

Work Plan of the Group of Experts on Renewable Energy for 2016–2017

Introduction

1. Annex II of the Executive Committee decision on matters relating to the Committee on Sustainable Energy (ECE/EX/7) establishes the Group of Experts on Renewable Energy which is mandated to carry out concrete result-oriented activities that, in line with the Sustainable Energy for All (SE4ALL) initiative of the Secretary-General, help significantly increase the uptake of renewable energy in the region and that help achieve the objective of access to energy for all in the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) region. A Work Plan 2014–2015 was approved at the first session of the Group of Experts on 19 November 2014.
2. According to its Terms of Reference, the Group of Experts will focus on a) regulatory and policy dialogue and b) sharing of best practices on various renewable energy sources, including biomass, with a view to increasing the share of renewables in the global energy mix.
3. At the first session of the Group of Experts on 18–19 November 2014 agreed on the Work Plan of the Group of Experts on Renewable Energy for 2014–2015 and requested the secretariat, in coordination with the Bureau of the Group of Experts, to prepare a Draft Work Plan of the Group of Experts on Renewable Energy for 2016–2017 for the next session of the Group of Experts and subsequent Committee on Sustainable Energy in its 24th session on 18–20 November 2015. This decision was endorsed by the Committee on Sustainable Energy at its twenty-third session on 19–21 November 2014 and approved by ECE Executive Committee at its seventy-fifth meeting on 10 February 2015. This Draft Work Plan is prepared in accordance with these decisions.
4. The Group of Experts will orient its activities towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goal on Energy and the 2030 Development Agenda.

II. Background

5. The Group of Experts requested to focus the work on the following key areas and activities in the Work Plan 2014–2015:
 - (a) State of development. A report on the renewable energy status based on existing data was presented at the first session of the Group of Experts, acknowledging important data gaps for the ECE. As follow-up, a report on the ECE Renewable Energy Status Report 2015 has been developed in partnership with the Renewable Energy Policy Network for the 21st Century (REN21) and the International Energy Agency (IEA) to fill data gaps and thus establish a more accurate baseline for renewable energy in the region. There seems to be a need to continue on the improvement of data gaps and tracking progress of renewable energy uptake;
 - (b) Energy Access. The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Renewable Energy Status Report 2015 has tried to close the information gap on the communities with no access to energy, as pointed out in a first report presented at the first

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session of the Group of Experts, and to facilitate a multi-stakeholder dialogue on possible ways to supply electricity and heat from renewable energy sources to those communities. As issues related to supply electricity and heat from renewable energy sources to communities with no access to energy remain relatively limited in the ECE region compared to other regions of the world, the future work can be directed on how to improve the quality of energy access within the integration of renewable energy in future sustainable energy systems;

(c) Exchange of know-how and best practices. The exchange of information on best practices and lessons learned among experts of member States has been recognized by the Group of Experts as a relevant step to significantly increase energy production from renewable sources as a means of sustainable development and climate change mitigation. A draft menu of efficient and economic technologies and policies to promote them was developed for further inputs by the Group of Experts to become a practical framework for the exchange of relevant information. A follow-up workshop in Azerbaijan is planned to promote the exchange of information and capacity building. This work has raised the need to enhance this exchange of information on best practices on policies and lessons learnt, focusing on the identification of key barriers and options for technological development and related policy support.

III. Concrete activities

6. Building on the activities of the Work Plan 2014–2015 and the recommendations from the Group of Experts, the Bureau of the Committee on Sustainable Energy and the Bureau of the Group of Experts on Renewable Energy propose to undertake the following activities:

A. Tracking of the progress made in the uptake of renewable energy sources in the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe region

Description: The Group of Experts will continue to monitor the progress made on the state of development of renewable energy following the baseline established in 2015. This work will be continued together with the IEA, the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), REN21, the World Bank Group and other key stakeholders, already partners in this process. This work will help to improve the understanding of renewable energy globally and add to existing global monitoring systems already in place by major partners.

Work to be undertaken:

(a) Review the state of development and monitor the progress made after the baseline 2015. This could include building on key findings and further investigating a selected number of target areas in relation to the progress made, and working with other partners and contributing to existing global monitoring frameworks;

(b) Identify key barriers, options and possible best practices for supplying electricity and heat from renewable energy sources, in particular taking into account regulatory framework and investment conditions in the ECE countries. This work will be based on the findings of the status report 2015 on how to improve access to energy;

(c) Foster cooperative activities with member States to promote and use the baseline report (workshops, seminars, roundtables, etc.) on key needs and obstacles on

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renewable energy uptake and on energy access with the aim of strengthening a multi-stakeholder dialogue;

(d) Identify ways to support the implementation of national plans and for strengthening framework conditions and instruments that help significantly increase the uptake of renewable energy in the region.

Deliverables: A report submitted for consideration by the Group of Experts at the annual meetings.

Timeline: 2016–2017

B. Exchange of know-how and best practices in the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe region on how to help significantly increase the uptake of renewable energy.

Description: The Group of Experts will encourage the exchange of know-how and best practices between member States, relevant international organizations and other stakeholders on how to significantly increase energy production from renewable sources as a means of sustainable development and climate change mitigation. This work will be undertaken collaboratively with other organisations, such as including IRENA, IEA, REN21 and the World Bank Group, the other United Nations Regional Commissions and other relevant organizations. The possible work on standards development will be explored with key partners especially existing Bureau members and bodies involved in standard setting like the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC).

Work to be undertaken:

(a) Identify the key operational policy priorities for member States and provide platforms for collective action;

(b) Provide an effective platform for expanding already developed policies and measures across countries in the region;

(c) Identify barriers to and options for technological development of renewable energy in the ECE region;

(d) Organize information sharing activities (workshops, seminars, roundtables, etc.) for exchange of experience on best practices and policies;

(e) Identify existing gaps in policies, legislation, standards and regulations and cooperate with other relevant organizations in addressing them.

Deliverables: A report submitted for consideration by the Group of Experts.

Timeline: 2016–2017

C. Integration of Renewable Energy in Future Sustainable Energy Systems in the region

7. The Group of Experts will continue to work at the achievement of higher renewable energy shares and this can be done through additional integration efforts. These include improved understanding of renewable energy resource characteristics and availability, as well as the system integration of the various renewable energy technologies across the

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broad range of present and future energy supply systems. The Group of Experts will promote renewable energy integration and investment conditions in ECE Member States by considering the role of renewable energy within the context of future energy systems, developing the instruments for assessing the potential of renewable energy resources and supporting possible synergies between renewable energy and fossil fuels in the energy production. This approach will strengthen the integration of renewable energy technologies in each sector, i.e. electricity generation, heating and cooling, gas and liquid fuel distribution as well as autonomous energy supply systems.

8. The Group of Experts will cooperate with the Experts Group on Resource Classification (EGRC) to allow investments in renewable energy projects through the application of the United Nations Framework Classification for Fossil Energy and Mineral Reserves and Resources 2009 to renewable energy resources and with the Group of Experts on Gas to optimize – economically and environmentally – the cooperation and synergy between renewable energy and gas for required support capacity, working in cooperation with the Task Force on Gas and Renewable Energy of the Group of Experts on Gas. Synergies will be also explored by the Chair of the Group of Experts on Renewable Energy and the Chair of the Group of Experts on Cleaner Electricity Production from Fossil Fuels.

Work to be undertaken:

- (a) Identify best practices about existing policies and policy reform to meet a higher renewable energy share within present and future energy systems;
- (b) Analyze renewable energy investment opportunities within future energy systems and energy market optimization;
- (c) Identify key needs for capacity building to develop renewable energy framework conditions to facilitate market conditions;
- (d) Organize capacity building and information sharing activities (workshops, seminary, roundtables, etc.) on renewable energy investment promotion, the consideration of renewables in energy systems, the assessment of renewable energy potential and costs and the development of hybrid power for increased system efficiency.

Deliverables:

Technical assistance to the national officials and experts through training workshop in renewable energy project development, finance and business planning; a case study about existing policies and policy reform for the increase of the renewable energy share; and organization of a seminar on policy reforms for renewable energy market formation. Technical assistance activities should be provided on a demand-driven basis and on the basis of funds availability, taking into account similar activities already implemented within the Sustainable Energy Sub-programme.

Timeline:

- (a) Organization of a capacity building workshop in 2016 (TBD);
- (b) Development of case study on the experience of existing policies and policy reforms for higher renewable energy share, in cooperation with national coordinator and national participating institutions by end 2016 (TBD);
- (c) Organization of a policy seminar focusing on policy reforms to promote renewable energy market conditions financing by 2017 (TBD).