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**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE**

**COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY**

Working Group for the preparation  
of the first meeting of the Parties to  
the Convention on Access to Information,  
Public Participation in Decision-making and  
Access to Justice in Environmental Matters  
(Third meeting, Pula, Croatia, 8-10 July 2002)

**PROCEDURES FOR THE PREPARATION,  
ADOPTION AND MONITORING OF WORK PROGRAMMES**

Prepared by the secretariat

**Introduction**

1. At its first meeting, the Working Group discussed the possibility of developing a programme for the work to be undertaken under the Convention. The purpose of such a work programme would be to provide a clear sense of purpose and a mechanism for identifying and setting priorities for the activities. The programme would provide for a clear and transparent framework of activities and would set clear objectives, cost estimates, time frames and expected outcomes. The Working Group requested the secretariat to start preparing a draft decision on a work programme and welcomed the offer by some delegations to contribute to this work (CEP/WG.5/2001/2, paras. 37-38).

This document has not been formally edited.

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2. The Bureau addressed the issue at its open-ended meeting on 28 February – 1 March 2002 on the basis of an informal paper prepared by the delegation of the United Kingdom. This proposal distinguished between a decision on the way work programmes in general should be prepared and adopted from a decision to adopt any given work programme and focused on the former. Other key elements of the proposal were the emphasis on transparency and accountability, the link to the financial arrangements and a project-based approach.

3. In general, the Bureau supported the proposed approach though it was felt that a number of adjustments would be desirable, especially concerning the need for more flexibility. It was considered that specific powers should be given to the Bureau and to the proposed inter-sessional body to adapt the work programme in the period between the meetings of the Parties. There was also a general concern that the process of preparing the work programme should not be overly burdensome and bureaucratic and it was noted that not all elements of the work programme could be expressed in ‘project’ terms. It was considered to be useful in the work programme to distinguish between, on the one hand, core or priority activities and on the other, non-priority or ‘nice-if’ activities, i.e. activities that it would be desirable to implement if sufficient funds were obtained but not essential. Finally, the Bureau considered that the methodology for the preparation and adoption of the work programme should be established on a provisional basis and reviewed in connection with the review of the interim financial arrangements. The Bureau decided that two draft decisions should be prepared for the first meeting of the Parties, one addressing the issue of how to prepare and adopt work programmes, the other addressing the specific activities for the forthcoming period up until the second meeting of the Parties (2003-2005).

4. At its second meeting, the Working Group considered a preliminary draft of this document and most delegations were of the opinion that the draft provided a good basis for further work. The issue was raised as to whether the budget should also include the resources provided by or needed from the United Nations regular budget, although the usefulness of this was questioned by some delegations as the Meeting of the Parties would have no influence on this budget. It was agreed to return to this issue at the next meeting of the Working Group (CEP/WG.5/2002/2, para. 53).

### **Elements for a work programme procedure**

5. A proposal for a draft decision on procedures for the preparation, adoption and monitoring of the Aarhus Convention work programme has been prepared by the secretariat taking into account the discussions referred to in the previous paragraphs and is included in the annex to the present document. The objective of establishing such procedures is to ensure transparency and coherence in the activities and to give all involved parties a clear sense of purpose in the work under the Convention. It is also the aim to provide a clear overview of ongoing activities under the auspices of the Convention in order inter alia to ensure that the scarce resources are used on activities of the highest priority and to guide the secretariat in its work.

6. It is proposed that the work programme will include activities which are the subject of other decisions made by the meeting of the Parties, other activities to further the effective implementation of the Convention and raise awareness of its issues. Each activity in the work programme should be described with the following details as appropriate:

(a) Level of priority

It is envisaged that the work programme should be as comprehensive as possible. As a consequence, not all included activities will be priorities for the coming period, i.e. the period up until the next meeting of the Parties. There may be activities that the Meeting of the Parties consider worthwhile and that it would be nice to implement if sufficient resources become available or if a donor earmarks its contribution to that specific activity. In the work programme, all activities will therefore be identified as either core activities or non-core activities. These designations should provide guidance but should not be interpreted rigidly. It would be important to avoid a situation where non-core activities could not proceed unless all core activities had been guaranteed their full budgetary allocation.

(b) Objective and expected output

The objective of the activity should be described clearly as well as the expected outcome if appropriate and possible. If the objective is to further explore different options for reaching a specific objective, it may not be possible to predict the final output, and so the work programme should be formulated accordingly.

(c) Lead country, body or organization

For each activity, a lead country, body or organization should be identified as far as possible. This could be a Party, Signatory, NGO or IGO. It could also be a specific subsidiary body under the Convention, such as the Compliance Committee or the Bureau, or it could be the secretariat. Activities without an identified lead could be included as well – for the longer term activities.

(d) Method of work

As far as possible, a short description of the envisaged way to reach the objective should be included. This could for instance be meetings, workshops, research or the preparation of publications.

(e) Estimated budget and expected sources of funding

An approximate estimation of the costs of the activity should be given. This could be the costs of bringing participants from countries with economies in transition to a workshop or a meeting or the costs of organizing a workshop. The costs of services which are provided under the UN regular budget, such as conference services, should not be included in the total. The expected sources of funding would for a large majority of the activities be the general (non-earmarked) contributions to the budget of the Convention, to which Parties and other States and organizations contribute through the financial

arrangements. In some cases, in particular for non-core activities, it could be a specific donor having offered to cover some or all of the costs of the activity directly, and in these cases, this would be specified in the work programme. The figures provided in the budget should be considered to be indicative in the sense that they should not prevent the spending of funds in excess of the budgeted amount for a specific activity where sufficient funds have been raised.

(f) Approximate time frame

At the outset, the work programme would cover the period up until the next meeting of the Parties. However, some activities may be longer-term and not necessarily finalized before the next meeting of the Parties. Some activities, such as inter alia the compliance mechanism, are ongoing and do not have a specific time frame.

7. A draft of the work programme should be prepared in advance of each meeting of the Parties and finalized by the Meeting, taking account of other relevant decisions by the Meeting.

Annex

DRAFT DECISION I/[..]

PROCEDURES FOR THE PREPARATION, ADOPTION AND  
MONITORING OF WORK PROGRAMMES

The Meeting.

Recalling article 10, paragraph 2 (g), requiring that Parties consider and undertake any additional action that may be required for the achievement of the purposes of the Convention,

Recalling further its decision I/[..] on the establishment of the Working Group of the Parties,

Believing that a work programme is necessary to identify and set priorities for activities to be undertaken under the auspices of the Convention, and that the procedures of preparing, adopting and monitoring the work programme should be clear and transparent,

Acknowledging the usefulness of identifying as far as possible all proposed activities for the forthcoming intersessional period and their objectives, estimated costs, time frames and expected outcomes at each ordinary meeting of the Parties,

Recognizing the need for flexibility in the implementation of the work programme and for the Working Group of the Parties and the Bureau to have the possibility of adjusting the work programme to changing circumstances and to unforeseen events,

Recognizing that the procedures which are the subject of this decision are closely linked with the financial arrangements and that they should be reviewed at the latest in connection with the review of the financial arrangements envisaged in decision I/[...], paragraph 10,

Believing that a long-term strategic plan for the Convention should eventually be adopted,

1. Decides that a work programme of activities under the auspices of the Convention should be prepared for adoption at each ordinary meeting of the Parties to provide a flexible framework guiding the undertaking of such activities during the inter-sessional period following that meeting;

2. Decides furthermore, that for each activity in the work programme, the following details should be indicated:

- (a) Level of priority
- (b) Objective(s) and expected output
- (c) Lead country, body or organization

- (d) Method of work
- (e) Estimated budget and expected sources of funding, if other than the Convention budget
- (f) Time frame;

3. Agrees to review the procedures for the preparation, adoption and monitoring of work programmes at the [second][third] meeting of the Parties in connection with the review of the financial arrangements and on the basis of any proposals from the Working Group of the Parties; and

4. Requests the Working Group of the Parties to take steps to prepare a long-term strategic plan for the Convention for possible adoption at the [second][third] meeting of the Parties.