr-darya-river-emergency-situations>.

³⁰ More detailed information on the meeting, along with the press release, is available at <https://unece.org/info/Environmental-Policy/Industrial-Accidents/events/377827>.

the Convention, the European Union Seveso Directive III³¹ and the Sendai Framework. A key achievement in 2023 was the completion of the Serbian National Programme for Industrial Safety.

Second meeting of the National Policy Dialogue Steering Committee (Belgrade, 4 April 2023) and consultation meetings with representatives of industry (Belgrade, 7 July 2023) and representatives of local government (Belgrade, 13 July 2023)

43. The Ministry of Environmental Protection held the second NPD Steering Committee meeting on 4 April 2023, followed by consultations with representatives of industry and of local government in July 2023. Those meetings updated participants on NPD activities and their role in enhancing environmental management, disaster resilience, and industrial safety and provided an opportunity to present the draft National Programme for Industrial Safety and gather feedback.

Stakeholder Consultation (Belgrade, 20 September 2023)

44. The Stakeholder Consultation,³² led by the Ministry of Environmental Protection with support from the Convention's secretariat and the OECD Programme on Chemical Accidents, aimed to obtain inputs from all relevant stakeholders on the National Programme. During the meeting, national and international experts reviewed and discussed the latest draft and identified next steps for finalizing the Programme, which was recognized as an essential document outlining policies and measures for improved industrial safety. Participants underscored the importance of horizontal coordination and maintaining ongoing dialogue among all stakeholders, and highlighted the continued need for the Convention's support in the NPD process.

Development and finalization of the National Programme for Industrial Safety

45. The National Programme for Industrial Safety, which outlines the strategy of Serbia for preventing, preparing for and responding to industrial accidents, has been recognized by Serbia and the NPD Steering Committee as a key need in industrial safety. Developed by the Ministry of Environmental Protection with the Convention's support and funding from the regular programme of technical cooperation, the Programme has been finalized after several years of work. In the next biennium, Serbia plans to develop an action plan for the Programme's implementation. Continued support from the Convention will be essential for implementing the National Programme.

5. Transboundary cooperation and exchange of information

46. In 2023–2024, Programme beneficiary countries enhanced their understanding of regional risks and engaged in knowledge exchange, sharing of good practices and peer-to-peer learning through the following activities.

Subregional workshop on mine tailings safety and the prevention of accidental water pollution in Central Asia (Dushanbe (hybrid), 25–26 May 2023)

47. The Subregional workshop³³ was organized by the competent authority of Tajikistan, in collaboration with the Convention secretariat and with financial support from FOEN, the German International Cooperation Agency (GIZ), the OSCE Programme Office in Astana and the regular programme of technical cooperation. This workshop was part of the ECE Projects on strengthening mine tailings safety in Central Asia (2020–2023) and Uzbekistan (2021–2023), funded by FOEN. The workshop highlighted the critical importance of developing a common regional approach to industrial safety and facilitated a transparent dialogue among stakeholders. Central Asian countries identified key needs, including the establishment of a political and technical coordination council to assess risks related to hazardous activities, additional inspections at identified TMFs, enhanced staff capacity-building and improved legislation. Participants also emphasized the Convention's pivotal

³¹ Available at <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2012/18/oj>.

³² More detailed information on the meeting, along with the meeting conclusions and presentations, is available at <https://unece.org/info/Environmental-Policy/Industrial-Accidents/events/381381>.

³³ More detailed information on the meeting, along with the press release, is available at <https://unece.org/info/Environmental-Policy/Industrial-Accidents/events/377827>.

role and expressed gratitude for ECE support and the financial backing of Switzerland in advancing tailings safety and preventing accidental water pollution in Central Asia.

Subregional cooperation in the Syr Darya River basin between riparian countries

48. As part of the Study on pollution sources and identification of accident risks in the Syr Darya River basin “Syr Darya Project (Phase I)” (July 2021–February 2023), discussions were initiated among riparian countries on transboundary contingency planning, notably through the Kazakh-Uzbek Joint Working Group on Environmental Protection and Water Quality in the Syr Darya River basin. Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan have been working together, resulting in the development of recommendations for improving the planning process in the Syr Darya River basin. The development of the Joint Contingency Plan for industrial/tailings accidents prevention, preparedness and response in the basin was one of the proposed recommendations. Under the project “Strengthening action in Uzbekistan on water and sanitation and protection of water resources from accidental pollution in the face of climate change,” there are plans to begin drafting this Joint Contingency Plan during the 2023–2024 biennium, with further development in the following biennium.

B. Implementation of the Strategic Approach in 2023–2024 and supporting accession efforts

49. During the current biennium, the Working Group on Implementation and the secretariat worked closely with national focal points to track progress and address challenges in implementing the Convention. Under the Strategic Approach, beneficiary countries regularly submit and update self-assessments and action plans and receive support in their efforts to accede to and fully implement the Convention. This biennium, the Convention’s bodies and secretariat supported non-Parties in their accession processes and collaborated with Ukraine, the newest Party, to strengthen its implementation of the Convention.

1. Central Asia

50. Reports reviewing national policies and legislation related to industrial safety in Central Asian countries, prepared in close collaboration with national experts, were shared with the heads of the respective competent authorities in early 2023. Central Asian countries are encouraged to implement the recommendations from these reports to further strengthen industrial safety, reduce technological disaster risks, and enhance cross-border protection for people and the environment; and to submit updated self-assessments and action plans in the next biennium.

Progress of Tajikistan in implementing the Strategic Approach and its efforts towards accession to the Convention

51. As a signatory to the Declaration by the heads of delegation of the East European, Caucasian, Central Asian and South-East European Countries (CP.TEIA/2005/12, annex), adopted at the High-level Commitment Meeting (Geneva, 15 December 2005), Tajikistan pledged to implement the Convention and regularly report on its progress. In the current biennium, Tajikistan made significant progress toward accession, having translated the Convention’s text into the national language, reviewed the benefits of accession, based on a note prepared by the secretariat, and submitted a formal proposal to accede to the Convention to the Government in March 2024. At the time of writing, Tajikistan is working to prepare an accession bill. The country established a national working group on accession, consisting of representatives of various national authorities, which held its first meeting in May 2024. During the second IIWG meeting, Tajikistan announced its goal to complete the accession process by the end of 2024.

52. Tajikistan also participated in two teleconferences organized by the Working Group on Implementation in February 2023 and May 2024. These meetings provided an opportunity to update the Working Group on the current progress and implementation issues, seek advice, and outline the next steps in strengthening implementation.

Technical workshop to facilitate accession to and implementation of the Industrial Accidents Convention by Uzbekistan (Tashkent, 14–15 March 2024)

53. In the current biennium, Uzbekistan benefited from a technical workshop organized as part of the “Strengthening action in Uzbekistan on water and sanitation and protection of water resources from accidental pollution in the face of climate change” Project (2023–2026), funded by SDC. The workshop acquainted Uzbek authorities with the benefits of accession, allowed sharing of experiences with other countries, and discussed the establishment of the IIWG in Uzbekistan. The secretariat and international experts from Serbia, Tajikistan and Ukraine provided insights into the accession process, scope, benefits and key requirements of the Convention. Participants agreed on next steps, including initiating internal discussions on accession and developing a road map under the leadership of the Ministry of Ecology, Environmental Protection and Climate Change. This progress aligns with the 2019 Concept on Environmental Protection until 2030 of Uzbekistan, which envisions accession to the Convention.

2. Eastern Europe and the Caucasus

54. In the current biennium, all beneficiary countries of Eastern Europe and the Caucasus submitted their national reports for the tenth reporting round. Additionally, Armenia participated in a teleconference organized by the Working Group on Implementation in early 2024, where it clarified its current situation regarding implementation and expressed interest in updating its self-assessment and action plan.

55. In response to feedback from the Working Group, Azerbaijan finalized its self-assessment, originally submitted in 2022. The Republic of Moldova, after appointing a new focal point in spring 2024, announced plans to submit an updated self-assessment and action plan in the 2025–2026 biennium.

Technical mission to support the accession of Georgia to the Industrial Accidents Convention (Tbilisi, 7–9 November 2023)

56. Georgia, the only non-Party in the Eastern Europe and Caucasus subregion, made significant strides toward accession. At the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, a representative of Georgia emphasized the need for a technical mission and knowledge exchange on the Convention’s implementation,³⁴ which it reiterated at a teleconference with the Working Group in early 2023.³⁵ In response, the secretariat, in cooperation with the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia, organized a technical mission on 7–9 November 2023, funded by the German Federal Ministry of the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection. The mission involved over 40 representatives from various national authorities and international experts. Consequently, Georgia agreed on the need to develop a road map for accession, with the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture leading the accession efforts. This process should be supported by an inter-agency group of relevant authorities and stakeholders responsible for industrial safety, aiming to submit a proposal for accession to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.³⁶ The Working Group on Implementation and the secretariat will continue to support accession to and implementation of the Convention by Georgia, depending on availability of funding.

Strengthening industrial safety in Ukraine through enhanced implementation of and alignment with the Industrial Accidents Convention (December 2023–December 2024)

57. On 4 October 2022, Ukraine became a Party to the Convention, marking the culmination of years of work in this direction. During the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, Ukraine highlighted its ongoing challenges and the need for expert support to further align its national legislation with the Convention. At the same meeting, the European Investment Bank (EIB) committed to strengthening the capacity of Ukraine to prevent,

³⁴ ECE/CP.TEIA/44, para. 40 (g).

³⁵ CP.TEIA/2023/WGI.1/Minutes, para. 21.

³⁶ More information on the mission and its outcomes is available on the Convention’s website at <https://unece.org/info/Environmental-Policy/Industrial-Accidents/events/385940>.

prepare for and respond to industrial accidents by enhancing implementation of the Convention.³⁷

58. Thanks to in-kind support through a consultant engaged by EIB, in close cooperation with the Convention's secretariat, a report is being prepared that analyses Ukrainian industrial safety legislation and offers recommendations for alignment with the Convention, along with a road map for full implementation. These documents are being developed in collaboration with Ukrainian national authorities, particularly the State Emergency Service. Once the report, recommendations and road map have been finalized, a capacity-building activity for relevant authorities may be organized, depending on availability of funding. These efforts aim to help Ukraine adopt a comprehensive approach to implementing the Convention and strengthen the authorities' capacities to manage industrial risks and mitigate their consequences effectively.

3. South-Eastern Europe

59. In this biennium, Montenegro submitted the final version of its self-assessment and action plan and reiterated the need for further capacity-building on the Convention and an interest in launching an NPD on Industrial Safety with the Convention's support, taking account of lessons learned from the Serbian process.

60. Bosnia and Herzegovina has been pursuing discussions with the Working Group and the secretariat to report on progress. Notably, the country participated in two teleconferences (in 2023 and 2024), during which it voiced the need for expert support to develop a self-assessment and action plan and for additional support to address existing gaps, in particular to draft a strategy on the Convention's implementation. A country-specific mission may then be organized in the next biennium, subject to confirmation of the need by the country, and the availability of funding.

61. Albania participated in the teleconference with the Working Group in 2024 but has not submitted its national implementation report.

62. Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia submitted their national implementation reports for the tenth reporting round.³⁸

III. Lessons learned, ongoing challenges, prospects and approaches for the delivery of future assistance

63. Over the past 20 years, the Assistance and Cooperation Programme has significantly contributed to strengthening industrial safety across beneficiary countries. By fostering collaboration and knowledge-sharing, the Programme's activities have helped enhance the capacity of Governments to prevent, prepare for and respond to industrial accidents, thereby reducing the risk of cross-border damage to the environment and human health. They have also supported operators and other stakeholders. By means of multi-year, multi-country projects, high-level and technical missions, legal analyses and reports with recommendations, the Programme has helped countries to align their industrial safety practices with regional and international standards, as well as to draft and update legislation, policy and guidance documents, consequently leading to improved regulatory and governance frameworks. The last 20 years have paved the way for more robust accident prevention, preparedness and response by the beneficiaries, with the Programme offering activities tailored to their needs.

64. Future activities will aim at supporting the accession of the remaining five non-Parties in the ECE region (Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan), and at further improving implementation by Parties, including recent Parties such as Ukraine. They will naturally make use of the Convention's tools and knowledge products, including the self-assessments and action plans, as well as online toolkits, information repositories, safety guidelines and good practices. They will also continue to convey good practices from other parts of the ECE region to countries with economies in transition and, at the same time,

³⁷ ECE/CP.TEIA/44, paras. 40 (a) and 85 (l).

³⁸ Based on the status at the time of writing (August 2024).

enhance the cooperation among them, enabling the beneficiaries to become regional leaders and transfer their knowledge among each other.

65. The Programme will focus on supporting beneficiaries in addressing pressing issues, such as Natech risk mitigation in the context of climate change, land-use planning/siting in the context of increasing urbanization, mine tailings safety in the context of natural resource and critical mineral extraction, as well as the hazards and risks linked more broadly with the energy transition. This will be achieved, among other things, by continuing to support countries in establishing and running national governance mechanisms, with a view to said mechanisms being independently managed by the beneficiaries and serving as sustainable platforms for inter-institutional, cross-cutting and multi-stakeholder cooperation on industrial safety. The Programme will also further support subregional coordination, in particular among neighbouring countries and in river basins.

66. The future evolution of the Programme will be informed by the outcomes of the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (Geneva, 27–29 November 2024), which will review the Programme’s achievements, challenges and the way ahead.³⁹

67. In particular, the beneficiary countries will be invited during a tour de table to respond to the following questions:

(a) How has the Assistance and Cooperation Programme helped in the achievement of national objectives to strengthen industrial safety, and what long-term impact has it had at the national, subregional and regional levels?

(b) What are the main lessons learned and the remaining challenges in the Convention’s implementation? Which aspects would benefit from further assistance and support?

(c) Are there any future plans to strengthen transboundary industrial accident prevention, preparedness and response, in line with the Convention’s implementation and eventual accession thereto? If so, please outline said plans.

68. Donor countries and partner organizations will also be invited to share information on how they have provided and plan to prepare further support to beneficiary countries to enhance industrial safety and advance in implementation. The current biennium has yet again demonstrated the achievements that are possible with steady reliable donor support – both as unearmarked and as earmarked multi-year projects – which has enabled effective support for countries on their road towards accession and implementation.

69. In engaging in the tour de table, delegations will be invited to consider the elements that have made it possible to deliver progressively effective assistance under the Programme:

(a) Making use of the Strategic Approach, to support countries in preparing national self-assessments and action plans to foster the Convention’s implementation, guided by the Working Group on Implementation;

(b) Promoting the application of the Convention’s guidance and knowledge products, including its safety guidelines, information repositories and other tools;

(c) Providing dedicated support to countries at the national or subregional level, backed by unearmarked support from donors to the Convention’s trust fund, coupled with multi-year projects with predictable funding;

(d) Nationally, supporting enhanced governance through regular inter-institutional and multi-stakeholder policy dialogues involving national and local authorities, operators, civil society and other relevant stakeholders, and fostering ownership of these processes by beneficiary countries;

(e) Review and analysis of national legislation with a view to its alignment with the requirements of the Convention, and developing recommendations contained, among other things, in road maps for implementation, or, in the case of non-Parties, for accession;

³⁹ Under agenda item 8 (b), ECE/CP.TEIA/46, paras. 38–41.

(f) Fostering the regular exchange of knowledge and best practices among countries at the subregional level, across the ECE region and beyond, supported by the Convention's intergovernmental framework;

(g) Strengthening transboundary cooperation, including in river basins, through activities such as joint studies, exercises, tabletop simulations and joint contingency plans;

(h) Addressing and mainstreaming cross-cutting issues of particular concern to beneficiary countries, such as Natech risks in the face of climate change and land-use planning in the context of urbanization;

(i) Closely collaborating with beneficiary and donor countries, as well as partner organizations and other stakeholders, to multiply the effect of the assistance provided and spread the benefits of the Convention's application.

Annex

Table 1
National assistance activities carried out from 2004 to 2024, by country

<i>Beneficiary country</i>	<i>Activity, date and place</i>
Albania	Awareness-raising mission to Albania (Tirana, 20–21 May 2009) Training session on the use of indicators and criteria under the Industrial Accidents Convention (Tirana, 8–9 Oct. 2014)
Armenia	Fact-finding mission to Armenia (Yerevan, 27–29 June 2006)
Azerbaijan	Fact-finding mission to Azerbaijan (Baku, 22–24 May 2006) National training session for Azerbaijan on the identification of hazardous activities (Baku, 27–28 Oct. 2010) Training session on the use of indicators and criteria under the Industrial Accidents Convention (Baku, 30–31 Oct. 2014) Meeting between representatives of Azerbaijan and the Working Group on Implementation (online, 21 Sept. 2021)
Belarus	Fact-finding mission to Belarus (Minsk, 15–17 May 2006)
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Awareness-raising mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina (Sarajevo, 22–23 Sept. 2009) High-level meeting to promote the implementation of the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents (Sarajevo, 19 May 2014)
Bulgaria^a	Fact-finding mission to Bulgaria (Sofia, 31 May–2 June 2006)
Croatia^a	Fact-finding mission to Croatia (Zagreb, 20–22 Aug. 2007) Capacity-building to enhance development and evaluation of safety reports (Zagreb, 28–29 Oct. 2013)
Georgia	Fact-finding mission to Georgia (Tbilisi, 28 Aug.–1 Sept. 2006) High-level awareness-raising meeting and expert workshop for Georgia (Tbilisi, 5–8 Nov. 2013)

<i>Beneficiary country</i>	<i>Activity, date and place</i>
	Mission to support the accession of Georgia to the Industrial Accidents Convention (Tbilisi, 7–9 Nov. 2023)
Kazakhstan	Fact-finding mission to Kazakhstan (Astana, 17–20 April 2007)
	National expert group meeting under the Project on strengthening implementation of and accession to the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents in Central Asia (Astana and Borovoe, Kazakhstan, 20–22 June 2017)
	National inception workshop under the ECE pilot project to strengthen the safety of mining operations, in particular tailings management facilities (TMFs), in Kazakhstan and beyond in Central Asia (Astana, 7–8 Nov. 2018)
	Inaugural Meeting of the Inter-institutional Working Group on Tailings Safety and the Prevention of Accidental Water Pollution in Kazakhstan (Astana (hybrid), 11 Feb. 2022)
	Second Meeting of the Inter-institutional Working Group on Tailings Safety and the Prevention of Accidental Water Pollution in Kazakhstan (Astana (hybrid), 15 Mar. 2023)
Kyrgyzstan	Fact-finding mission to Kyrgyzstan (Bishkek, 12–15 Sept. 2006)
	Workshop on accession to and implementation of the Convention for Kyrgyzstan (Bishkek, 28–29 Oct. 2013)
	National expert group meeting under the Project on strengthening implementation of and accession to the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents in Central Asia (Bishkek, 16–18 May 2017)
	Meeting on reviewing industrial safety-related policies and legislation of Kyrgyzstan (online, 8 July 2021)
Montenegro	Implementation of the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents in Montenegro (Podgorica, 15–16 Apr. 2014)
	Technical mission to support Montenegro in implementing the Industrial Accidents Convention (Podgorica, 30 Nov.–1 Dec. 2021)
Rep. of Moldova	Fact-finding mission to Rep. of Moldova (Chisinau, 29–31 May 2006)
	National training session for Rep. of Moldova on the identification of hazardous activities (Chisinau, 9–10 Mar. 2011)
North Macedonia	Awareness-raising mission to North Macedonia (Skopje, 29–30 May 2006)
	National training session for North Macedonia on the identification of hazardous activities (Skopje, 23–24 Mar. 2010)
	National training session on preparation and evaluation of safety reports (Skopje, 27–28 Feb. 2014)

<i>Beneficiary country</i>	<i>Activity, date and place</i>
Romania^a	Fact-finding mission to Romania (Bucharest, 12–14 June 2006)
Serbia	Fact-finding mission to Serbia (Belgrade, 11–14 June 2007)
	Training session on safety management system as part of safety reports (Belgrade, 13–14 Nov. 2013)
	Launch of National Policy Dialogue (NPD) in Serbia (Belgrade, 26 Oct. 2021)
	First meeting of Steering Committee to NPD for Industrial Safety in Serbia (Belgrade, 16 Mar. 2022)
	Support to elaboration of National Programme for Industrial Safety (Jan. 2022–Dec. 2023)
	Stakeholder Consultation – NPD on Industrial Safety (Belgrade, 20 Sept. 2023)
Tajikistan	Fact-finding mission to Tajikistan (Dushanbe, 10–12 May 2005)
	National expert group meeting under the Project on strengthening implementation of and accession to the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents in Central Asia (Dushanbe, 13–15 Mar. 2018)
	Meeting on reviewing industrial safety-related policies and legislation of Tajikistan (online, 24 June 2021)
	Inaugural Meeting of the Inter-institutional Working Group on Tailings Safety and the Prevention of Accidental Water Pollution in Tajikistan (Geneva (hybrid), 2 Dec. 2021)
	Second Meeting of the Inter-institutional Working Group on Tailings Safety and the Prevention of Accidental Water Pollution in Tajikistan (Dushanbe (hybrid), 4 Apr. 2023)
	Third Meeting of the Inter-institutional Working Group on Tailings Safety and the Prevention of Accidental Water Pollution in Tajikistan (Dushanbe (hybrid), 15 May 2024)
Turkmenistan	National workshop on the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents (Ashgabat, 9–10 Oct. 2014)
	National expert group meeting under the Project on strengthening implementation of and accession to the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents in Central Asia (Ashgabat, 24–26 Jan. 2018)
Ukraine	Fact-finding mission to Ukraine (Kyiv, 18–20 Sept. 2006)

^a Following their accession to the European Union, these countries are no longer counted as Assistance and Cooperation Programme beneficiaries.

<i>Beneficiary country</i>	<i>Activity, date and place</i>
	Workshop on raising knowledge among students and teachers on tailings safety and its legislative review in Ukraine (Dnipro, Ukraine, 3–7 Oct. 2016)
	High-level awareness-raising mission to Ukraine (Kyiv, 18–19 Apr. 2018)
	Ongoing support to Ukraine in implementation of the Strategic Approach and accession process (2021–2022)
	Kick-off meeting under United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE)-European Investment Bank (EIB) Project on strengthening industrial safety in Ukraine through enhanced implementation of and alignment with the Industrial Accidents Convention (Geneva (hybrid), 13 Dec. 2023)
Uzbekistan	Fact-finding mission to Uzbekistan (Tashkent, 9–12 July 2007)
	National training on the identification of hazardous activities for Uzbekistan (Tashkent, 6–7 Dec. 2011)
	National expert group meeting under the Project on strengthening implementation of and accession to the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents in Central Asia (Tashkent, 7–9 Feb. 2018)
	Inception meeting on the establishment of the Inter-Institutional Working Group on Tailings Safety and Prevention of Accidental Water Pollution in Uzbekistan (Tashkent (hybrid), 27 Apr. 2023)
	High-level project launch event, press conference and technical meetings in Uzbekistan (Tashkent (hybrid), 14–15 Mar. 2024)

Table 2
Assistance activities organized at the subregional level from 2004 to 2024

<i>Year</i>	<i>Assistance Programme activity</i>	<i>Beneficiary countries</i>
2005	High-Level Commitment Meeting (Geneva, 14–15 Dec.)	Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Rep. of Moldova, Romania, Serbia, Tajikistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan
2007	Workshop on capacity-building to further strengthen the legal and institutional frameworks under the Convention in the countries of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia (Kyiv, 5–7 Dec.)	Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bulgaria, Georgia, Rep. of Moldova, Romania, Serbia, Ukraine
	Capacity-building workshop (Vadul lui Voda, Rep. of Moldova, 13–14 Dec.)	Rep. of Moldova, Romania, Ukraine
2008	Hands-on training session on identification of hazardous activities (Minsk, 21–22 Oct.)	Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Croatia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Rep. of Moldova, Romania, Serbia, Ukraine
2009	Training session on integrated approaches to major hazard prevention (Prague, 11–13 Feb.)	Armenia, Azerbaijan, Croatia, Kazakhstan, Rep. of Moldova, Serbia, North Macedonia, Ukraine
	Kick-off meeting, Danube River project (Bucharest, 17–18 Mar.)	Bulgaria, Romania, Serbia
	Technical workshop, Danube River project (Drobeta-Turnu Severin, Romania, 16–18 June)	Bulgaria, Romania, Serbia
	Field exercise and evaluation workshop, Danube River project (Negotin, Serbia, 24–25 Sept.)	Bulgaria, Romania, Serbia
	Final workshop, Danube River project (Sofia, 17–18 Nov.)	Bulgaria, Romania, Serbia
2010	Training session on the evaluation of safety reports for Croatia, Serbia and North Macedonia (Belgrade, 8–9 Feb.)	Croatia, North Macedonia, Serbia
2011	Follow-up to the training session on the evaluation of safety reports and joint inspection for Croatia, Serbia and North Macedonia (Zagreb, 29–31 Mar.)	Croatia, North Macedonia, Serbia
	Workshop on the use of indicators and criteria for the implementation of the Strategic Approach (Bratislava, 4–6 May)	Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, North Macedonia, Rep. of Moldova, Serbia, Tajikistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan

<i>Year</i>	<i>Assistance Programme activity</i>	<i>Beneficiary countries</i>
	Kick-off meeting, Danube Delta project (Kyiv, 11 May)	Rep. of Moldova, Romania, Ukraine
	Workshop on hazard management, Danube Delta project (Chisinau, 12–13 July)	Rep. of Moldova, Romania, Ukraine
	Joint visit to oil terminals, Danube Delta project (Galati, Romania, 27–29 Sept.)	Rep. of Moldova, Romania, Ukraine
	Regional training session on identification of hazardous activities for Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan (Bishkek, 22–23 Nov.)	Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan
	Workshop on crisis management, Danube Delta project (Chisinau, 13–14 Dec.)	Rep. of Moldova, Romania, Ukraine
2012	Training session on the evaluation of safety reports – on-site inspection for Croatia, Serbia and North Macedonia (Split, Croatia, 22–24 Oct.)	Croatia, North Macedonia, Serbia
2013	Workshop on safety guidelines and good industry practices for oil terminals in Odessa within the Danube Delta project (Odessa, Ukraine, 23–25 Sept.)	Rep. of Moldova, Romania, Ukraine
2015	Hazard and Crisis Management Week, Danube Delta project (Chisinau, 23–26 Mar.)	Rep. of Moldova, Romania, Ukraine
	Subregional workshop for Central Asia: Chemicals management, identification and notification of industrial hazardous activities and accidental water pollution (Astana, 26–28 May)	Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan
	Field exercise in the Danube Delta between the Rep. of Moldova, Romania and Ukraine (Giugiurlesti, Rep. of Moldova, 1–3 Sept.)	Rep. of Moldova, Romania, Ukraine
	Final workshop, Danube Delta project (Bucharest, 19–23 Oct.)	Rep. of Moldova, Romania, Ukraine
2017	Subregional workshop for South-Eastern Europe on industrial accidents prevention (Zagreb, 21–23 Feb.)	Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia
	Subregional workshop for the Caucasus and Eastern Europe on industrial accidents prevention (Minsk, 11–13 April)	Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Rep. of Moldova, Ukraine
	Training on environment and emergencies and hazardous industrial activities: Training of trainers (Almaty, Kazakhstan, 23–24 and 25–26 Oct.)	Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan
2018	Introductory meeting on reviewing national policies and legislation on industrial safety (online, 10 Mar.)	Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan

<i>Year</i>	<i>Assistance Programme activity</i>	<i>Beneficiary countries</i>
	Technical meeting to prepare for on-site training in Tajikistan and to enhance capacity for governance and policymaking on tailings safety in Central Asia (online, 23 Apr.)	Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan
	Subregional workshop on land-use planning and industrial safety for Eastern Europe and the Caucasus (Chisinau, 22–24 May)	Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Rep. of Moldova, Ukraine
	On-site training, evaluation workshop and on-site report on strengthening safety and governance of mine tailings in Central Asia (Penjikent, Tajikistan (hybrid), 2–4 June)	Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan
	Awareness-raising workshop for Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan on the Industrial Accidents Convention (Geneva, 6 June)	Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan
	Introduction workshop and on-site training session under the ECE projects on improving mining/tailings safety in Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and beyond in Central Asia (Kokshetau, Kazakhstan, 11–13 June)	Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan
	Subregional workshop for Central Asia on industrial safety and transboundary cooperation under the Project on strengthening implementation of and accession to the Convention in Central Asia (Almaty, Kazakhstan, 25–26 Sept.)	Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan
	Online teaser event: Subregional workshop on land-use planning and industrial safety for South-Eastern Europe (online via Webex, 21 Oct.)	Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia
	Subregional workshop on land-use planning and industrial safety for South-Eastern Europe (Belgrade (hybrid), 27–29 Oct.)	Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia
	Consultation for Central Asia on a draft global tailings standard, co-convened with the Global Tailings Review (Almaty, Kazakhstan, 18–19 Nov.)	Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan
	Subregional workshop on improving mine tailings safety in Central Asia (Almaty, Kazakhstan, 20–21 Nov.)	Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan
	Introductory online meeting of experts within Syr Darya Project (online, 21 Dec.)	Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan
2022	Technical meeting of experts on industrial safety within Syr Darya Project (online, 24 Jan.)	Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan
2023	Subregional workshop on mine tailings safety and the prevention of accidental water pollution in Central Asia (Dushanbe (hybrid), 25–26 May)	Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan

Table 3
Projects carried out under the Assistance and Cooperation Programme from 2004 to 2024

<i>Start</i>	<i>Assistance Programme activity</i>	<i>End</i>	<i>Beneficiary countries</i>	<i>Donor countries</i>
2009	Project on joint management of transboundary emergencies from spills of hazardous substance into the Danube River	2009	Bulgaria, Romania, Serbia	Italy (Ministry for the Environment, Land and Sea)
2009	Follow-up to the training session on evaluation of safety reports and joint inspection	2010	Croatia, North Macedonia, Serbia	Germany (German Federal Ministry of the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety and by the German Federal Environment Agency) under the Environment and Security Initiative
2010	Project on hazard and crisis management in the Danube Delta	2015	Rep. of Moldova, Romania, Ukraine	Germany (German Federal Ministry of the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety and by the German Federal Environment Agency), Finland (Ministry of the Interior) and the Netherlands (Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management)
2016	Project on strengthening industrial safety in Central Asia through the implementation of and accession to the Convention	2019	Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan	Russian Federation (Ministry of Foreign Affairs)
2017	Pilot project to strengthen the safety of mining operations, in particular TMFs, in Kazakhstan and beyond in Central Asia	2019	Kazakhstan, benefiting also Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan	Switzerland (FOEN)
2019	Project to strengthen the safety of mining operations, in particular TMFs, in Tajikistan and Central Asia	2021	Tajikistan, benefiting also Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan	Switzerland (FOEN)
2020	Project on supporting countries of Central Asia in strengthening the safety of mine tailings	2021	Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan	Switzerland (FOEN)

<i>Start</i>	<i>Assistance Programme activity</i>	<i>End</i>	<i>Beneficiary countries</i>	<i>Donor countries</i>
	Project on NPDs for Industrial Safety in Central Asia (Phase I: Launch)	2022	Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan	Russian Federation (Ministry of Foreign Affairs)
2021	Study on pollution sources and identification of accident risks in the Syr Darya basin	2023	Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan	European Union (Directorate-General for International Partnerships) through Water Convention
2021	NPD on Industrial Safety in Serbia	2023	Serbia	France (Ministry of Ecological Transition)
2021	Project on strengthening tailings safety and the prevention of accidental water pollution in Uzbekistan and beyond in Central Asia	2024	Mainly Uzbekistan, benefiting also Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan	Switzerland (FOEN)
2022	Project on addressing technological/industrial accident risks in national strategies and Disaster Risk Reduction plans and plans of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan	2023	Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan	EU (as a part of the Central Asia Initiative implemented by UNDRR)
2023	Project on strengthening action in Uzbekistan on water and sanitation and protection of water resources from accidental pollution in the face of climate change	2026	Mainly Uzbekistan, benefiting also Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan	Switzerland (SDC)

Table 4
Indicators of progress of beneficiary countries towards implementation of the Convention during the period 2004–2024

a. South-Eastern Europe

<i>Beneficiary country</i>	<i>Albania (since 2009)</i>	<i>Bosnia and Herzegovina (since 2005)</i>	<i>Montenegro (since 2014)</i>	<i>Serbia (since 2005)</i>	<i>North Macedonia (since 2005)</i>
Year of becoming Party	1994	2013	2009	2009	2010
Self-assessment (year)	2011, 2015	No	2018, 2020, 2022	2011, 2015	2011
Action plan (year)	2012, 2016	No	2022	2012, 2015	2012, 2015
Number of activities organized under the Programme	6	7	6	20	12
Implementation reports submitted	2004–2005 to 2016–2018	2006–2007, 2016–2018	2010–2011 to 2019–2022	2004–2005 to 2019–2022	2004–2005 to 2019–2022
Participation in meetings of the Conference of the Parties	1 st –3 rd , 7 th , 8 th , 10 th –12 th	4 th –9 th , 11–12 th	4 th , 8 th –12 th	4 th –12 th	5 th –12 th
Competent authority designated	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Point of contact^a determined	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

^a Point of contact for accident notification and mutual assistance, to be nominated in accordance with article 10 of the Convention.

b. Eastern Europe and the Caucasus

<i>Beneficiary country</i>	<i>Eastern Europe</i>			<i>Caucasus</i>		
	Belarus (since 2005)	Rep. of Moldova (since 2005)	Ukraine (since 2005)	Armenia (since 2005)	Azerbaijan (since 2005)	Georgia (since 2005)
Year of becoming Party	2003	1994	2022	1997	2004	Not a Party
Self-assessment (year)	2011, 2012	2011, 2013, 2018	2011 (incomplete), 2020, 2021	2011, 2015, 2018	2012, 2016, 2020, 2021, 2022	2011 (incomplete)
Action plan (year)	2012, 2013	2013	No	No	2022	2015
Number of activities organized under the Programme	7	18	21	8	11	9
Implementation reports submitted	2002–2003 to 2019–2022	2002–2003 to 2019–2022	2002–2003 to 2008–2009, 2012–2013, and 2016–2018 to 2019–2022	2001–2002 to 2019–2022	2002–2003 to 2019–2022	2004–2005 to 2008–2009, 2012–2013, and 2016–2018 to 2019–2022
Participation in meetings of the Conference of the Parties	1 st –12 th	1 st –12 th	1 st –12 th	1 st –4 th , 6 th –12 th	1 st –4 th , 6 th –12 th	2 nd –10 th , 12 th
Competent authority designated	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Point of contact	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

c. Central Asia

<i>Beneficiary country</i>	<i>Kazakhstan (since 2005)</i>	<i>Kyrgyzstan (since 2005)</i>	<i>Tajikistan (since 2005)</i>	<i>Turkmenistan (since 2005)</i>	<i>Uzbekistan (since 2005)</i>
Year of becoming Party	2001	Not a Party	Not a Party	Not a Party	Not a Party
Self-assessment (year)	2018, 2021	2011 (incomplete), 2017, 2021	2018, 2021	2018	2013, 2014, 2018
Action plan (year)	2018, 2021	2017, 2021	2018	2018	2013, 2018, 2021
Number of activities organized under the Programme	22	19	21	9	18
Implementation reports submitted	2000–2001 and 2004–2005 to 2016–2018	2004–2005, 2006–2007, 2019–2022	2004–2005	n/a	2004–2005 to 2006–2007, 2014–2015 to 2019– 2022
Participation in meetings of the Conference of the Parties	2 nd , 4 th , 5 th , 7 th –12 th	1 st –12 th	1 st , 3 rd , 4 th , 6 th , 9 th –12 th	9 th , 10 th , 12 th	1 st –4 th , 6 th , 8 th –12 th
Competent authority designated	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Point of contact	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes