

Economic Commission for Europe

Committee on Environmental Policy

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Environmental monitoring, assessment and reporting

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Eighth pan-European environmental assessment

Note by the secretariat

Summary

This document shares updated information on the planning of an eighth pan-European environmental assessment. At its twenty-eighth session (1–3 November 2023), the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) Committee on Environmental Policy took note of the information provided by the secretariat on the expected eighth assessment.

Since then, the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment has welcomed a draft concept of the eighth pan-European environmental assessment (ECE/CEP/AC.10/2024/6) and requested the secretariat to forward it to the Committee.

Subsequently, the Joint Task Force on Environmental Statistics and Indicators, at its twenty-first session (17– 8 October 2024), will have been invited to discuss a preliminary selection of environmental indicators (ECE/CEP-CES/GE.1/2024/3) that could inform the eighth pan-European assessment. The secretariat will provide orally the outcome of that discussion.

The Committee is invited to guide the preparation of the eighth pan-European environmental assessment, including regarding its scope and funding.

I. Background

1. The series of assessments of the state and trends of the environment in the pan-European region provide up-to-date and policy-relevant information on interactions between the environment and society. The assessments were a consistent feature of the Environment for Europe process from 1995 to 2016. The 2009 reform of that process identified the pan-European assessment as one of the three substantive documents to be prepared for each Ministerial Conference, together with up to two theme-specific reports (ECE/CEP/S/152, annex I, para. 12 (a) and (d)).
2. Following the Seventh Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference (Nur-Sultan, 2011), responsibility for drafting the assessment shifted from the European Environment Agency (EEA) to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and ECE. During the Eighth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference (Batumi, 2016), the launch of the European regional assessment of the Global Environment Outlook as the regular pan-European environmental assessment was welcomed.
3. Following the Eighth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference, the ECE Committee on Environmental Policy adopted the revised mandate and terms of reference of the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment for the period 2017–2021. The Working Group was tasked by the Committee with leading a process of consultation on the regular pan-European environmental assessment for consideration by the Committee and

leading up to the next Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference. This mandate has been repeated for the period 2024–2028.

4. At its twenty-fifth session (Geneva, 13–15 November 2019), the Committee on Environmental Policy requested the secretariat and UNEP, working in close cooperation with the EEA, to prepare a limited indicator-based and thematic assessment, subject to availability of resources. The Committee encouraged all Member States to provide the necessary funding to enable the preparation of the assessment.

5. Two publications were made available to the Ministers at the Ninth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference (Nicosia, 5–7 October 2022): *Europe's Environment: The Seventh Pan-European Environmental Assessment*;¹ and a brochure that presented the key messages and recommendations of the pan-European assessment and to address remaining gaps in the implementation of the Shared Environmental Information System.²

6. The Ministers adopted a declaration that acknowledged the importance of regular, indicator-based environmental assessments, and confirmed their commitment to keeping the pan-European region under regular review in support of sustainable development and the transition to a circular, green and sustainable economy. Ministers also took note of the key findings of the seventh pan-European assessment, produced by ECE and UNEP.

II. Recent developments

7. The secretariat provided information to the Committee at its twenty-eighth session (1–3 November 2023) on possible approaches to an eighth pan-European assessment, based on lessons learned from the seventh assessment. The assessment would be prepared for the expected Tenth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference, which might take place in 2027 or later. The Committee took note of the information provided.

8. The Working Group, at its twenty-sixth session (18 and 19 April 2024), welcomed the draft concept of the eighth pan-European environmental assessment (ECE/CEP/AC.10/2024/6),³ which included a proposed outline, process and timetable, roles and estimated budget (reproduced in the table below). The Working Group also requested the secretariat to forward the document to the Committee, agreed to support the securing of funding through discussions with members of the Committee, confirmed its support for the selection of indicators and in assessing the extent to which Earth observations could be used to generate indicator values, and confirmed its support for the provision of national data for selected indicators.

9. The Joint Task Force on Environmental Statistics and Indicators, at its twenty-first session (17–18 October 2024), will have been invited to discuss a preliminary selection of environmental indicators (ECE/CEP-CES/GE.1/2024/3)⁴ that could inform the eighth pan-European assessment, including indicators that could be derived with the help of Earth observations. The document to be examined includes a proposed selection of environmental indicators, together with a process and timetable for the finalization of the indicator selection and the production of indicators. The timetable for the indicators is integrated into the broader timetable of the production of the assessment.

10. The Committee is invited to guide the preparation of the eighth pan-European environmental assessment, including regarding its scope and funding.

¹ Available at <https://unece.org/info/Environment-Policy/Environmental-Monitoring-and-Assessment/pub/370327>.

² The latter part of the brochure was extracted from the final report on the establishment of the Shared Environmental Information System (ECE/NICOSIA.CONF/2022/8).

³ <https://unece.org/environment/documents/2024/02/working-documents/draft-concept-eight-pan-european-environmental> (available in English, French and Russian).

⁴ <https://unece.org/environment/documents/2024/08/working-documents/draft-selection-environmental-indicators-eighth-pan> (available in English and Russian).

Table
**Estimated budget breakdown for a light, indicator-based and thematic assessment,
and additional options**

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Budget (US dollars)</i>
Consultants and/or stipends for experts and/or institutions	90 000
Coordination and harmonization of inputs	10 000
Editing, design, graphics and layout	20 000
Translation (into Russian, if not provided by regular budget of United Nations)	20 000
Total	140 000
Possible optional additions:	
Section on noise	5 000
Text on circular economy	5 000
Section on sustainable infrastructure	10 000
Section on green economy	10 000
Review of policy goals adopted by past Environment for Europe Ministerial Conferences	20 000
Foresight or outlook chapter	100 000

Source: ECE/CEP/AC.10/2024/6