

# Economic Commission for Europe

## Committee on Environmental Policy

### Twenty-ninth session

Geneva, 6-8 November 2024

Item 14 of the provisional agenda

### Criteria for financial support for participation in meetings and events

Information paper No. 9

30 October 2024

## Countries eligible for financial support to participate in meetings and events

### Note by the secretariat in consultation with the CEP Bureau

1. The Committee on Environmental Policy (CEP) at its nineteenth session (22–25 October 2013) “...took note of the assessment of criteria for providing financial support for participation in meetings and events (ECE/CEP/2013/20), and approved the recommendations contained therein (see paras. 20 and 21)”. Paragraph 21 stipulates in particular that “(a) ... The CEP shall take decision at each regular session on either amending the present criteria or extending them for another period; (b) The draft of a relevant decision of the CEP shall be based on the input from the secretariat, in consultation with the Bureau and its Chair, to be prepared and circulated beforehand ...”.

2. According to the mandate referred to in a para 1 above, the Committee at its twenty-seventh session (Geneva, 3-5 November 2021) approved the revised criteria for providing financial support for participation in meetings and events, as presented in information paper No. 8<sup>1</sup>, and requested the Bureau, with support from the secretariat, to periodically verify the availability of data for 2021 and, if available for all countries with economies in transition, to prepare revised criteria for financial support for subsequent approval by the Committee.

3. This document had been in force ever since and had been reviewed by the Committee at its twenty-eighth session (Geneva, 1–3 November 2023), at which point the Committee decided<sup>2</sup> that the document “Countries eligible for financial support to participate in meetings and events”, approved at its twenty-seventh session, should remain in force for another year.

4. The Committee also requested the Bureau, with support from the secretariat, to: review the effectiveness of the present mechanism for providing financial support for participating in meeting and events adopted by the Committee on Environmental Policy in 2013; review also possible adjustments to the current mechanism, for example, by taking into account an inflation index; and review further possible alternatives that could be considered instead of the current mechanism. The Committee asked the Bureau to provide recommendations to the Committee at its next regular session.

5. The Committee also recommended that all the countries consider including the cost of participation of their delegates to the Committee and other relevant meetings in their national budgets, as the decision of the Committee in 2024 might affect their eligibility for financial support for participation in meetings and events.

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<sup>1</sup> Available at [https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2021-11/CEP-27\\_EligibilityCriteria\\_IP.8.e.pdf](https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2021-11/CEP-27_EligibilityCriteria_IP.8.e.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> See “Report of the Committee on Environmental Policy on its twenty-eighth session” (ECE/CEP/2023/2), 70-74. <https://unece.org/environment/documents/2024/02/reports/report-committee-environmental-policy-its-twenty-eighth>

6. Following up the above request from the Committee, the Bureau with the support of the secretariat has discussed in detail the present mechanism and its potential alternatives during its meetings in Lisbon (4-5 June 2024) and online (23 September 2024).

7. The Bureau considered the following alternatives:

(a) No support: Eliminating the current support system entirely.

(b) Modified two-threshold system:

i. Rigid thresholds: Maintaining the current system with fixed thresholds.

ii. Adjusted thresholds:

1. Inflation-adjusted thresholds: Adjusting thresholds based on inflation rates.

2. Limited beneficiary group: Restricting support to a specific number of countries.

3. Modified threshold gap: Decreasing the lower threshold and increasing the upper threshold.

(c) Lumpsum system:

i. Full reimbursement: Providing a fixed calculated amount for all countries below the upper threshold, covering full travel costs.

ii. Phased-out reimbursement: Offering a fixed calculated amount with a gradual reduction over a specified period (e.g., 10 years).

8. The Bureau considered the alternatives, weighing factors such as fairness to those with financial constraints, ease of understanding and calculating, the ability to plan ahead for those approaching the income threshold, and the need for a defined timeline.

9. The Bureau recommended that the most suitable approach is to maintain the current two-threshold system with the base thresholds of USD 4500 and USD 5500 (in 2013 US dollars) used as a reference point for calculating the adjusted thresholds. The Bureau also recommended to exclusively use the UNECE Statistical Database data for GDP per capita calculations.

10. Consistent with the past, the criteria include lower and upper thresholds. These will remain at the same nominal 2013 levels<sup>3</sup>, but adjusted for inflation to reflect the September 2024 US Dollar compared to October 2013.

11. The lower threshold (for full financial support) will be set to 4,500 in 2013 October US\$ of the gross domestic product (GDP) per capita.

12. The upper threshold (for full financial support) will be set to 5,500 in 2013 October US\$ of GDP per capita.

13. Using the inflation index of 1.35 (September 2024 vs. October 2013)<sup>4</sup>, the adjusted thresholds in 2024 US Dollars become:

(a) Lower threshold: USD 6,075

(b) Upper threshold: USD 7,425

14. The secretariat continued to monitor data availability. After assessing the situation in mid-October 2024, the secretariat has prepared updated version of the criteria for the

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<sup>3</sup> As defined in the document "Assessment of criteria for providing financial support for participation in meetings and events" (ECE/CEP/2013/20).

<sup>4</sup> According to the official publicly available data of the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. CPI Inflation Calculator, <https://data.bls.gov/cgi-bin/cpicalc.pl>

consideration of the Bureau<sup>5</sup>. The CEP Bureau considered the revised and updated criteria during its meeting of October 23 (online) and recommended submitting them to the Committee for approval.

15. The Committee will be invited to consider the updated criteria for financial support with a view to approving it.

16. The present criteria will enter into force immediately after their approval by CEP. For projects with specific donor conditions, other approaches can be applied.

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<sup>5</sup> The Statistical Database of the UNECE has been the primary source of data, using 2023 data whenever possible, or the most recent available data otherwise.

## Annex

### Countries eligible for financial support to participate in meetings and events

1. For the purposes of this paper, “partial financial support” includes Daily Subsistence Allowance (DSA) only; and “full financial support” includes DSA and travel expenses.
2. The lower threshold for financial support equals US\$ 6075. Representatives of the member States with annual GDP per capita below the lower threshold are entitled to full<sup>a</sup> financial support to participate in meetings and events to which the CEP decision applies. For projects with specific donor conditions, other approaches can be applied.
3. The upper threshold for financial support equals US\$ 7425. Representatives of the member States with annual GDP per capita between the lower and upper thresholds are entitled to partial<sup>b</sup> financial support to participate in meetings and events to which the CEP decision applies. For projects with specific donor conditions, other approaches can be applied.

#### List of countries eligible for financial support

<b>Countries eligible for financial support, total: 8</b>	
<b>Eligible for travel expenses and DSA support, subtotal: 5</b>	
<i>Country</i>	<i>GDP per capita, US\$<sup>c</sup></i>
Tajikistan	1187
Kyrgyzstan	2050
Uzbekistan	2611
Moldova, Republic of	3619 <sup>d</sup>
Ukraine	4828 <sup>e</sup>
<b>Eligible for DSA support only, subtotal: 3</b>	
<i>Country</i>	<i>GDP per capita, US\$</i>
Albania	6377 <sup>f</sup>
Bosnia & Herzegovina	7042 <sup>g</sup>
Azerbaijan	7131

<sup>a</sup> Travel expenses and DSA, subject to availability of extrabudgetary resources for this purpose.

<sup>b</sup> DSA only, subject to availability of extrabudgetary resources for this purpose.

<sup>c</sup> UNECE Statistical Database (<https://w3.unece.org/PXWeb2015/pxweb/en/STAT/>). Country GDP per capita in current US\$ has been calculated by dividing the figure for “GDP per capita at current prices, NCUs” onto the figure for “Exchange rate (XR), NCU per US\$” of the same year. Data of 2023, unless indicated otherwise. Database was accessed on 31 October 2024.

<sup>d</sup> Data of 2022

<sup>e</sup> Data of 2021

<sup>f</sup> Data of 2021

<sup>g</sup> Data of 2022