

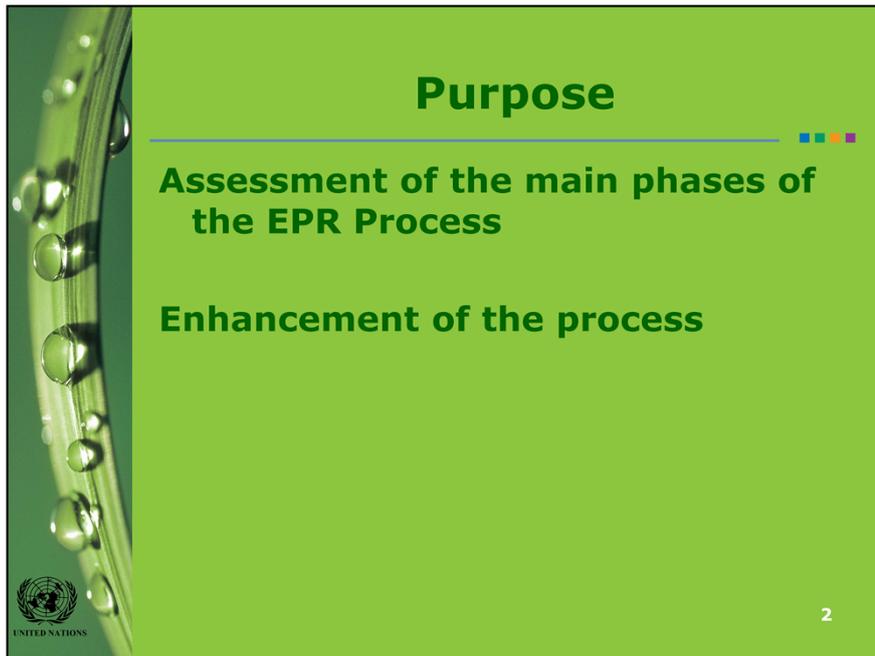
**Environmental Performance
Review Programme (EPR)**



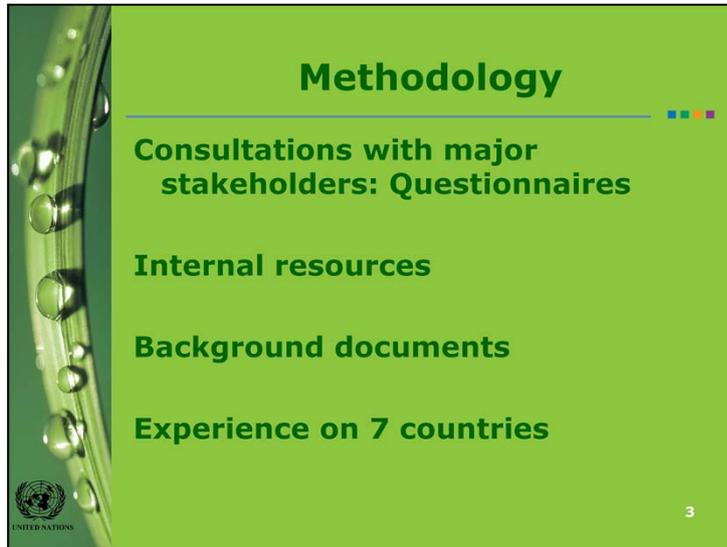
**United Nations Economic
Commission for Europe**



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1. Preparations
2. Review mission
3. Drafting
4. Expert and peer review
5. Publication and dissemination of the final report
6. Launching of publication.



Major stakeholders

- ECE EPR secretariat
- Members of the EPR review teams that prepared the reviews for the above-mentioned countries
- Members of the ECE EGEP
- Delegates to the CEP
- National coordinators of the EPR.

Total 45 persons out of 143 responded to the questionnaires.

Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Tajikistan, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.



The **selection of national coordinators usually works very well both in terms of the timing of the nomination and the professional quality of national coordinator** (a person of adequate seniority and experience to support the mission). Despite this positive experience, they have not always been able to deliver the expected outcomes, their work sometimes being hindered by **weak communication channels and poor governance**.

But quite often there were **significant delays in the nomination of national focal points**; on occasion some **national focal points were only made known to the ECE EPR secretariat shortly before or at the onset of the review mission**. Sometimes the **profiles of national focal points are not fully up to the requirements of the review**, either due to the lack of required expertise, lack of seniority or weak communication skills. This impacts the effectiveness of fact-finding missions. The utilization of networks of local experts of national focal points is one of the biggest assets of the EPR methodology which relies on in-country research, interviews and site visits which in many ways are superior to desk-studies from afar. Weak networks of national focal points heavily impact the ability of international experts to unearth useful information or capture nuances specific to each country under review.

Important documents and data are often not available to the EPR review team in time before the mission.

The ECE EPR secretariat requires each member of the EPR review team to **prepare a questionnaire** on specific issues that are of particular interest to her/him. These are forwarded by the ECE EPR secretariat to the country some 4-6 weeks before the mission, translated, where appropriate, into Russian on the expert's initiative. Questionnaires are potentially a very useful tool because they allow the EPR review team to close important gaps concerning factual information.

All EPR review team members that participated in the survey indicated that **they had always prepared such a questionnaire**. But three quarters of the EPR review team never received any feedback to their questionnaire before the mission. The quality of responses received before the review mission was judged to be mainly satisfactory and partly satisfactory. The outcome is that questionnaires do not achieve their intended goal to make the review better informed.

There are a number of reasons for this outcome.

- **National focal point too busy** with their daily workload and did not therefore find the necessary time to respond to the questionnaire.
- **National focal points for a specific environmental domain were still not nominated by the country.**
- **National experts never received the questionnaire** due to internal coordination problems in the reviewed country.

As regards the few cases where answers were received, **lack of local expertise in certain environmental domains** has, on occasion, limited the usefulness of responses. Therefore, the **information to be collected via the questionnaires had to be mostly collected during the review mission**. The reasons behind this poor responsiveness by national focal points and national experts before the actual mission are frequently the **result of poor governance, weak cooperation between various administrative branches and bad communication**.



The **EPR review team members have found the web-portal quite useful during the preparatory phase.** However, due to changes in the management of ECE websites, it has not been possible to create and maintain such web-portals in recent reviews. Furthermore, important Government documents were often not available. Although these missing official documents were usually obtained during the review mission, this adversely affects the overall efficiency of the work of the EPR review team.



Recommendation 4

Conclusion
Consistency of the draft report

Recommendation
Provide opportunity to comment the draft report by EPR Expert Team



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The draft report is, however, not submitted for final comments to all the members of the EPR review team before submitting it to the ECE EGEP. The majority of EPR review team members (15 out of 25 who expressed a view on this issue) consider, however, that there should be an opportunity for the EPR review team to go through the draft report and make comments before it is submitted for expert review. The two main reasons are either to check consistency between the chapters in particular with chapters of Parts I and II, or to validate their own chapters after the ECE EPR secretariat review.

Recommendation 5

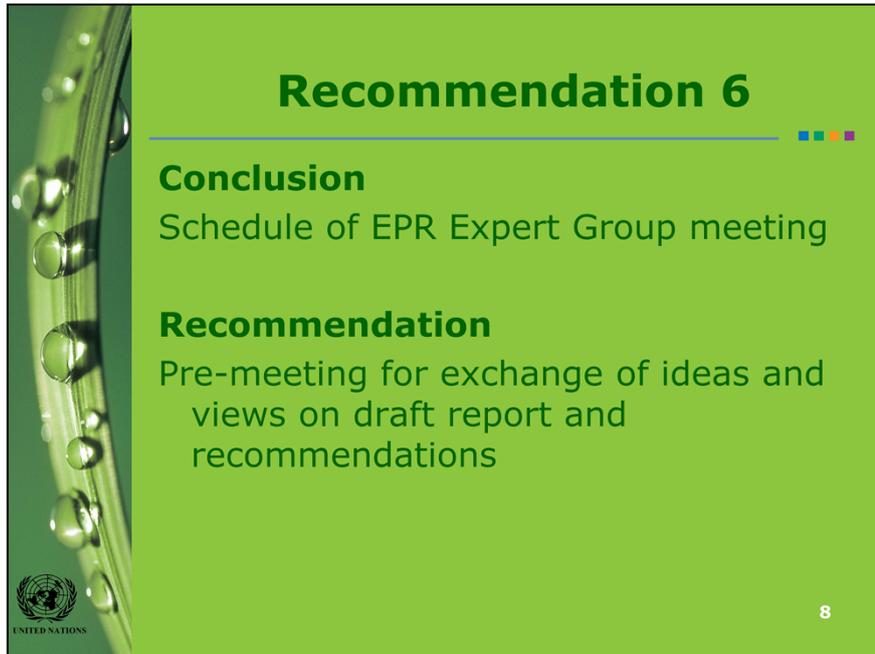
Conclusion
EPR Expert Group and CEP

Recommendation
Provide draft report 3 weeks in advance
Supply with Executive Summary

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Adequate preparation for the expert review requires that the draft report is available in good time before the meeting. There is, however, no formally agreed deadline for sending the report to the ECE EGEP. Members of the ECE EGEP receive the draft report from the ECE EPR secretariat in general some 3-4 weeks before the meeting. Two thirds of the members of the ECE EGEP considered that 4 weeks would be adequate; the others indicated that 2 weeks would be sufficient for them.

There is currently no organized discussion of the EPR among the members of ECE EGEP before the meeting, using the internet (e-mail; dedicated website) as a platform. The same holds for the comments and suggestions made concerning the recommendations by the authorities of the country reviewed. However, when the country under review delivers comments in advance, they are formatted and circulated soon after to the ECE EGEP.



Recommendation 6

Conclusion
Schedule of EPR Expert Group meeting

Recommendation
Pre-meeting for exchange of ideas and views on draft report and recommendations

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The ECE EGEP dedicated one full working day to each EPR. The majority of ECE EGEP deems that one meeting day was fully sufficient to deal with a report. But for some reports, particularly those that were longer than the average, some members judged that it would have been better to have more time (specified as half a day) for the review. Otherwise, there is a risk that the time may not be sufficient to give sufficient time for the country delegation to express its opinion and to review in an adequate manner the recommendations contained in the chapters that are last to be reviewed during the session.

Recommendation 7

Conclusion
EPR Dissemination

Recommendation
2 complementary launch events
Geneva
Country under review

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Once the print version of the report is available, the report is usually launched in the capital of the reviewed country. The organization of the launch event and its format are discussed and agreed with the Government. There is no launch event in the ECE secretariat's headquarters.

The ECE issues a special press release on the occasion of the launch of the report. Such an event usually takes place on average 6 -12 months after the publication. Only 3 of them (Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) have organized launch events in close cooperation with ECE EPR secretariat.

Typically, the launch event includes

- a press conference with high-level Government representation;
- a presentation by ECE EPR secretariat of the main findings of the report to national experts as well as experts from other institutions present in the country (international organizations; embassies; foreign assistance organizations, academia, etc.).

EPR Programme



Thank you

UNECE/EPR

