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**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE**

**COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY**

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**REPORTING ON PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE**

Note by the secretariat

*Summary*

This document gives an overview of the planned performance assessments and self-evaluations for the Environment subprogramme. In line with the decision of the UNECE Commission requesting each Sectoral Committee to conduct biennial evaluations (see E/ECE/1434/Rev.1), it sets the framework for such evaluations to be performed in the context of the 2008–2009 biennium. The Committee on Environmental Policy is invited to review and agree on the expected accomplishments and related indicators of achievement proposed for each cluster of activities in this framework.

In addition, the Committee is presented with the subprogramme's 2010–2011 strategic framework drawn up in the context of the United Nations programme budget preparations. The Committee is invited to take note of the strategic framework.

## INTRODUCTION

1. Like any large organization, the United Nations, including UNECE, is expected to plan its activities in advance and with the participation of stakeholders, enabling the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly to make the necessary funding decisions. Likewise, after a defined period – in the case of the United Nations, two years – those responsible for a programme should report on their achievements and be answerable for the results.

2. In recent years, the United Nations has moved to a results-based management system, where programmes are assessed in terms of results achieved and not just the outputs produced. This necessitates putting in place mechanisms to monitor and report on achievements and lessons learned, which should lead to improved performance.

3. Generally, there are two formal frameworks for programme planning, performance assessment and reporting:

- (a) The United Nations-wide mandatory assessment system, in compliance with the instructions provided by the General Assembly and Headquarters;
- (b) UNECE biennial performance evaluations, to be implemented by each Sectoral Committee at the request of the Commission.

4. Each of the two systems has its own legitimate requirements; the challenge is to align all the processes and to streamline the use of resources, for instance by harmonizing planning periods and by using the same methods to assess performance.

### I. UNITED NATIONS-WIDE MANDATORY ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

5. To achieve the best possible results, and as mandated by the United Nations, two key tools are employed by all its entities to ensure that the work carried out corresponds adequately to the objectives set and the needs of users and stakeholders:

- (a) The United Nations results-based management and results-based budgeting framework;
- (b) Self-evaluations.

6. According to the United Nations results-based management and results-based budgeting system, all subprogrammes, before each biennium, must set up a strategic framework that determines their objectives in terms of “expected accomplishments” and, for each of them, indicators of achievement. The 2008–2009 strategic framework for the Environment subprogramme was approved by the General Assembly (A/61/6 (Prog. 16)).

7. Apart from the above assessments, subprogramme managers are also requested to undertake self-evaluations of selected areas of work, projects or key activities. The main aim of these self-evaluations is to ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of the work undertaken and to optimize its impact. For example, in the 2008-2009 biennium, self-evaluations are planned on:

- (i) The review of the activities of the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters;
- (ii) The review of the environmental monitoring and assessment activities.

## **II. UNECE BIENNIAL PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS 2008–2009**

8. The UNECE member countries, being committed to the transparency and effectiveness of programme management, agreed at the Commission session in 2004 to place more emphasis on evaluation as a tool in managing the Commission's work. The Sectoral Committees were therefore requested by the Commission to conduct biennial evaluations of their respective subprogrammes and to take into account the results of these evaluations in determining their work programmes. The 2005 UNECE reform further strengthened this approach.

9. The biennial evaluations should give an opportunity for the members of each Sectoral Committee to review and reaffirm, on a continuous basis, the relevance of the activities and their clusters in view of the subprogrammes' objectives. The results of these evaluations should contribute to defining subprogramme priorities and the related distribution of resources.

10. In the context of the biennial evaluations, each Sectoral Committee has been mandated to identify clusters of activity and to agree on expected accomplishments for 2008–2009 for each of them, together with the related indicators of achievement and measurement methodologies. This approach is more detailed than the more aggregated United Nations-wide approach (see section I above), while following the same results-based methodology.

11. These biennial evaluations should comprise two phases: (a) a planning phase, prior to each biennium as mentioned above; and (b) an evaluation phase, towards the end of any biennium, drawing up an accomplishment account for each expected accomplishment, including lessons learned and recommendations for possible programmatic adjustments.

12. The secretariat proposed draft expected accomplishments and indicators of achievement for each cluster of activities for review and agreement by the Committee. At its annual session in 2009, the Committee will be requested to address some key evaluation elements (relevance, effectiveness, impact and efficiency) in reviewing the accomplishments of the subprogramme in each of its clusters. Some guidelines for these evaluations have been prepared by the UNECE Programme Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Unit and are available in the "Guide for biennial evaluations of subprogramme performance by UNECE Sectoral Committees" (available at <http://www.unece.org>).

13. The proposed clusters of activities of the Environment subprogramme are:

- (a) Environmental Performance Reviews;
- (b) Follow-up to the Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe";
- (c) Follow-up to World Summit on Sustainable Development;

- (d) Environmental monitoring;
- (e) Education for sustainable development;
- (f) Transport, health and environment;
- (g) The Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution;
- (h) The Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters;
- (i) The Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context;
- (j) The Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes;
- (k) The Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents.

14. The draft expected accomplishments and indicators of achievement for these clusters for the purpose of the 2008–2009 biennial performance evaluations are presented in annex II.

15. The Committee on Environmental Policy is invited to discuss and agree on the expected accomplishments for the 2008–2009 biennial performance evaluations.

### **III. UNITED NATIONS STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK 2010-2011**

16. In accordance with the UNECE programme planning process, the draft strategic framework must be reviewed by the UNECE Executive Committee in November/December 2007 and submitted to United Nations Headquarters in early 2008.

17. As outlined in annex I, the 2010–2011 strategic framework for the subprogramme contains the following elements:

- (a) Subprogramme objective;
- (b) Expected accomplishments and indicators of achievement;
- (c) Strategy to achieve the subprogramme's expected accomplishments and objective.

18. The Committee on Environmental Policy is invited to take note of the 2010–2011 strategic framework as reviewed by the Executive Committee.

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**Annex I****STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR 2010–2011**

Objective of the organization: Reduce the pollution burden, safeguard the environment and health, improve environmental management and further promote integration of environmental policies into sectoral policies.

## Expected accomplishments:

## Indicators of achievement

Strengthened national capacity for environmental monitoring and assessment systems in the countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA) and South-Eastern Europe (SEE)	Increase in the number of countries applying the environmental indicators as defined in the UNECE guidelines for the application of environmental indicators
Strengthened implementation of UNECE regional environmental commitments by member countries	Increased number of reports from countries indicating progress in implementing legally binding instruments
Improved environmental performance in countries with economies in transition	<p>Increase in number of countries with improved environmental performance as measured through a set of indicators reported by the Environmental Performance Reviews (EPRs)</p> <p>Number of recommendations which have contributed to policy formulation and implementation as reported by the reviewed countries</p>

**Strategy**

The responsibility for the subprogramme is vested in the Environment, Housing and Land Management Division. In line with its objective, the subprogramme will emphasize a country needs based approach in carrying out its activities. It will focus on building the capacities of EECCA and SEE countries with respect to environmental policy and management, including for the effective implementation of environmental legislation.

The subprogramme will continue to conduct the second round of EPRs of countries with economies in transition and assist them in implementing the recommendations of their national EPRs. It will also assist in building capacity for environmental observation and reporting, which will contribute to the provision of timely and accurate environmental data to improve monitoring and assessment in these countries. The UNECE guidelines for the application of environmental

indicators and for the preparation of indicator-based environmental assessments reports will serve as guidance.

While taking into account the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, the subprogramme will further promote the implementation of sustainable development in the UNECE region and the outcomes of regional environment and sustainable development conferences, in particular of the decisions taken by the Sixth Ministerial Conference “Environment for Europe” (Belgrade, 10–12 October 2007).

Actions will be taken to further integrate environment into other sectoral policies through, inter alia, sectoral programmes and projects, including education for sustainable development, transport, health and environment as well as water and health. It will also improve cross-border environmental security in cooperation with the other regional organizations involved. Cross-sectoral work will also include work on promoting synergies and cooperation between the UNECE legally binding instruments.

Continuous emphasis will be placed on supporting the implementation of regional and subregional agreements and action programmes, as well as multi-stakeholder processes and partnerships resulting from, inter alia, the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) and the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), by providing regional contributions to the CSD programme cycle.

## Annex II

### **EXPECTED ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND INDICATORS OF ACHIEVEMENT FOR THE ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME, PER CLUSTER OF ACTIVITIES, FOR THE PURPOSE OF 2008–2009 BIENNIAL PERFORMANCE EVALUATION**

<p>Improved environmental performance in countries with economies in transition <i>(Cluster (a))</i></p>	<p>Increased number of countries with improved environmental performance demonstrated by a set of indicators reflected in the EPRs</p> <p>Number of recommendations which have contributed to policy formulation and implementation as reported by the reviewed countries</p>
<p>Successful reform of the “Environment for Europe” (EfE) process <i>(Cluster (b))</i></p>	<p>Consensus reached by UNECE member States on the reform as requested by Ministers at the Belgrade EfE Conference</p>
<p>Successful review of progress in the implementation of the WSSD outcomes and Agenda 21 within the biennial CSD implementation cycle <i>(Cluster (c))</i></p>	<p>Consensus reached by UNECE member States on the key challenges to be addressed as they relate to the themes of the CSD cycle</p>
<p>Strengthened capacity for environmental monitoring and assessment in EECCA countries <i>(Cluster (d))</i></p>	<p>Increased number of countries that reported on the state of the environment following the guidelines for the preparation of governmental reports on the state and protection of the environment</p>
<p>Enhanced integration of key themes of sustainable development in national education programmes at all levels <i>(Cluster (e))</i></p>	<p>Increased number of countries that integrate the key themes of sustainable development into national education programmes</p>
<p>Enhanced integration between transport, health and environment <i>(Cluster (f))</i></p>	<p>Increased number of uploaded documents within the THE PEP<sup>1</sup> Clearing House, demonstrating an integrated policy approach</p>
<p>Strengthened implementation of the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution <i>(Cluster (g))</i></p>	<p>Increased number of reports/activities from countries indicating progress in implementing the Convention in three key provisions:</p> <p>(a) Review of strategies and policies for the abatement of air pollution by Parties to the Convention (2009);</p> <p>(b) Ratification of the three most recent protocols to the Convention;</p>

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<sup>1</sup> Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme.

	(c) Training sessions targeting implementation of the Convention and its protocols in EECCA and SEE countries.
Strengthened implementation of the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention) <i>(Cluster (h))</i>	<p>Increased number of countries submitting National Implementation Reports to the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention reporting progress in three key provisions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) On the establishment and maintenance of clear, transparent and consistent legislative, regulatory and administrative framework to implement the Convention;</li> <li>(b) On progressive establishment of coherent nationwide systems of pollution inventories or registers on a structured, computerized and publicly accessible database compiled through standardized reporting;</li> <li>(c) With regard to the requirement on each Party to progressively increase the range of environmental information available through the public telecommunications network.</li> </ul>
Strengthened implementation of the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo Convention) <i>(Cluster (i))</i>	<p>Increased number of countries working to improve implementation of the Convention in three main areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Increased number of countries indicating progress in subregional cooperation under the Convention;</li> <li>(b) Increased number of Parties indicating progress in strengthening compliance with the Convention;</li> <li>(c) Increased number of countries participating in training workshops on the Convention's Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment.</li> </ul>
Strengthened implementation of the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) <i>(Cluster (j))</i>	<p>Increased number of countries indicating progress in implementing the Convention in three key provisions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Increased number of countries ratifying the Protocol on Water and Health;</li> <li>(b) Increased capacity of non-European Union countries to assess impact of climate change on their water resources;</li> </ul>

	(c) Increased capacity of non-European Union countries to plan and implement adaptation strategies for water management.
Strengthened implementation of the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents <i>(Cluster (k))</i>	<p>Increased number of reports from countries indicating progress in implementing the Convention in three key provisions</p> <p>(a) Identification of hazardous activities through training sessions;</p> <p>(b) Prevention – application and strengthening of preventive measures at hazardous activities through capacity-building sessions;</p> <p>(c) Notification of industrial accidents using the Industrial Accidents Notification System, implemented through training sessions.</p>