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Meeting of the Parties to the Convention
on Environmental Impact Assessment
in a Transboundary Context

Ninth session

Meeting of the Parties to the Convention
on Environmental Impact Assessment in
a Transboundary Context serving as the
Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on
Strategic Environmental Assessment

Fifth session

Geneva, 12–15 December 2023

Report of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on its ninth session and of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on its fifth session

Addendum

Decisions adopted jointly by the Meetings of the Parties to the Convention and the Protocol

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Decision IX/1–V/1

Financial arrangements for 2024–2026

The Meeting of the Parties to the Convention and the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol, meeting in joint session,

Recalling decision VIII/1–IV/1 on financial arrangements for 2021–2023,¹

Recalling also the financial strategy adopted in 2014,² while expressing regret at the strategy’s limited applicability to improve funding for the Convention and its Protocol and the predictability and equitable distribution of contributions,

Recognizing the Parties’ wish for a high degree of transparency and accountability regarding the status and developments in the financing of activities under the Convention and the Protocol,

Welcoming the annual financial reports prepared by the secretariat during the intersessional period 2021–2023,

Acknowledging with appreciation the contributions made in cash and in kind during that period,

Expressing regret, however, that contributions continued to be insufficient for the full implementation of the joint workplan under the Convention and the Protocol and for ensuring an adequate level of secretariat staffing required for that purpose,

Reiterating the necessity for each Party to take part in an equitable sharing of the workplan costs, to contribute, to the extent possible, in the light of its economic strength,³

Expressing regret, however, that the financial burden remained unevenly distributed, with only a few Parties providing most of the funding, the majority of Parties contributing only limited amounts compared to their economic strength³ and 8 Parties not contributing at all,

Affirming the need for all Parties to ensure stable and sufficient financial and human resources for implementation of the workplan of the Convention and its Protocol for 2024–2026, adopted through decision IX/2–V/2,

Aware of the importance of Parties’ wide participation in activities under the Convention and the Protocol in order to improve their effectiveness,

Aware also of the need to facilitate the participation, at meetings and in activities under the Convention and the Protocol, of several countries with economies in transition that may otherwise not be able to take part, including, to the extent feasible, of countries outside the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) region,

Recalling article 23 (3) of the Protocol, which allows States Members of the United Nations not members of ECE to accede thereto, and article 17 (3) of the Convention, which

¹ ECE/MP.EIA/30/Add.1–ECE/MP.EIA/SEA/13/Add.1.

² ECE/MP.EIA/20/Add.3–ECE/MP.EIA/SEA/4/Add.3, decision VI/4–II/4, annex II.

³ Through decision VIII/1–IV/1, the Meetings of the Parties affirmed the necessity for each Party to contribute, to the extent possible, depending on its “economic strength”, as concerns States parties. The reference to “economic strength” is not applicable to contributions of the European Union. Every three years, the General Assembly adopts an updated scale of assessment for calculating the contributions of States Members of the United Nations to the United Nations regular budget according to their economic strength, based on estimates of gross national income of each State Member. Consequently, by way of reference, the annex to the present decision lists indicative amounts of Parties’ annual contributions for 2024 to the proposed budget for 2024–2026 under the Convention and the Protocol, calculated based on the United Nations scale of assessment for 2022–2024 (adopted through General Assembly resolution 76/238 (A/RES/76/238)), as adjusted to the number of Parties to the Convention.

is expected, in the current intersessional period, to also allow for accession to the Convention by non-ECE member States,

1. *Agree* to maintain the existing financial scheme for funding the adopted workplans whereby all the Parties have a duty to contribute to the sharing of costs not covered by the United Nations regular budget;

2. *Also agree* that the workplan for 2024–2026 should match the resources available for its implementation, and that available funds should be allocated as a priority for ensuring sufficient secretariat staffing for the delivery of the core activities;

3. *Request* every Party to make yearly or multi-year contributions towards the joint workplan's financing, in a timely manner, and at an appropriate level, in the light of their economic strength;³

4. *Express concern* that Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Liechtenstein, Serbia, Ukraine and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland did not contribute financially or in kind in 2021–2023, contrary to decision VIII/1–IV/1 requesting them to do so without exception in the current intersessional period;

5. *Also express concern* that Croatia did not fully honour its pledges for funding in 2021–2023, requesting it to make its outstanding contributions as soon as possible;

6. *Note with concern* that the contributions thus far have been insufficient to finance fully the joint workplan's implementation and to ensure an adequate level of secretariat resources required for that purpose;

7. *Invite* Parties to increase the available funding to collectively finance at least one additional Professional staff post and one part-time administrative support staff post for the provision of core secretariat services for the Convention and the Protocol needed under the workplan for 2024–2026 and beyond;

8. *Invite* national focal points under the Convention and the Protocol to, if possible, engage in national awareness-raising and resource-mobilization activities;

9. *Agree* that, in accordance with the financial scheme's principles, Parties should:

(a) Make regular contributions in cash, preferably without earmarking them for a particular activity, in order not to limit their allocation for the priority costs;

(b) Make possible additional contributions in cash, earmarking them for a particular activity or service, or in kind, such as sponsoring Junior Professional Officers to strengthen the secretariat support;

(c) Make contributions in cash through the ECE trust fund for the Convention and its Protocol, against payment requests to be issued by the secretariat;

(d) Insofar as possible, make contributions for a given calendar year by 1 October of the preceding year or, otherwise, in the first six months of the calendar year to which the contributions apply, so as to secure the extension of extrabudgetary secretariat staff contracts, as a priority, for the secretariat's smooth functioning and the workplan's timely and effective implementation;

(e) Pledge well in advance of the adoption of the workplan and the budget by the Meetings of the Parties, their expected yearly or multi-year financial and in-kind contributions, to ensure that the workplan matches the level of funding and to provide greater certainty for financial and project management;

(f) As needed, provide to the secretariat the estimated monetary values, in United States dollars, of the activities and services planned to be delivered in kind under the workplan;

10. *Also agree* that a single contribution to the trust fund should not be less than \$1,000, bearing in mind the administrative transaction costs of each payment;

11. *Invite* signatories, other interested States, organizations and international financial institutions to also contribute financially or in kind;

12. *Adopt* the financial report prepared by the secretariat covering the period 2021–2023 contained in document ECE/MP.EIA/2023/2–ECE/MP.EIA/SEA/2023/2;

13. *Decide* that activities under the workplan for 2024–2026 and the corresponding estimated resource requirements, as set out in, respectively, annexes I and II to decision IX/2–V/2, and which are not covered by the United Nations regular budget, are to be covered by Parties' contributions to the trust fund totalling \$1,862,805;

14. *Underline* the need for appropriate and stable secretariat staffing for planning and delivery of workplan activities by giving the highest priority to financing sufficient extrabudgetary secretariat staff, including to provide support for the Implementation Committee under the Convention and the Protocol;

15. *Agree* that any savings made in the previous periods may be carried over and be earmarked for secretariat staff resources;

16. *Also agree* that, in accordance with United Nations financial rules, the secretariat should allocate the required amount of contributions in the trust fund by 1 October of each year to secure extension of extrabudgetary secretariat staff contracts, as a priority;

17. *Request* the secretariat to provide Parties with payment requests in accordance with their Governments' pledges by the end of March 2024, for contributions for the year 2024, and, for the years 2025 and 2026, by 15 September of the preceding year, stressing the Parties' responsibility to ensure the timeliness of their contributions;

18. *Also request* the secretariat to provide Parties whose contributions have not been received by 31 December of the relevant year with timely reminders concerning outstanding pledges and possible arrears at the beginning of each year, highlighting the importance of contributing;

19. *Further request* the secretariat, in accordance with United Nations financial rules, and within the limits of its resources, to:

(a) Monitor the use of funds, and continue to prepare and submit to the Bureau annual financial reports and request the Bureau to consider them and agree to their publication;

(b) Include in the reports information on the resources available, including in-kind contributions (and their estimated values in United States dollars, if made available to the secretariat) and to highlight any arrears in the payment of Parties' regular contributions during the intersessional period;

(c) Prepare a report for the next sessions of the Meetings of the Parties, based on the information contained in the annual reports and giving a clear indication of the significant developments during the period, in order that Parties can best meet future demands for resources under the Convention and its Protocol;

20. *Request* the Working Group to consider, in the light of the annual reports, whether changes would be required to the workplan's content or time frame, in the event that the level of contributions does not match the level of funding needed;

21. *Decide* that the Executive Secretary of ECE has the authority, after consultations with the Bureau, to make transfers between the main budget lines of up to 10 per cent of the main budget line from which the transfer would be made, where such adjustments of the allocations are necessary before the next sessions of the Meetings of Parties, and that Parties must be promptly informed of such adjustments;

22. *Request* the Executive Secretary of ECE to allocate more resources to support work under the Convention and the Protocol, considering the balance in the use of regular budgetary resources in the different subprogrammes;

23. *Call upon* countries with economies in transition to finance, to the extent possible, their own participation in the activities under the Convention and its Protocol, in order to ensure that the limited funds available are used efficiently;

24. *Urge* Parties and encourage non-Parties and relevant international organizations to contribute financial resources to enable countries with economies in

transition and non-governmental organizations to participate in the meetings under the Convention and its Protocol;

25. *Recommend* that the Convention and its Protocol apply the guiding criteria established and periodically updated by the Committee on Environmental Policy for financial assistance to support the participation of experts and representatives from countries with economies in transition in meetings under the Convention and its Protocol and other relevant activities, depending upon the availability of funds for this purpose;

26. *Agree* that, if required, and on an exceptional basis, travel-related expenses for meetings of treaty bodies of elected officers from countries not eligible for financial support could be funded from the trust fund, should there be sufficient money therein to cover the expense in question;

27. *Decide* that, contingent on the availability of funds for this purpose, financial support is to be provided for participation in formal meetings of representatives of non-governmental organizations and of developing and least-developed countries from outside the ECE region, in accordance with the agreed budget and criteria to be set by the Bureau; and, for non-ECE countries, subject to a case-by-case examination by the Bureau;

28. *Also decide* that the Working Group on Environmental Impact Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment should agree on a further draft decision on financial arrangements for adoption by the Meetings of the Parties to the Convention and the Protocol at their tenth and sixth sessions, respectively, based on experience gained in the interim period;

29. *Agree* to review the operation of the financial scheme at the tenth and sixth sessions of the Meetings of the Parties to the Convention and the Protocol, respectively.

Annex

Indicative scale for annual contributions by Parties to the Espoo Convention to fund the proposed budget for 2024–2026 (for Parties to refer to on a voluntary basis)

<i>Column A</i>	<i>Column B</i>	<i>Column C</i>	<i>Column D</i>	<i>Column E</i>
<i>Parties</i>	<i>United Nations scale of assessment (percentage)^a</i>	<i>Espoo Convention Adjusted scale (percentage)^b</i>	<i>Indicative annual contribution (for 2024) (US dollars) based on adjusted scale + draft budget for 2024–2026</i>	<i>Indicative annual contribution (for 2024) (US dollars) based on adjusted scale + draft budget for 2024–2026 (Small amounts increased to \$1,000)</i>
Albania	0.008	0.024	150	1 000
Armenia	0.007	0.021	130	1 000
Austria	0.679	2.056	12 775	12 575
Azerbaijan	0.03	0.091	560	1 000
Belarus	0.041	0.124	770	1 000
Belgium	0.821	2.486	15 440	15 200
Bosnia and Herzegovina	0.012	0.036	230	1 000
Bulgaria	0.056	0.170	1 050	1 040
Canada	2.628	7.958	49 400	48 600
Croatia	0.091	0.276	1 710	1 680
Cyprus	0.036	0.109	680	1 000
Czechia	0.34	1.030	6 390	6 280
Denmark	0.553	1.674	10 400	10 240
Estonia	0.044	0.133	830	1 000
Finland	0.417	1.263	7 840	7 720
France	4.318	13.075	81 190	79 970
Germany	6.111	18.504	114 900	113 180
Greece	0.325	0.984	6 110	6 000
Hungary	0.228	0.690	4 290	4 220
Ireland	0.439	1.329	8 250	8 130
Italy	3.189	9.656	59 960	59 060
Kazakhstan	0.133	0.403	2 500	2 460
Kyrgyzstan	0.002	0.006	40	1 000
Latvia	0.05	0.151	940	1 000
Liechtenstein	0.01	0.030	190	1 000
Lithuania	0.077	0.233	1 450	1 430
Luxembourg	0.068	0.206	1 280	1 260
Malta	0.019	0.058	360	1 000
Montenegro	0.004	0.012	80	1 000
Netherlands	1.377	4.170	25 890	25 500

<i>Column A</i>	<i>Column B</i>	<i>Column C</i>	<i>Column D</i>	<i>Column E</i>
North Macedonia	0.007	0.021	130	1 000
Norway	0.679	2.056	12 770	12 580
Poland	0.837	2.534	15 740	15 500
Portugal	0.353	1.069	6 640	6 540
Rep. of Moldova	0.005	0.015	100	1 000
Romania	0.198	0.600	3 730	3 670
Serbia	0.028	0.085	530	1 000
Slovakia	0.155	0.469	2 910	2 870
Slovenia	0.079	0.239	1 480	1 460
Spain	2.134	6.462	40 120	39 520
Sweden	0.871	2.637	16 370	16 140
Switzerland	1.134	3.434	21 320	21 000
Ukraine	0.056	0.170	1 050	1 040
United Kingdom	4.375	13.248	82 260	81 070
European Union ^{c, d}	—	—	—	—
Total	33.024	100	620 935	620 935

^a Figures in column B reproduce the United Nations scale of assessments for 2022–2024 (General Assembly resolution 76/238 on the scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (A/RES/76/238)) to calculate the contributions of the 193 States Members of the United Nations to the regular budget of the United Nations for 2022, 2023 and 2024. The scale of assessment is based on estimates of gross national income and constitutes an objective reference for the apportionment of expenses according to capacity to pay.

^b The percentages from the United Nations scale of assessments have been adjusted for (the 44 States parties to) the Espoo Convention by using a multiplier of 3.028 in order to arrive at a total of 100 per cent.

^c Subject to footnote d below on the contribution of the European Union, the figures in column D give an indication of annual contributions of the Parties to the proposed annual budget in 2024, based on their economic strength. The figures were derived by multiplying the adjusted scale/percentage value in column C by the proposed annual cost requirements of the draft workplan for 2024–2026 (see proposed resource requirements in draft decisions IX/1–V/1, para. 13, and IX/2–V/2, annexes I–II).

^d A percentage has not been assigned to the European Union, since the European Union is not included in the United Nations scale of assessments. Consequently, it is not possible to calculate the level of its contribution on the same basis as with the other Parties.

Decision IX/2–V/2

Adoption of the workplan for 2024–2026

The Meeting of the Parties to the Convention and the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol, meeting in joint session,

Recalling article 11 (2) (f) of the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context, stipulating that the Meeting of the Parties thereto will consider and undertake any additional action that may be required to achieve the Convention's purposes,

Recalling also article 14 (4) (f) of the Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment, stipulating that the Meeting of the Parties thereto will consider and undertake any additional action, including action to be carried out jointly under the Protocol and the Convention, that may be required to achieve the Protocol's purposes,

Acknowledging that the Convention and its Protocol provide a framework for the integration of environmental, including health, concerns into proposed activities, plans and programmes and, where appropriate, into policies and legislation across the economic sectors and that, consequently, their effective application contributes to supporting countries in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, greening the post-coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic recovery, as well as global commitments related to climate and biodiversity,

Welcoming the valuable work carried out under the workplan for 2021–2023, including the following activities:

(a) Consideration by the Implementation Committee of 52 compliance cases, including regarding the lifetime extension of nuclear power plants, and the preparation of amendment proposals to its modus operandi to clarify and improve its working methods,

(b) Preparation by the secretariat of reviews of implementation of the Convention and the Protocol in 2019–2021 based on Parties' reporting,

(c) Preparation of a report presenting synergies and proposed cooperation activities with six regional sea conventions and bodies, the organization of three joint technical meetings for its discussion, and the collection of good practice fact sheets (funded by Italy),

(d) Preparation of guidance on the assessment of health in strategic environmental assessment (by volunteering Parties and Bureau members, initially funded by the European Investment Bank), resulting in a document for information purposes,

(e) Organization of subregional events for the Baltic Sea region by Estonia and Poland,

(f) Organization of thematic seminars for the exchange of good practice: by Switzerland and the secretariat on sustainable infrastructure; and by the secretariat and Italian-funded consultants on energy transition, circular economy and green financing,

Welcoming also the secretariat's accomplishment of the following activities, mostly through additional project funding:

(a) Technical assistance to support Parties and non-Parties to align their legislation with the Convention and/or the Protocol, and Ukraine, to conclude a bilateral agreement with Romania for implementation of the Convention (funded through the EU4Environment programme for Azerbaijan, Belarus, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine; and by Switzerland for Kazakhstan),

(b) Capacity-building activities to enhance practical application and awareness of the Protocol (and/or the Convention), (with EU4Environment programme funding), including: pilot projects on strategic environmental assessment for Azerbaijan; training workshops for Armenia, Azerbaijan, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine; national awareness-raising events for Azerbaijan and the Republic of Moldova; materials for

Azerbaijan and the Republic of Moldova; and national issue- or sector-specific guidelines for Armenia, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine,

(c) Organization of subregional cooperation events for countries of Eastern-Europe and the Caucasus (with EU4Environment programme funding); and in Central Asia (in cooperation with the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, and with funding from Germany),

(d) Preparation of national action plans for introducing strategic environmental assessment and organization of related national awareness-raising events for Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan (in cooperation with the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, and with funding from Germany),

Recognizing that wide, fully compliant and effective application of the obligations arising from the Convention and the Protocol is essential for the achievement of the objectives of those treaties,

Expressing appreciation, therefore, for the considerable and continuing growth in the number of Parties to the Convention and the Protocol, the frequency of the treaties' application and the activities under their workplans since their respective entries into force, expecting that the scope of the instruments will further expand with the Convention's anticipated global opening,

Wishing to establish a workplan that supports the strategic goals and priority objectives set out in the long-term strategy and the action plan adopted through decision VIII/3–IV/3, namely: full and effective implementation of the Convention and the Protocol; increased impact by addressing new national, regional and global challenges; and wider implementation of the Convention and the Protocol within and beyond the ECE region,⁴

Wishing also to establish a realistic and feasible workplan by ensuring in advance sufficient funding for its implementation,

Recognizing the secretariat's essential role in supporting, coordinating and promoting intergovernmental work under the Convention and the Protocol and their joint workplan, as well as in furthering accessions to the two treaties,

Acknowledging that the Parties' offer of secretariat resources – of only one staff member since 2001 – no longer suffices for the proper fulfilment of the secretariat's significantly increased number of tasks,

1. *Adopt* the workplan for the period 2024–2026 and the estimated resource requirements for its implementation, as set out in annexes I and II, respectively, to the present decision;

2. *Agree* that all the Parties should fund the workplan estimated resource requirements in accordance with decision IX/1–V/1 on financial arrangements for 2024–2026;

3. *Invite* the Parties to upgrade the resources for the workplan's implementation, including by collectively financing at least one additional Professional post and part-time administrative support for the secretariat;

4. *Acknowledge* that, pending receipt of the required additional resources, only a reduced amount of activities and secretariat support can be delivered under the two treaties and their workplan;

5. *Note* that, for the current period, technical assistance and capacity-building previously provided by the secretariat will not be available, due to the lack of dedicated project funding and secretariat staff for further fundraising and project preparation;

6. *Call on* the Parties, and also invite non-Parties, to arrange, host and actively participate in seminars, workshops and meetings, and to provide capacity-building support

⁴ ECE/MP.EIA/30/Add.1–ECE/MP.EIA/SEA/13/Add.1, decision VIII/3–IV/3, annex, para. 6.

bilaterally to beneficiary countries to facilitate implementation of, compliance with and accession to the Convention and the Protocol;

7. *Invite* relevant bodies or agencies, whether national or international, governmental or non-governmental and, possibly, researchers and consultants for agreed activities, to actively participate in the activities included in the workplan, where appropriate;

8. *Invite* the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) to continue supporting the work under the Convention and the Protocol, by promoting the workplan activities and providing formal documentation for and ensuring publication of the outcomes of those activities in the three official languages of ECE, as appropriate and within the limits of the resources available. Publications subject to global outreach should be processed and translated by the United Nations Conference Services and made available in the six official languages of the United Nations;

9. *Decide* that, during the intersessional period extending until the next sessions of the Meetings of the Parties to the Convention and the Protocol (preliminarily scheduled for December 2026), and depending on the availability of resources, the Working Group on Environmental Impact Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment should meet up to two times (in 2025 and 2026) and that the Implementation Committee should hold up to nine sessions in total, meeting up to three times a year;

10. *Request* the secretariat, within the limits of its resources, to prepare the provisional agendas and other formal documentation for and reports on the meetings referred to in paragraph 10 above;

11. *Also request* the secretariat, within the limits of its resources, to first present relevant documentation informally to the Bureau for its prior agreement, involving convening and reporting on up to four Bureau meetings in the intersessional period;

12. *Encourage* Parties to make every effort to communicate proposed amendments to the formal documentation three weeks before the meeting at which they are discussed, in order to facilitate the preparation and coordination by other Parties of their corresponding views and the achievement of a consensus by all Parties;

13. *Decide* that the Bureau and the Working Group should report to the Meetings of the Parties to the Convention and the Protocol at their next sessions on the implementation of the present workplan as well as agree on a new workplan and corresponding draft decision for the next intersessional period for adoption at said sessions;

14. *Agree* that, as a rule, the sessions of the Meetings of Parties shall take place in Geneva, unless otherwise decided by the Parties based on an offer of a contracting Party to host the sessions.

Annex I

Workplan for 2024–2026

I. Facilitation, coordination and visibility of intersessional activities

This work area is necessary for the functioning of the Convention and the Protocol, and the conduct, coordination and visibility of the activities carried out towards the achievement of the objectives of those two treaties. It contains the following categories of activity:

- (a) Facilitating intergovernmental action;
- (b) Communication, visibility and coordination;
- (c) General programme management.

A. Facilitating intergovernmental action

The Meetings of the Parties are the decision-making bodies of the Convention and its Protocol that exercise their functions as specified in article 11 of the Convention and in article 13 of the Protocol, in accordance with the applicable rules of procedure.⁵ The Bureau and the Working Group on Environmental Impact Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment are subsidiary bodies to the Meetings of the Parties, assisting them in reviewing the implementation of the Convention and the Protocol, managing their joint workplan and budget, and making recommendations on further work necessary to ensure the treaties' effective implementation.⁶

The secretariat's core functions consist of convening and preparing the sessions of the Meetings of the Parties and the meetings of their joint subsidiary bodies, preparing documents and related follow-up in the intersessional period.⁷

Delegates' participation in treaty body meetings will: build knowledge-sharing and capacities related to the treaties' implementation; and enable participants to network and explore options for enhancing that implementation. Support to travel of participants from countries eligible for financial support allows for their full and effective participation in meetings, resulting in an inclusive and representative decision-making process, increased legitimacy of the decisions adopted and greater commitment to decisions taken.

Activities:

1. Sessions of the Meetings of the Parties to the Convention and the Protocol (initially in November/December 2026);
2. Up to four Bureau meetings (in 2024, 2025 and twice in 2026);
3. Up to two Working Group meetings (in , 2025 and in mid-2026);
4. Secretariat support to the above-mentioned official treaty bodies and their meetings:
 - (a) Prepare, edit, translate and publish on the website agendas and official meeting documents and prepare and publish informal meeting documents;
 - (b) Send out invitations and information;
 - (c) As relevant, support the organization by lead countries or organizations of thematic events or side events;

⁵ Available at <https://unece.org/info/Environment-Policy/Environmental-assessment/pub/21608>.

⁶ Decision I/5-V/5 (ECE/MP.EIA/SEA/2) and ECE/MP.EIA/30–ECE/MP.EIA/SEA/13, annex II.

⁷ Convention (art. 13), Protocol (art. 17) and rules 24–25 of the rules of procedure.

- (d) Register participants and organize travel for funded participants and, as needed, facilitate obtention of visas;
- (e) Support officers of the meeting, including by preparing briefing notes;
- (f) Organize logistics (related to meeting venue and United Nations security);
- (g) As relevant, collect and record credentials;
- (h) Provide conference services at the meeting;
- (i) Provide interpretation at the meeting in the three ECE languages;⁸
- (j) Prepare, edit, translate and publish meeting reports;
- (k) As relevant, prepare press releases/media coverage;
- (l) Follow up on decisions taken.

Entity(ies) responsible:

- (a) The Meetings of the Parties, the Working Group and the Bureau;
- (b) The secretariat, within the limits of its resources,⁹ and, whenever needed, in consultation with the Bureau;
- (c) For sessions of the Meetings of the Parties hosted by a Party, the host country is responsible for the organizational aspects (and their costs) – in accordance with a detailed host country agreement to be concluded with the secretariat;
- (d) Lead countries or organizations, for the organization of any thematic events held during or on the margins of the meetings.

Resource requirements: Professional and support staff of the secretariat. In-kind support for thematic events. Financial support for travel of eligible participants and experts (speakers). Travel support to representatives of non-ECE countries based on criteria to be developed by the Bureau. For any meetings held outside Geneva, as required, support for travel of the secretariat.

B. Communication, visibility and coordination

Activities:

Consultation, cooperation and coordination are essential for Parties' effective implementation of the Convention and its Protocol. The secretariat supports and promotes the treaties' implementation through general communication and coordination tasks and ensuring the visibility of and access to information about the treaties and their activities. To this end, its core tasks include:

- (a) Liaising with focal points, stakeholders and relevant partner organizations within and outside the United Nations system, responding to any queries and raising awareness of the treaties and their activities;
- (b) Ensuring visibility and access to up-to-date information and documents on the treaty website, including online databases of focal points for administrative matters and

⁸ Interpretation is expected to be available for in-person meetings of the Meetings of the Parties, the Working Group and, as required, the Implementation Committee. Organization of meetings requiring remote simultaneous interpretation is subject to availability of sufficient additional funding and staffing resources.

⁹ Should the treaty secretariat's resources for its core functions not be strengthened by at least 1 professional staff member and administrative support at 50 per cent, the secretariat will only be able to ensure reduced support to the Meetings of the Parties, the Bureau and the Working Group (reduced number of meetings, including no meeting of the Working Group in 2024, reduced meeting agendas and documentation; no support for thematic events; less detailed briefing notes to officers; limitation of follow-up activities and tasks that treaty bodies can ask secretariat to carry out).

points of contact for notification under the Convention and the Protocol and online meeting calendars;

(c) Coordinating implementation of workplan activities, including cooperating with other ECE multilateral environmental agreement secretariats and subprogrammes, and, subject to availability of resources, with other relevant United Nations bodies and international organizations and instruments, including regional sea conventions;

(d) Representing the Convention and the Protocol at relevant meetings and events, as needed, to promote and/or coordinate activities;

(e) Preparing correspondence and briefings for ECE senior management for high-level bilateral and multilateral meetings within and beyond the ECE region;

(f) As needed, preparing press releases and other advocacy materials.

Entity(ies) responsible: The secretariat, within the limits of its resources,¹⁰ whenever needed, in consultation with the treaty bodies. Parties to inform the secretariat of any changes to their focal points/points of contact.

Resource requirements: Professional and support staff of the secretariat; travel funds for the secretariat, and, as relevant, for officers/national experts to attend meetings related to workplan implementation, and, as needed, meetings of relevant external bodies; and funds for promotional material, as needed.

C. General programme management

As part of its core functions, and in accordance with the applicable rules of the United Nations, the secretariat is to undertake financial, human resources and other general programme planning and management-related tasks, administrative actions and reporting necessary for the functioning of the treaties and their secretariat.

Activities:

(a) Prepare payment requests for donors' contributions to the trust fund;

(b) Prepare and submit, for the Bureau's agreement, annual financial reports, prior to publishing them on the website, as relevant, reflecting also information from Parties and stakeholders on their in-kind contributions;

(c) If requested, and on an exceptional basis, prepare separate financial reports for individual donors;

(d) Prepare annual and longer term cost plans and forecast meetings, documents and publications for processing by the United Nations administration and relevant services;

(e) Report on substantive and administrative issues within the United Nations;

(f) Recruit/contract and manage secretariat staff and, as relevant, consultants/individual contractors.

Entity(ies) responsible:

(a) The secretariat, within the limits of its resources;¹¹

¹⁰ In the absence of additional professional and administrative staffing for supporting the secretariat's core functions, the secretariat can only ensure limited promotion of the Convention and the Protocol, and the visibility and the coordination of their activities, in terms of: website management; media coverage; promotional material; bilateral and multilateral communication with Governments and stakeholders, including, at high-level, by ECE senior management; outreach; engagement with other relevant organizations, legal instruments and international processes; and participation in relevant meetings.

¹¹ In the absence of additional Professional and administrative staffing, the secretariat must still ensure its core functions related to programme and budgetary management, in accordance with United Nations rules, but would need to limit the details of financial reporting to Parties.

(b) Parties, volunteering non-Parties and other donors to ensure prompt and sufficient financial contributions to the treaties' trust fund.

Resource requirements: Professional and support staff of the secretariat.

II. Compliance with and implementation of the Convention and the Protocol

The work area aims to promote full and effective implementation of and compliance with the Convention and the Protocol, through the following categories of activity, of which (a) and (b) are mandatory under the two treaties:

- (a) Review of compliance;
- (b) Reporting and review of implementation;
- (c) Legislative assistance for aligning Parties' legislation with the Convention and the Protocol.

A. Review of compliance

The review of compliance by Parties with their obligations under the Convention and the Protocol is provided for in article 14 bis of the Convention and decision V/6–I/6 (ECE/MP.EIA/SEA/2).

Entity(ies) responsible: The Implementation Committee, supported by the secretariat, within the limits of its resources.¹²

Method of work: The Implementation Committee is to hold up to three annual (in total, up to nine) meetings in 2024–2026, and, in between, as needed, work via email and hold online meetings.

As part of its core functions, the secretariat supports the Committee's work. It is to: organize and service the meetings;¹³ prepare, edit and translate meeting agendas, reports, and other official documents; support curators and officers in preparing and following up on meetings; make informal working documents available to Committee members; maintain the official website; and assist the Chair in communicating regarding the Committee's deliberations.

Resource requirements: Professional and general support staff of the secretariat, including a secretary to the Implementation Committee; funding for travel support for eligible Committee members to meetings, or, on an exceptional basis, as decided by [the Bureau].

1. Consideration of compliance issues

The Implementation Committee is to consider compliance submissions, Committee initiatives, information from other sources and any general and specific compliance issues arising from the reviews of implementation.

As appropriate, the Committee is to prepare findings and recommendations further to the submissions and Committee initiatives, and present draft decisions on compliance by Parties to the Convention and the Protocol with their obligations thereunder to the Meetings of the Parties to the Convention and the Protocol at their tenth and sixth sessions, respectively.

¹² In the absence of additional professional and administrative staffing for supporting the secretariat's core functions, the secretariat will only be able to ensure reduced support to the review of compliance work led by the Implementation Committee (reduced number of meetings and documentation; streamlining of the Committee's work to reduce the secretariat's related tasks).

¹³ As required, and to the extent feasible, the secretariat will arrange interpretation between English and Russian for in-person Implementation Committee meetings. The organization of meetings requiring remote simultaneous interpretation is dependent upon provision of sufficient additional funding and staffing resources by Parties.

2. Examination of the outcome of the seventh review of implementation of the Convention and the fourth review of implementation of the Protocol

The Committee is to examine the outcomes of the seventh and the fourth reviews of implementation of the Convention and the Protocol, respectively, with support from the secretariat, by the end of 2024, in order to identify possible general and specific compliance issues.

3. If necessary, review and revision of the Committee's structure and functions and operating rules

The Committee is to review the rules governing its mode of operation in the light of its experience and, as needed, present proposals for possible amendments to the Meetings of the Parties at their next sessions.

4. Report on the Committee's activities

The Committee is to report on its activities to the next sessions of the Meetings of the Parties, initially scheduled for 2026, in the form of an official document. In the interim period, it is to provide regular updates on its work to the Bureau and the Working Group.

5. Collection of findings and opinions from the Committee regarding the Convention and the Protocol

The secretariat is to collect the Committee's new findings and opinions and publish them online as an informal publication annually.

6. Exploring possible synergies with other relevant forums

The Committee is to explore possible synergies with other relevant forums regarding compliance matters, including by liaising with the compliance bodies under the other relevant multilateral environmental agreements, in particular of ECE and, as relevant and subject to availability of resources, attending informal meetings of their Chairs.

Additional resource requirements: As needed, travel support for the Chair or Vice-Chair.

B. Reporting and review of implementation

Mandatory reporting by Parties is provided for in articles 14 (bis) of the Convention and 13 (4) and 14 (7) of the Protocol. Review of implementation is required under articles 11 (2) of the Convention and 14 (4) of the Protocol.

Entity(ies) responsible: Parties, the Implementation Committee and, within the limits of its resources, the secretariat.

Resource requirements: Professional and general support staff of the secretariat.

1. Distribution of the questionnaires for reporting on implementation of the Convention and the Protocol in 2022–2024

The secretariat is to distribute to Parties, by end December 2024, the questionnaires for reporting agreed in the previous reporting round, as needed, after making minor technical adjustments to thereto, with Parties to return the questionnaires by end April 2025.

2. Reporting by Parties

All Parties are to report by the deadline of 30 April 2025 on their implementation of Convention and the Protocol in 2022–2024.

3. Preparation of draft reviews of implementation of the Convention and the Protocol

The secretariat, with support from consultants, is to draft reviews summarizing the outcomes of Parties' implementation of the Convention and the Protocol, for presentation to the Working Group in 2025 for comments, and, once finalized based on the comments made, to

the Meetings of the Parties at their next sessions in 2026. Subject to availability of resources, upon adoption, the secretariat is to publish the reviews as electronic publications in English, French and Russian.¹⁴

Additional resource requirements: \$25,000 for consultants and translation of national reports. In-kind contribution by Canada for translating into English national reports provided in French.

C. Legislative assistance

Objective: With a view to promoting compliant implementation of and accession to the Convention and/or the Protocol, this category of activities aims to support beneficiary countries in further aligning their legislation with the two treaties, through assistance in identifying gaps or inconsistencies (legislative reviews); drafting new primary or secondary legislation or amendments to existing primary or secondary legislation, and, as needed, organizing awareness-raising events to promote the legislation's adoption.

Activities and entity(ies) responsible: Parties/partner organizations to provide bilateral legislative assistance to beneficiary countries at their request and/or as recommended by the Implementation Committee, in cooperation with those countries, and, as needed, consulting with the Implementation Committee, and to report on progress to the Working Group:

(a) Assistance to countries of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), subject to availability of funding.

Resource requirements: In-kind by Parties or partner organizations. Implementation of related activities depends on bilateral donor support.

III. Promoting practical application of the Convention and the Protocol

This work area aims to promote effective practical application of the Convention and the Protocol, through the following categories of activity:

- (a) Subregional cooperation and capacity-building;
- (b) Exchange of good practices;
- (c) Capacity-building.

A. Subregional cooperation and capacity-building

The activity pursues the following objectives in the different ECE subregions:

(a) Contribute to common understanding and improved implementation of the Convention and its Protocol within the ECE subregions;

(b) Promote cooperation among Parties within and between the subregions and strengthen contacts with States and subregions outside the ECE region;

(c) Increase professional skills of officials at all government levels and awareness of the public, including non-governmental organizations (NGOs), in relation to strategic environmental assessment, transboundary environmental impact assessment and application of the Convention and its Protocol;

(d) Contribute to increased cooperation and synergies with relevant multilateral environmental agreements, other international instruments and organizations;

¹⁴ In the absence of additional Professional and administrative staffing for supporting the secretariat's core functions, reviews of implementation, as adopted, would be made available as official documents.

(e) Contribute to wider application of the Convention and the Protocol within and beyond the ECE region.

1. Baltic Sea subregion

Activities: Organize and host two subregional meetings on cooperation on the Convention and the Protocol, on topics of interest for the subregion that the lead countries concerned are to identify in advance of the meeting in consultation with the other participating countries, and prepare the minutes of the meeting on the outcomes for the secretariat to make available on the website.

To enhance synergies and cooperation with regional sea conventions, their representatives could be invited to take part.

Entity(ies) responsible: Lead countries, with the secretariat's support, within the limits of its resources.

(a) Lithuania (online, April–June 2024);

(b) Poland (in-person, Poland, May/June 2025), with the invitation extended also to representatives of other subregions/regional sea bodies, to be confirmed.

Resource requirements: In-kind contributions to be confirmed by the countries concerned. As relevant, the secretariat's participation requires funding of related travel costs.

2. Mediterranean region

Activities: Organize and host up to three subregional meetings on cooperation on the Convention and the Protocol to informally exchange information about forthcoming or ongoing transboundary environmental impact assessment and strategic environmental assessment procedures of projects, plans and programmes related to the Mediterranean Sea and coastal areas, and discuss any topical issues of relevance to be identified by the host in consultation with the other riparian countries. Additionally, representatives of non-Parties around the Mediterranean Sea and the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean (Barcelona Convention) could be invited to participate in order to increase cooperation with, and raise awareness of, the Espoo Convention and its Protocol.

Entity(ies) responsible: Lead countries. As relevant, with the secretariat's support, within the limits of its resources:

(a) Italy (Rome, May 2024);

(b) Slovenia (Portoroz, September 2025);

(c) Greece, to be confirmed/France, to be confirmed (2026).

Resource requirements: In-kind contributions to be confirmed by the lead country/countries concerned to cover the hosting of the event and possible travel related costs of up to two representatives of non-Parties and, as relevant, of the secretariat.

3. Marine regions

Activities:

1. To enhance synergies and coordination with relevant activities of regional sea conventions and bodies, exchange information about the application of the transboundary procedures of the Espoo Convention and the Protocol in marine regions and their effectiveness, reporting on experience and lessons learned:

(a) At the national level, with representatives of the regional sea conventions/bodies;

(b) Bilaterally, by making use of contact databases of national focal points under the respective treaties;

(c) During relevant meetings and activities of regional sea conventions/bodies (e.g., Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission-Vision and Strategies Around the Baltic Sea (HELCOM-VASAB) Maritime Spatial Planning Working Group and/or HELCOM Working Group on Reduction of Pressures from Sea-based Sources; the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic (OSPAR Convention) activities on development and scaling up of offshore renewable energy in a way that cumulative environmental impacts are minimized; Barcelona Convention activities on climate change, integrated coastal zone management and marine spatial planning; the meeting of the Framework Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Caspian Sea (Tehran Convention) on the occasion of the entry into force of its Protocol on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context).

Entity(ies) responsible: Lead countries: Parties and stakeholders in marine regions.

Resource requirements: In-kind.

2. Create a dedicated web page on the ECE treaty website with links to the websites of relevant regional sea conventions and bodies, and to relevant information on cooperation in marine regions.

Entity responsible: Secretariat, within the limits of its resources.

Resource requirements: Professional and general support staff of the secretariat.

3. Prepare fact sheets describing good practices in the application of the Convention and the Protocol in marine and coastal areas for publication on the ECE treaty website and, as relevant, present them at Working Group meetings.

Entity(ies) responsible: Lead countries: Parties and stakeholders in marine regions.

Resource requirements: In-kind.

4. Provision of legislative assistance or capacity-building support to beneficiary countries, as required, to align legislation and practice with the Convention and the Protocol, including pilot projects in the fields of: maritime spatial plans; offshore hydrocarbon exploration and exploitation; offshore renewable energy; pipelines and high-voltage powerlines; and liquefied natural gas terminals.

Entity(ies) responsible: Bilateral donor arrangements by Parties or partner organizations, such as relevant international development banks.

Resource requirements: In-kind.

B. Exchange of good practices

The objective of the work area is to share knowledge and experience regarding the legislation and practice for implementation of the Convention and the Protocol, leading to better national legislation and improved implementation of the treaties. It also contributes to awareness-raising on the two treaties and their benefits, highlighting the role that they can play in addressing global and national priorities and challenges in the field of environment. The work area is implemented through the following categories of activity:

- (a) Thematic workshops or seminars;
- (b) Fact sheets of good practice;
- (c) FasTips.

1. Thematic workshops or seminars

Activities: To organize half- or full-day workshops or seminars during Working Group meetings in 2024–2026 and/or the sessions of the Meetings of the Parties in 2026 on the role of the Convention and the Protocol with respect to key environmental goals/commitments and other specific themes/topics, in order to produce a clear and concise document on said role presenting benefits and good practice, as well as advice on the most important challenges identified for the theme in question, also referring to the contribution of the topics to the

application of Sustainable Development Goals. Additionally, the events take into account the Convention's expected global opening during the intersessional period. The specific themes/topics concerned are the following:

- (a) Biodiversity assessment;
- (b) Mining, mining waste/tailings and critical raw materials;
- (c) Climate assessment/proofing;
- (d) Consideration of alternatives to and the rationale for selected options of the proposed activities in the environmental impact assessment and strategic environmental assessment documentation.

Entity(ies) responsible: The following lead-country(ies) or organizations, with the secretariat's support, subject to availability of resources:¹⁵

- (a) Italy and Slovenia (2025/2026);
- (b) Switzerland (to be confirmed, 2025/2026);
- (c) Italy, in cooperation with Greece (to be confirmed);
- (d) Lead country/organization to be identified.

Resource requirements: Costs for speakers, provision and translation of materials to be covered in kind by lead countries. Funds from the trust fund to cover travel costs for countries eligible for financial support and non-ECE countries.

2. Fact sheets

Activities: Preparation of fact sheets on the practical application of the Convention and the Protocol, to be presented during the Working Group meetings and posted on the website.

Entity(ies) responsible: All Parties, with the secretariat's support, within the limits of its resources.

Resource requirements: In-kind.

3. FasTips

Activities: Preparation of two-page informal pamphlets (FasTips) containing practical and concise advice on key issues in strategic environmental assessment practice (topics may be suggested by Parties and stakeholders).

Entity(ies) responsible: International Association for Impact Assessment.

Resources: In-kind. Translation of FasTips will require additional resources (in-kind or donor funding).

4. Relevant work of partner organizations

Activities: Knowledge exchange with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on its strategic environmental and social assessments in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia:

- (a) Informal exchange of information on relevant projects between UNDP and secretariat;
- (b) Information, consultation and, where relevant, engagement, of the relevant national focal points under the Protocol during the preparation and implementation of the strategic environmental and social assessments processes supported by the UNDP in the countries of interest;

¹⁵ In the absence of additional staff resources, the secretariat could not support the organization of the thematic events.

(c) Exchange information about planned events. Invitation (where appropriate) of relevant Protocol representatives to UNDP national and regional knowledge events held within the framework of UNDP-led initiatives;

(d) Evaluation of experience resulting from the implementation of development interventions on the ground. Knowledge exchange and presentation of UNDP case-studies and lessons learned within the framework of relevant meetings held under the auspices of the Protocol.

Entity(ies) responsible: UNDP, Parties and stakeholders, with the secretariat's support, within the limits of its resources.

Resource requirements: In-kind.

C. Capacity-building

This category of activities aims at promoting fully compliant application of the Convention and the Protocol, including through increased capacities and improved professional skills of officials at all relevant administrative levels and increased awareness of decision-makers and the public, including NGOs, regarding the treaty provisions and their application and benefits. It also contributes to wider application of the treaties by promoting their ratification by non-Parties.

1. Bilateral assistance by Parties and partner organizations

Activities: Strengthen links between Parties' relevant bilateral capacity-building and awareness-raising activities (e.g., relevant assistance by Parties' environmental and development agencies in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia, or outside ECE region) and the objectives of the Convention and the Protocol, involving regular reports by Parties at Working Group meetings and Meetings of the Parties sessions to increase the awareness, visibility and coordination of those activities, and to promote the instruments' implementation and ratification. Such activities include:

(a) Pilot implementation of strategic environmental assessment or transboundary environmental impact assessment procedures to a plan or project to be identified by the beneficiary countries – to provide hands-on learning for implementing those procedures, with built-in training involving analytical and consultative tasks, in accordance with Protocol/Convention;

(b) Training (including training of trainers) workshops on practical treaty application;

(c) National events to raise the awareness of sectoral authorities and other relevant actors on the need for and benefits of effective implementation of strategic environmental assessment (or transboundary environmental impact assessment) legislation in accordance with the Convention/Protocol;

(d) National issue- or sector-specific guidance.¹⁶

Entity(ies) responsible: Parties (central authorities or agencies for environment, international cooperation or development) to provide bilateral assistance to beneficiary countries, requested by those countries, as relevant, with support from partner organizations; Partner organizations to provide such assistance. Reporting on progress to the Working Group:

(i) OSCE: "Strengthening national and regional capacities and cooperation on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in Central Asia – Phase II", with funding from Germany;

(ii) World Health Organization: Bonn School of Environment and Health (2025), to address technical gaps and to raise awareness on environment and health challenges

¹⁶ Not subject to endorsement by the Meetings of the Parties.

also covering environmental impact assessment and strategic environmental assessment, if requested by member States and subject to availability of resources.

Resource requirements: In-kind. Implementation of the related activities depends on the availability of bilateral or multilateral donor-funded support.

2. Finalization of a video on the application of the Protocol for the Central Asian countries

Activities: To raise awareness of and promote the Protocol's ratification and application in the Central Asian countries, editing the video on the Protocol, inserting into its Russian-language version Kazakh-, Kyrgyz-, Tajik-, Turkmen- and Uzbek-language subtitles translated by OSCE in 2022.

Entity(ies) responsible: Subject to availability of additional resources, to be coordinated by the secretariat, with support from consultants. Support by OSCE, subject to availability of funds.

Resource requirements: Requires donor funding for individual contractors (for coordination and production) and national consultants (for linguistic verification).

IV. Increasing awareness, accession and implementation beyond the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe region

Objective: Increase awareness of and accession to the Convention and the Protocol, and the application of their principles outside the ECE region.

Activities:

(a) Use regional and international cooperation frameworks and meetings to disseminate information and to raise awareness of and interest in the treaties and their activities, through presentations and organization of sessions and/or side events;

(b) Translate existing guidance materials related to the implementation of the treaties (e.g., into Arabic and Spanish);

(c) Develop advocacy material, such as a brief for policymakers on the benefits of the Convention and the Protocol, with references to good practice; and responses to frequently asked questions;

(d) Organize national or subregional awareness-raising events on the Convention and the Protocol (benefits, practical implementation, etc.);

(e) Support legal reforms, awareness-raising and capacity-building via bilateral development support and twinning arrangements between current and prospective Parties.

Entity(ies) responsible: Parties and stakeholders to provide bilateral or multilateral support to the beneficiary countries; The secretariat, within the limits of its resources, with lead countries, in cooperation with the treaty bodies.

Resource requirements: In-kind bilateral support from Parties, including for translations of materials. Professional and support staff of the secretariat; travel funds for the secretariat and officers to attend meetings related to workplan implementation, funding for promotional material. Implementation will depend on the availability of funding from Parties.

Annex II

Resource requirements for the workplan for 2024–2026

Table 1
Resource requirements for 2024–2026

Area	Activities	XB financial resources (in cash and in kind, in US dollars)	RB/XB human resources to support planned activities (in work-months of P and G secretariat staff)	
			P	G
I. Facilitation, coordination and visibility of intersessional activities			35	21
A. Facilitating intergovernmental processes				
Meetings of Bureau, Working Group and Meetings of the Parties. Their substantive and administrative preparations, servicing and follow-up by secretariat	Working Group meetings (up to 2): travel of approximately 20 experts/meeting: from eligible ECE countries (max. \$20,000); NGOs (max. \$10,000); from non-ECE countries (max. \$3,000) [– subject to funding and Bureau’s approval]	66 000		
Financial support to travel of meeting participants	Meetings of the Parties sessions (in 2026): travel of experts: from eligible ECE countries (max. \$30,000); from NGOs (max. \$20,000); from non-ECE countries (max. \$15,000); speakers (max. \$15,000)	80 000		
B. Communication, visibility, coordination				
	Secretariat travel related to workplan, and promotion or coordination activities (approximately 8 trips per year)	30 000		
	Consultancy support and promotional materials	10 000		
C. General programme management				
	Financial, human resources and other general programme planning and management-related functions, administrative actions and reporting	-		
Subtotal		3 186 000		
II. Compliance with and implementation of the Convention and the Protocol			47.25	17
A. Review of compliance				
	Implementation Committee meetings (up to 9): travel of eligible experts (1 expert for 4-day meeting)	22 500		
B. Reporting and the review of implementation				
	Preparation of draft reviews of implementation of Convention and Protocol: costs for consultants and translation of national reports	25 000		
C. Legislative assistance				
Subtotal		47 500		

Area	Activities	XB financial resources (in cash and in kind, in US dollars)	RB/XB human resources to support planned activities (in work-months of P and G secretariat staff)	
			P	G
III. Promoting practical application of the Convention and the Protocol				
A. Subregional cooperation and capacity-building			3	2.25
	Baltic Sea (in-kind contributions)			
	Mediterranean Sea (in-kind contributions)			
	Marine regions (in-kind contributions)			
B. Exchange of good practices			3	3
	Thematic workshops or seminars within meetings of Working Group and of Meetings of the Parties (Parties'/stakeholders' in-kind contributions)			
	Preparation of fact sheets (Parties'/stakeholders' in-kind contributions)	-		
C. Capacity-building			2.5	1.5
	Pilot projects, training, awareness-raising, national implementation guidance (in-kind/bilateral donor contributions)	-		
	Finalization of Protocol video in Central Asian countries' languages	15 000		
	Preparation of FasTips by IAIA (in-kind)	-		
IV. Increasing awareness, accession and implementation beyond the ECE region				
	Translation of existing material (in-kind).			
	Consultancy support for advocacy material	20 000		
	Legislative assistance and capacity-building support (in-kind)			
Subtotal				
Total activities (work areas sections I–IV)		268,500 000	94.50	47.25

Abbreviations: ECE, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe; G, General Service staff; IAIA, International Association for Impact Assessment; NGO, non-governmental organization; P, Professional staff; RB, regular budget; XB, Extrabudgetary.

^a Financing of workplan activities for 2024–2026, as set out in table 1, is contingent on sufficient funds being made available by Parties through voluntary contributions to Convention and Protocol trust fund.

Table 2
Total resources for 2024–2026
(in US dollars)

<i>Items/activities + human resources (from table 1 above)</i>	<i>Costs</i>
Activities	268 500
Staff	
RB, Professional, full-time, P–4 level (31.5 work-months)	a
RB, General Service, part-time, at 50% (15.75 work-months)	a
XB, Professional, full-time, P–3 level (63 work-months)	1 200 000
XB, General Service, part-time at 50% (15.75 work-months)	180 000
Subtotal	1 648 500
Overhead (13%) (rounded)	214 305
Total	1 862 805

Note: One post (Professional or General Service) translates into 10.5 work-months per year, or 31.5 work-months per triennium for one staff member. The above staff resource estimates are based on United Nations standard rates, including net salary, taxes and common staff costs, as well as mandatory costs for office space, information technology equipment, communication and training).

^a Provided under United Nations regular budget. RB, Professional post is that of Secretary to Espoo Convention and Protocol, involving oversight of functioning of treaty secretariat and workplan implementation.

Decision IX/3–V/3

Cooperation in marine regions

The Meeting of the Parties to the Convention and the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol, meeting in joint session,

Recalling the Long-term strategy and action plan for the Convention and the Protocol¹⁷ that call for: creating and increasing synergies and cooperation; coordinating and cooperating with relevant treaties and organizations; and contributing to wider implementation of the Convention and the Protocol within and beyond the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) region,

Recalling also decision VIII/2–IV/2¹⁸ on the adoption of the workplan for 2021–2023, which provides for the identification of synergies and subregional cooperation opportunities in marine regions, with a special focus on the Mediterranean Sea,

Welcoming the adoption of an agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction,¹⁹

Concerned about the growing environmental pressures on marine and coastal ecosystems and on islands and biodiversity loss caused by climate change, increasing litter pollution (loads), tourism, fishing, mining of minerals and energy production,

Affirming the need for a multidisciplinary, participatory and transboundary/regional approach to the protection of marine ecosystems, islands and coastal zones,

Wishing to promote cooperation among Parties within and between marine regions, as well as to strengthen contacts and cooperation with States outside the ECE region and with relevant regional sea conventions and commissions,

Convinced of the important benefits for the marine environment of widespread, effective and coherent application of the well-established procedures of the Convention and the Protocol to maritime spatial planning, strategic planning for sustainable blue economy and to other plans, programmes and projects in key development sectors in marine regions, including tourism, water and waste management, as well as energy, involving, for example, exploration and exploitation of hydrocarbons, cables and pipelines, tide and wave energy and offshore wind energy, in terms of prevention and mitigation of negative impacts, including in a transboundary context,

Acknowledging the further need to raise awareness of the benefits of the Convention and the Protocol, in particular, beyond the ECE region, and to assist countries that need support in aligning their legislation and building capacities for the implementation of the principles and provisions of those treaties,

Recognizing that strengthened cooperation in marine regions supports the implementation of the regional sea conventions and their respective protocols and work programmes with respect to both strategic environmental assessments and environmental impact assessments in a transboundary context, taking into account the related legal provisions and practice thereunder,

Expressing appreciation for the donor funding and leadership from Italy for the implementation of the workplan activities related to marine regions in 2021–2023,

¹⁷ ECE/MP.EIA/30/Add.1–ECE/MP.EIA/SEA/13/Add.1, decision VIII/3–IV/3, annex, items II.A.5, II.B.4 and II.C.

¹⁸ Ibid., decision VIII/2–IV/2, annex I, item III.A.4.

¹⁹ See advance, unedited version of agreement at www.un.org/bbnj/sites/www.un.org/bbnj/files/draft_agreement_advanced_unedited_for_posting_v1.pdf.

Expressing appreciation also for the interest and active participation of representatives of the regional sea conventions and partner organizations,

1. *Welcome* the final report identifying synergies and possible future cooperation activities in marine regions, prepared in consultation with representatives of the Espoo Convention and its Protocol; the Arctic Council and its Working Group on the Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment; the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean (Barcelona Convention); the Convention on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution (Bucharest Convention) and the Black Sea Commission; the Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area (Helsinki Convention); the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic (OSPAR Convention); and the Framework Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Caspian Sea (Tehran Convention), and with support from the secretariat;

2. *Also welcome* the case studies from Estonia, Italy, Poland and Slovenia that illustrate good practice and lessons learned in the application of the Convention and the Protocol to plans, programmes and projects in marine regions, inviting also other Parties and stakeholders to provide further case studies;

3. *Agree* to include in the workplan for 2024–2026 selected cooperation activities in marine regions,²⁰ inviting Parties and stakeholders to take the necessary actions to implement them and to report on progress at the meetings of the Working Group on Environmental Impact Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment;

4. *Request* the Bureau and the Working Group to recommend possible further activities for the workplan for 2027–2029, building on progress made and needs identified in the interim;

5. *Affirm* the importance of a coordinated international cooperation among countries, partner organizations, relevant ECE and other multilateral environmental agreements, and international financial institutions within and beyond the ECE region in assessing and addressing environmental, including health, effects, in particular in transboundary and regional contexts;

6. *Call on* Parties to promote effective and coordinated application of the provisions of the Convention and the Protocol to projects, plans and programmes, as well as, to the extent appropriate, to policies and legislation that may have an impact on marine regions, including in the framework of the regional sea conventions and commissions;

7. *Encourage* States not yet Parties to the Convention and/or the Protocol to implement their principles and, as relevant, to take steps towards acceding to those treaties;

8. *Invite* United Nations organizations and other relevant intergovernmental, as well as non-governmental organizations, to continue to facilitate the application of the principles of Convention and the Protocol in marine regions;

9. *Encourage* international financial institutions and bilateral aid agencies to ensure that their environmental assessment procedures are consistent with the Convention and the Protocol, in relation to their strategic planning and to investment projects affecting the marine environment.

²⁰ ECE/MP.EIA/34/Add.1–ECE/MP.EIA/SEA/15/Add.1, decision IX/2–V/2, annex I, items. III.A. 2 and 3.

Decision IX/4a-V/4a on compliance by Albania with its obligations under the Convention and the Protocol in respect of the planned construction of several small hydropower plants on the Cijevna River

The Meeting of the Parties to the Convention and the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol, meeting in joint session,

Recalling articles 11 (2) and 14 bis of the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context and article 14 (4) of the Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment,

Recalling also decisions IX/4¹ on general issues of compliance with the Convention, adopted at the ninth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention, and V/4² on general issues of compliance with the Protocol, adopted at the fifth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol (Geneva, 12–15 December 2023),

Having considered the findings and recommendations of the Implementation Committee on compliance by Albania with its obligations under the Convention and the Protocol in respect of the planned construction of several small hydropower plants on the Cijevna River,³

Having considered also the report on the activities of the Implementation Committee to the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention at its ninth session, in particular, the section concerning Albania,⁴

1. *Welcome* the steps taken by Albania and Montenegro to enter, further to article 2 (5) of the Convention, into discussions on whether the proposed activities by Albania referred to in the submission by Montenegro of 25 September 2019 were likely to cause a significant adverse transboundary impact;

2. *Establish* that, in discussions under article 2 (5) of the Convention, Parties should exchange information in a way that allows them to identify whether significant adverse transboundary impacts on the environment could occur, and that both the Party of origin and the affected Party are responsible for the timeliness and quality of their information exchange;

3. *Endorse* the findings of the Implementation Committee that, in accordance with the information provided to the Committee:

(a) Albania and Montenegro properly fulfilled their obligations under article 2 (5) of the Convention by entering into discussion with each other on the matter;

(b) In the absence of an agreement by the concerned Parties under article 2 (5) of the Convention, Albania was not in non-compliance with article 2 (2) and (6) of the Convention, as those provisions were not applicable;

(c) Albania was not in non-compliance with article 10 of the Protocol, as, in the absence of a plan or a programme by Albania in the meaning of article 4 (1) of the Protocol, the Protocol was not applicable;

4. *Encourage* both Parties to continue their dialogue under article 2 (5) of the Convention, ensuring that the cumulative impact of the proposed activities is properly assessed, and the criteria listed in appendix III to the Convention are properly applied during the assessment, including with regard to the environmental sensitivity of the Cijevna River basin;

¹ ECE/MP.EIA/2023/6.

² ECE/MP.EIA/SEA/2023/8.

³ ECE/MP.EIA/IC/2023/9.

⁴ ECE/MP.EIA/2023/13–ECE/MP.EIA/SEA/2023/13.

5. *Invite* Albania to continue to provide Montenegro with information on all planned activities at the Cijevna River referred to in the above-mentioned submission for the purposes of the assessment of their transboundary impacts;
6. *Invite* Montenegro to provide Albania with any further reasonably obtainable information relating to the potentially affected environment from the proposed activities, if requested;
7. *Acknowledge* that Albania expressed its willingness to apply the Convention should it, as a result of the discussions under article 2 (5) thereof, agree that the activities in question cause significant adverse transboundary impacts;
8. *Encourage* Albania to take into account, in the context of any future assessment of transboundary environmental impacts of any further small hydropower plants on the Cijevna River, the cumulative impacts of all existing and planned hydropower plants, and to provide the related information to Montenegro;
9. *Encourage* Montenegro to provide Albania with any reasonably obtainable information relating to the potentially affected environment from any future relevant planned activities on the Cijevna River, if requested;
10. *Request* Albania and Montenegro to apply the Protocol as an environmental protection instrument at an early stage of development of plans and programmes, such as energy strategies or plans and joint river basin management plans that cover any future developments in the Cijevna River basin or other areas of outstanding nature and environmental value, as well as to ensure that cumulative impacts of the planned activities, including those in a transboundary context, are properly addressed.

Decision IX/4b-V/4b on compliance by Armenia with its obligations under the Convention and the Protocol in respect of its national legislation

The Meeting of the Parties to the Convention and the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol, meeting in joint session,

Recalling articles 11 (2) and 14 bis of the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context and article 14 (6) of the Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment,

Recalling also decisions IV/2, paragraphs 15–19,²¹ V/4, paragraphs 27 and 28,²² VI/2, paragraphs 29–35,²³ IS/1a²⁴ and VIII/4a²⁵ on compliance by Armenia in respect of its national legislation for the implementation of the Convention,

Recalling further decisions IX/4²⁶ on general issues of compliance with the Convention, adopted at the ninth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention, and V/4²⁷ on general issues of compliance with the Protocol, adopted at the fifth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol (Geneva, 12–15 December 2023),

Having considered the report on the activities of the Implementation Committee to the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention at its ninth session, in particular, the section concerning the steps taken by Armenia further to decisions IS/1a and VIII/4a,²⁸

Acknowledging the technical assistance provided by the secretariat to the Government of Armenia to assist the country in bringing its legislation into line with the provisions of the Convention and the Protocol, further to paragraph 35 of decision VI/2,

1. *Appreciate* the regular, albeit occasionally delayed, progress reports and the steps taken by the Government of Armenia further to decision VIII/4a since the eighth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention and the fourth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol (Vilnius (online), 8–11 December 2020);

2. *Welcome* the adoption of a new law on environmental impact assessment and expert examination on 3 May 2023,²⁹ but note the delays in the legislative process for adopting the relevant secondary legislation;

3. *Note with concern* that, while providing some improvements, the new law does not address most of the fundamental deficiencies of the previous law, therefore not ensuring full compliance by Armenia with its obligations under the Convention and the Protocol;

4. *Note* that the new law contains in particular the following deficiencies:

(a) The definition of “report”, which covers both environmental impact assessment and strategic environmental assessment reports, reflects a conceptual discrepancy in the approach towards assessment and the role of the respective reports in the Convention and Protocol (environmental impact assessment documentation under article 4 of the Convention and the environmental report under article 7 of the Protocol);

(b) The definition of “the public” and public associations, organizations or groups in accordance with article 1 (x) of the Convention and article 2 (8) of the Protocol is not included;

²¹ ECE/MP.EIA/10.

²² ECE/MP.EIA/15.

²³ ECE/MP.EIA/20/Add.1–ECE/MP.EIA/SEA/4/Add.1.

²⁴ ECE/MP.EIA/27/Add.1–ECE/MP.EIA/SEA/11/Add.1.

²⁵ ECE/MP.EIA/30/Add.2–ECE/MP.EIA/SEA/13/Add.2.

²⁶ ECE/MP.EIA/2023/6.

²⁷ ECE/MP.EIA/SEA/2023/8.

²⁸ ECE/MP.EIA/2023/13–ECE/MP.EIA/SEA/2023/13.

²⁹ Law of the Republic of Armenia on Making an Amendment to the Law of the Republic of Armenia on Environmental Impact Assessment and Expert Examination, adopted on 3 May 2023 and entered into force on 9 June 2023.

(c) It is unclear whether “major changes” to activities are covered according to the Convention;

(d) It is unclear which plans or programmes are subject to article 4 (3) and (4) to the screening in accordance with article 5 of the Protocol, in particular whether an appropriate procedure is in place, and whether screening criteria according to annex III to the Protocol are provided for;

(e) Monitoring in accordance with article 12 of the Protocol is not provided for;

5. *Regret* that, despite over a decade of technical assistance provided by the secretariat³⁰ and the Implementation Committee to Armenia to bring its legislation into line with the Convention and the Protocol, and multiple decisions by the Meetings of the Parties requesting it to do so, Armenia has not yet adopted fully compliant legislation or secondary legislation, especially concerning procedures according to the Protocol;

6. *Endorse* the finding of the Implementation Committee that, despite steps taken, pending the alignment of its law with the Convention and the Protocol and the adoption of relevant secondary legislation, the Government of Armenia has not yet fulfilled the requests addressed to it in decisions IS/1a and VIII/4a;³¹

7. *Reaffirm* decisions IS/1a and VIII/4a, and request the Government of Armenia to rectify, as soon as possible, the deficiencies of the new law, and to adopt the relevant secondary legislation in accordance with the recommendations of the international consultant to the secretariat,³² with a view to ensuring full compliance of its legislative framework with the Convention and the Protocol;

8. *Request* the Government of Armenia to provide the Implementation Committee with the text of the amendments to the law of 3 May 2023 and the relevant secondary legislation, once adopted, together with the English translations thereof;

9. *Request* the Implementation Committee to evaluate the amendments to the law of 3 May 2023 and the relevant secondary legislation, once adopted, and to report thereon to the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention and the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol at their tenth and sixth sessions, respectively.

³⁰ In the period 2013–2018, with European Union funding under the Greening Economies in the European Union’s Eastern Neighbourhood programme and, in the period 2019–2023, under the European Union for Environment programme.

³¹ ECE/MP.EIA/IC/2023/8, para. 8.

³² See Assessment of the draft Law of the Republic of Armenia “On the environmental impact assessment and expertise”: Opinion paper – Summary (2014). Available at https://unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/cia/sea_protocol/Summary_opinion_Arm_EIAlaw_ENG_3005_2014_AS_clean.pdf.

Decision IX/4c–V/4c on compliance by Bosnia and Herzegovina with its obligations under the Convention and the Protocol in respect of the construction of Buk Bijela hydropower plant on the Drina River

The Meeting of the Parties to the Convention and the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol, meeting in joint session,

Recalling articles 11 (2) and 14 bis of the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context and article 14 (4) of the Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment,

Recalling also decisions IX/4³³ on general issues of compliance with the Convention, adopted at the ninth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention, and V/4³⁴ on general issues of compliance with the Protocol, adopted at the fifth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol (Geneva, 12–15 December 2023),

Having considered the findings and recommendations of the Implementation Committee on compliance by Bosnia and Herzegovina with its obligations under the Convention and the Protocol in respect of the construction of Buk Bijela hydropower plant on the Drina River,³⁵

Having considered also the report on the activities of the Implementation Committee to the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention at its ninth session, in particular, the section concerning Bosnia and Herzegovina,³⁶

1. *Endorse* the findings of the Implementation Committee that:

(a) The concerned Parties should, at the earliest stage possible, provide the Committee with all allegations and information on facts to which they wish to refer, and which are relevant for the outcome of the case. The allegation of Montenegro regarding the absence of any time limit set by Bosnia and Herzegovina during the 2012/2013 procedure was delivered only after it had received the Committee's revised draft findings and recommendations. Such late delivery of new claims by Montenegro considerably obstructed the work of the Committee;

(b) By not notifying Montenegro regarding the activity early in the 2012/2013 procedure, Bosnia and Herzegovina failed to fulfil its obligations under articles 2 (4) and 3 (1) of the Convention;

(c) The above non-compliance was not rectified by subsequently setting a time limit in accordance with article 3 of the Convention; Bosnia and Herzegovina did not provide evidence of, nor did it follow up on, what it considered to be an agreement to that effect with Montenegro;

(d) By not providing Montenegro with the final decision, Bosnia and Herzegovina failed to fulfil its obligations under article 6 (2) of the Convention;

(e) The environmental impact assessment procedure conducted by Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2012/2013 was in breach of the Convention and, therefore, would not be valid for subsequent permit decisions;

(f) By not conducting a new environmental impact assessment before issuing a new permit in 2019 for the planned activities at Buk Bijela hydropower plant, Bosnia and Herzegovina failed to comply with its obligations under articles 2 (2)–(3) and 4 (1) of the Convention;

(g) Bosnia and Herzegovina was not in non-compliance with its obligations under the Protocol, as the Protocol entered into force for it only after the start of the procedure for

³³ ECE/MP.EIA/2023/6.

³⁴ ECE/MP.EIA/SEA/2023/8.

³⁵ ECE/MP.EIA/IC/2023/8, annex II.

³⁶ ECE/MP.EIA/2023/13–ECE/MP.EIA/SEA/2023/13.

the adoption of plans or programmes for the energy sector that include Buk Bijela hydropower plant;

2. *Welcome* the fact that the Parties entered into bilateral cooperation to address some of the disputed issues and recommend that, in the future, the Parties broaden the scope of that cooperation to cover issues of a more general focus;

3. *Also welcome* the establishment of a joint working group as a result of the bilateral cooperation, not only for this project but also for future proposed activities, to enhance trust and understanding between the Parties;

4. *Request* Bosnia and Herzegovina to conduct a transboundary environmental impact assessment procedure involving Montenegro and, as needed, other affected Parties, including, by:

(a) Concluding consultations with authorities and the public of the affected Parties based on the environmental impact assessment documentation, as set out in articles 3 (8), 4 (2) and 5 of the Convention;

(b) Revising the final decision on the construction of Buk Bijela hydropower plant, taking due account of the outcomes of the environmental impact assessment procedure, including the environmental impact assessment documentation and comments received from the affected Parties, further to article 6 of the Convention;

(c) Providing the affected Parties with the revised final decision;

5. *Also request* Bosnia and Herzegovina to provide the Implementation Committee, as soon as possible and no later than 15 January 2024, with a detailed plan with a timetable for implementing the steps foreseen in the above recommendations;

6. *Further request* Bosnia and Herzegovina to report, by the end of each year, to the Implementation Committee on the steps taken to complete the transboundary environmental impact assessment procedure;

7. *Request* the Implementation Committee to report to the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention and the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol at their tenth and sixth sessions, respectively, on compliance by Bosnia and Herzegovina in respect of the permit for Buk Bijela hydropower plant.
