

# Economic Commission for Europe

## Committee on Environmental Policy

### Twenty-fifth session

Geneva, 13-15 November 2019

Item 5 of the provisional agenda

### Environmental monitoring, assessment and reporting

Information paper No. 22

25 October 2019

## CONCEPT NOTE FOR A PAN-EUROPEAN ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

### i. Title

Production of the next pan-European environmental assessment: “Europe’s environment: the seventh assessment”.

### ii. Implementing Entity and partners

The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) will be the lead agency. The project will be implemented in cooperation with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and with support from the European Environment Agency (EEA).

### iii. Background

The series of environmental assessments of the pan-European region provide up-to-date and policy-relevant information on the interactions between the environment and society. The assessments have been a consistent feature of the Environment for Europe process from 1995 to 2016. The 2009 reform of the Environment for Europe process identified the pan-European assessment as one of the three substantive documents to be prepared for each ministerial conference, together with up to two theme-specific reports.

After the Seventh Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference (Astana, 2011), responsibility for the drafting of the assessment shifted from EEA to UNEP and UNECE.



During the Eighth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference (Batumi, Georgia, 2016), the launch of the European regional assessment of the Global Environment Outlook as the regular pan-European environmental assessment was welcomed. The Sixth Global Environment Outlook (GEO-6) Assessment for the Pan-European Region provided a picture of the environmental factors affecting human health and well-being at the regional level.

After the Eighth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference, the UNECE Committee on Environmental Policy adopted the revised mandate and terms of reference of the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment for the period 2017–2021. The new terms of reference include the objective to provide assistance in the preparation of the seventh regular pan-European environmental assessment. Specifically, the Working Group was tasked with leading a consultation on the regular pan-European environmental assessment (ECE/CEP/2017/2, annex II) for consideration by the Committee on Environmental Policy.

A draft concept for the assessment was presented to the Committee during its twenty-fourth session (29–31 January 2019). The Committee requested the Working Group, with the support of the UNECE secretariat, working in close cooperation with EEA and UNEP, to prepare a detailed proposal, including a timetable, budget and expanded outline, for the assessment to be presented to the Committee at its next session.

At its twenty-first session (6–7 May 2019), the Working Group decided to recommend that an indicator-based and thematic assessment be prepared and asked the UNECE secretariat to draft a detailed proposal on the assessment, including an annotated table of contents, timeline for the assessment, costs for the elements of the assessment and the foreseen outputs. The proposal should be presented in such a way that it would make clear how the assessment would be affected if inadequate financial resources would be made available. The secretariat should share the detailed proposal with potential donors leading up to the session of the Committee on Environmental Policy. The present document is the response to the Working Group’s request for a detailed proposal.

iv. **Objective**

To provide decision-makers with adequate information to take informed policy decisions at the Ninth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference (expected in 2021), both on broader environmental issues and on two themes to be selected for the conference, in support of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

v. **Expected Accomplishments**

- EA1:** Heightened awareness and understanding of the drivers and environmental status and trends in the pan-European region.
- EA2:** Policy recommendations to decision-makers in the pan-European environment and on the two conference themes.
- EA3:** Knowledge of the progress made in establishing the Shared Environmental Information System in Europe and Central Asia.

vi. **Deliverables**

As a minimum, the assessment will be delivered as a synthesis report, from which would be derived a summary for policymakers that could be included in the ministerial declaration. Alternatively, the summary could be produced as a separate official document of about 1–2 pages. Social media posts will also be made. A preliminary outline of the synthesis report is shown in the table below. If resources allow, a laid-out version of the assessment might be produced, with about 50–70 pages and a short print run of about 100 copies, possibly together with a three-minute video summary.

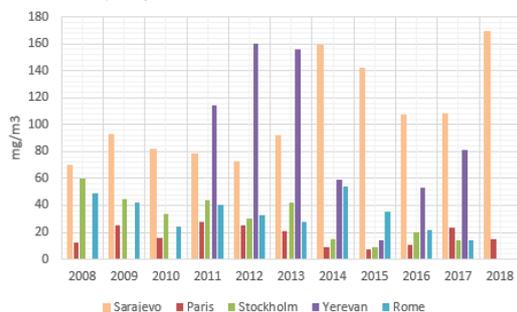
**Possible outline of pan-European environmental assessment: synthesis report**

<b>CHAPTER/Section</b>	<b>Notes</b>
INTRODUCTION	
DRIVERS/ PRESSURES	This chapter will examine human and societal development, for example, demographics (population growth, urbanization, ageing), economic processes (consumption, production, markets and trade, such as changes in mobility and energy, e-commerce and teleworking, plastics), scientific and technological innovation (such as electric vehicles, batteries and renewable sources resulting in new resource needs), distribution pattern processes (inter- and intra-generational) and cultural, social, political and institutional processes (including production and service sectors), as well as a changing climate. The identification of the main drivers will be made in an expert meeting and descriptions of the drivers subsequently elaborated. Drivers/pressures will be examined also through the lens of the two themes chosen for the Ninth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference.

INDICATOR-BASED AND THEMATIC ASSESSMENT	<p>This chapter will discuss environmental state and trends and policy responses, using the UNECE core set of environmental indicators. Again, these elements will be examined also through the lens of the two themes and using, if possible, early drafts of the two thematic background papers to be produced for the Conference. The depth of the analysis will depend on the resources available. Each section might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key policy-relevant messages</li> <li>• Pressures such as emissions (link also with relevant MEAs) and changing land-use (use also remote-sensed imagery)</li> <li>• State and trends (using the UNECE set of indicators, perhaps compare some cities, emissions and ambient conditions, also geospatial/remote-sensed data – without showing national borders – and studies, e.g. under MEA and SDG reporting, plus EEA thematic or indicator-based reports)</li> <li>• Policy responses (policy, legal, institutional, technological and other solutions, by different actors such as national governments, local authorities, the private sector and civil society, and by MEAs)</li> </ul>
Air pollution and ozone depletion	partners to include Air Convention, and PRTRs Protocol
Climate change	partners to include UNFCCC secretariat
Water	partners to include UNECE secretariat of Water Convention and Protocol on Water and Health
Biodiversity	partners to include IUCN, UNEP-WCMC, CBD secretariat
Land and soil	partners to include UNECE Housing and Land Management Division, UNCCD, FAO
Agriculture	partners to include FAO
Energy	partners to include UNECE Sustainable Energy Division
Transport	partners to include UNECE Sustainable Transport Division
Waste	partners to include UNECE Statistical Division
SHARED ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION SYSTEM	<p>This chapter will present a review of progress in establishing the Shared Environmental Information System in Europe and Central Asia. It would be structured in a similar way to the mid-term review report on this topic (ECE/CEP/2019/7)</p>
BACK MATERIAL	<p>The document will also include references, additional sources, abbreviations, definitions, etc.</p>

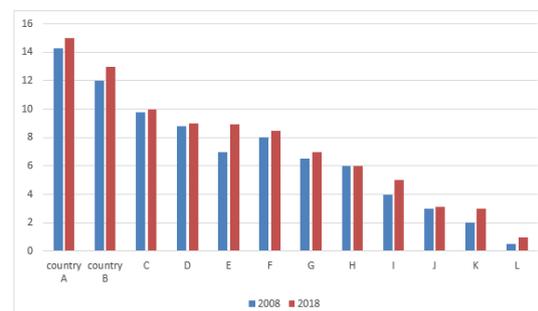
**Ambient air quality in urban areas**

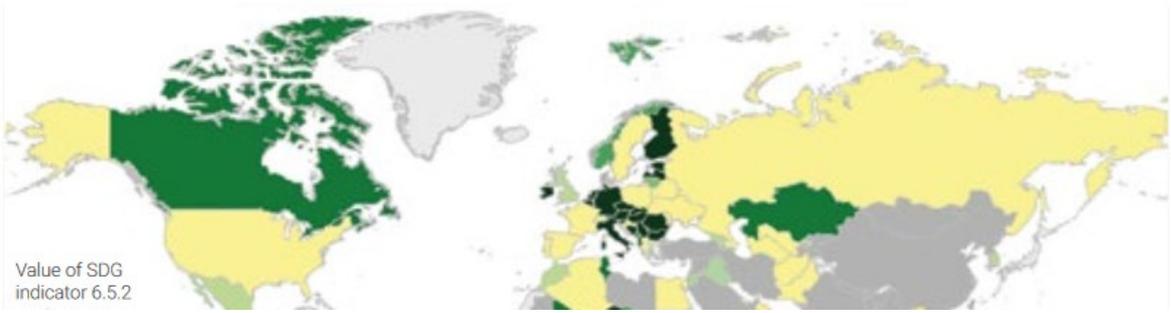
Particulate Matter (PM10)



**Protected areas**

Share of protected areas (all IUCN categories)





## vii. Main activities

The main activities are listed here with, in the table below, a possible timetable for the work.

- A1:** Establish a drafting group of experts from within the United Nations system (as illustrated in the outline section above by the indication of potential partners) who, together with external consultants, would be engaged in the production of the assessment. In particular, bodies under multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) would be well placed to report on the latest state, trends and policies for a number of areas, such as air quality, climate change, water and biodiversity. Other areas might be covered by UNEP and relevant UNECE divisions (e.g., regarding transport and energy).
- A2:** Use the drafting group, including the consultants, to identify drivers and pressures to be considered in the assessment, including in relation to the themes, while referring also to the EEA State and Outlook for Europe's Environment Report (SOER) 2020 and the latest UNEP Global Environment Outlook (GEO-6).
- A3:** Access data flows from countries available through the Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS) to complement information available through the EEA SOER 2020 and GEO-6, as well as data available from MEAs. Use to establish a framework for status and trends. Consultants or interns would support this work.
- A4:** Use the drafting group to review drivers, pressures, status and trends and develop the narrative and policy responses for the indicator-based assessment. Consultants would support this work.
- A5:** Undertake the review of progress in establishing the Shared Environmental Information System in Europe and Central Asia, with the result to be included in the pan-European environmental assessment, indicating what has been achieved and what remains to be done.
- A6:** Compile the above elements into the draft synthesis report of the pan-European assessment, undertake a comprehensive intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder peer review process and consult widely, through national focal points and relevant meetings. The policy recommendations, in particular, will be subject to review by the Committee on Environmental Policy. Revise as necessary. Translate into Russian. Produce a simple laid-out digital synthesis report.

### **Oversight**

The Working Group is entrusted with leading a consultation on the regular pan-European environmental assessment. At its sessions and, if necessary, between sessions by electronic means, members of the Working Group will be invited to comment on the evolving outline and scope and, later, the emerging draft text. They will also be invited to provide inputs in terms of data, case studies and good practices. The Working Group will review the summary for policymakers prior to its submission to the Committee on Environmental Policy. For these reasons, all member States will be encouraged to participate in meetings of the Working Group and to nominate experts to contribute to the consultation process.

- A7:** If resources allow, prepare a more elaborate laid-out version of assessment, print a limited number of copies and produce a three-minute video summary.
- A8:** Launch and outreach the key findings of the assessment, including to member States and stakeholders, using established networks and social media

### **Possible timetable for the seventh pan-European assessment**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Actions</b>
<b>October 2019</b>	16 <sup>th</sup> session of the Joint Task Force on Environmental Statistics and Indicators	Further refine the general approach and process for the assessment
<b>November 2019</b>	25 <sup>th</sup> session of the Committee on Environmental Policy	Decide the two themes for the next conference and the general approach and process for the assessment
<b>Early 2020</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> meeting of the drafting group	
<b>May 2020</b>	22 <sup>nd</sup> session of the Working Group	

<b>Summer- autumn 2020</b>	2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> meetings of the drafting group	
<b>October 2020</b>	17 <sup>th</sup> session of the Joint Task Force	
<b>November 2020</b>	26 <sup>th</sup> session of the Committee	Review of draft assessment
<b>Early 2021</b>	Special session of the Committee	Consideration of the draft assessment
	23 <sup>rd</sup> session of the Working Group	To be determined
<b>2021</b>	9 <sup>th</sup> Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference	Consideration of the seventh pan-European environmental assessment

#### viii. **Budget narrative (\$188,000)**

The estimated budget for an indicator-based assessment, including a review of progress in establishing the Shared Environmental Information System and addressing the two conference themes is presented below. The scope and form of the assessment are fully dependent on the resources made available, with the proposed outline and process representing the maximum of what could be achieved with a full budget. A more limited budget would mean a more limited product:

- (a) The indicator-based and thematic assessment might be replaced by the status and perhaps trends;
- (b) The review of progress in establishing SEIS would be maintained;
- (c) The drafting group might be smaller and unable to meet face-to-face at all;
- (d) The synthesis report might be produced in a less attractive format, using standard desktop software.

#### **1. Consultants and Experts: \$ 92,000**

##### (a) *International consultants*

2 international consultants for drafting, coordination of inputs and preparation of the thematic perspectives, with possible substitution by stipends for experts and/or institutions:

A4 – review and narrative (6.5 work-months) x (\$8000 per month) = \$60,000.

##### (b) *Regional consultant*

1 regional consultant for data collection and to provide additional support to coordination:

A3 – data collection (3 work-months), A4 – review (1 work-month), A6 – consult and review (2 work-months) x (\$4000 per month) = \$24,000

##### (c) *Consultant travel*

Missions by 2 international consultants to join author and coordination meetings, especially in support of activities A2 – identify drivers (2 x 1 mission) and A4 – review (2 x 1 mission). (\$2,000 average mission cost) x (4 missions) = \$8,000.

#### **2. Travel of participants: \$ 24,000**

Travel of UN staff and other experts to author meetings in support of activities A2 (6 x 1 mission) and A4 (6 x 1 mission). (\$2,000 average mission cost) x (12 missions) = \$24,000

#### **3. Contractual services (120): \$ 50,000**

Contractual services in support of activity A6 (design, graphics, lay-out) = 30,000; in support of activity A6 (translation into Russian) = 20,000. Activity A7 not covered.

#### **4. Programme support costs \$ 21,580**

Programme support costs at 13% are applicable to all expenditure.