

TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE WORKING GROUP ON ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT FOR 2012-2014

as adopted by the Committee on Environmental Policy at its 18th session in April 2012

1. The Committee on Environmental Policy renews the mandate of the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment for 2012-2014. The Working Group should help strengthening environmental information and observation capacity, including monitoring networks, in countries in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, Central Asia and the Russian Federation as well as in interested countries of South-Eastern Europe to make monitoring and assessment an effective instrument in environmental policymaking, and to improve international environmental reporting.
2. The Working Group will promote the coordination of multilateral and bilateral efforts in the above areas, in particular for the implementation of relevant decisions by the Ministerial Conferences “Environment for Europe”. It should contribute:
 - (a) To establishing a regular process of environmental assessment and developing the Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS) across the region jointly with the European Environment Agency (EEA) and its partners;
 - (b) To an appraisal of monitoring and assessment requirements within the framework of the “Environment for Europe” process as well as national and international monitoring and assessment requirements, including obligations under the relevant multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs).
3. The Working Group should promote implementation of recommendations and guidelines on environmental monitoring and assessment adopted by Ministerial Conferences “Environment for Europe”. It should use relevant results of the work of and cooperate with other international forums and networks, such as EEA, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), the World Health Organization (WHO) European Centre for Environment and Health (ECEH), relevant MEAs, especially those of UNECE, the Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS), and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and give priority to the following specific areas:
 - (a) Modernization and upgrading of national monitoring networks and information systems;
 - (b) Improvement of data collection, transfer and use, and the application of modelling;
 - (c) Strengthening monitoring of specific environmental media;
 - (d) Promotion of the use of indicator-based mechanisms for periodic environmental assessments and evaluation of the effectiveness of environmental policies and decision-making;
 - (e) Improvement of environmental assessments, including the use of the methodology of the “Europe’s Environment: An Assessment of Assessments” report.
4. Donors will be invited to provide support for the Working Group’s activities.

5. The Working Group will be open to all UNECE member States and include EEA. In its operation it will be guided by the relevant procedures established by the UNECE Executive Committee.
6. Members of the Working Group are officials dealing in the UNECE countries with environmental monitoring and assessment. The Working Group will involve in its activities experts from statistical agencies, relevant services and major groups.
7. The UNECE secretariat will provide secretariat assistance and conference facilities to the Working Group at the United Nations Office at Geneva, including interpretation and translation, in accordance with UNECE rules and practices.
8. The Committee on Environmental Policy will review the present terms of reference in two years after the adoption by the Committee of the Working Group's work programme.
