

Economic Commission for Europe

Committee on Environmental Policy

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Reform of the UN planning and budgeting process

Information paper No.6

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Reform of the UN planning and budgeting process

Note by the secretariat

1. In its resolution A/72/266 “Shifting the management paradigm in the United Nations”, the General Assembly (GA) approved the proposed change from a biennial to an annual budget period on a trial basis, beginning with the programme budget for 2020, and requested the Secretary-General to conduct a review of changes to the budgetary cycle in 2022, following the completion of the first full budgetary cycle. The General Assembly further decided to review at its seventy-seventh session, with a view to taking a final decision, the implementation of the annual budget.
2. The Proposed Programme Budget of the Organization will consist of the following three parts:
 - a) Part I: the plan outline, which presents the long-term priorities and the objectives of the Organization;
 - b) Part II: the programme plan and programme performance information for programmes and subprogrammes; and
 - c) Part III: the post and non-post resource requirements for programmes and subprogrammes.
3. Part I will be prepared by the secretariat at the UN Headquarters, and submitted to the General Assembly through the Committee for Programme and Coordination as a separate document. Parts II and III will be prepared by Secretariat Departments (“budget sections”), including ECE, on an annual basis. They will be submitted to the General Assembly through the Committee for Programme and Coordination (Part II) and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (Part III).
4. The first annual proposed programme budget will be prepared for 2020.
5. Based on the UN Controller’s instructions issued in late December 2018, the ECE secretariat prepared the proposed programme budget for 2020 of subprogramme 1 Environment which is shared for comments with the Committee on Environmental Policy. Modified as appropriate, the proposed programme budget of subprogramme 1 will subsequently be submitted as part of the ECE budget proposal to the Committee for Programme and Coordination and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions at their respective sessions in mid-2019. Their conclusions and recommendations therein will be transmitted to the General Assembly at its seventy-fourth session in 2019 when it considers the Secretary-General’s proposed programme budget for 2020.

6. Annexes I and II provide extracts from the draft ECE proposed programme budget for 2020 “Part II. Programme plan and programme performance information” related to subprogramme 1. Both the programme plan and supplementary information contained in the annexes were reviewed by the ECE Executive Committee and the Bureau of the Committee on Environmental policy.

Draft ECE proposed programme budget for 2020
Part II. Programme plan and programme performance information

Programme of work

Subprogramme 1: Environment



A. Objective

1. The objective, to which this subprogramme contributes, is to improve environmental governance and performance throughout the ECE region for safeguarding the environment and human health.

B. Alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals

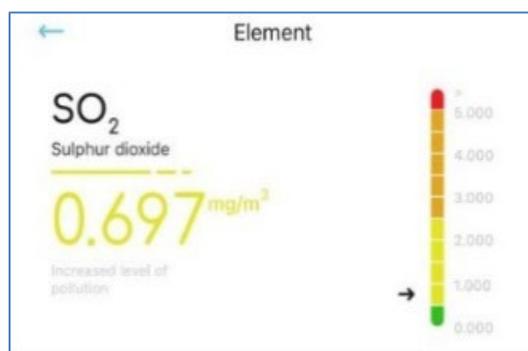
2. Given its broad scope, the objective is aligned with all Sustainable Development Goals, especially Goals 3, 6, 11, 12, 13, and 17.

3. Alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals serves as a framework for contributing to the objective of the subprogramme. Within this framework, the subprogramme will develop cross-sectoral activities with other ECE subprogrammes where there is complementarity between the respective SDGs and targets in line with the nexus areas described in paragraph 10 above.

C. Highlighted actual result in 2018

Environmental Performance Reviews show increased public awareness for air quality

In 2018, the environmental performance of both Kazakhstan and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia was reviewed for the third time under the ECE Environmental Performance Review (EPR) Programme. Based on requests by the Governments of these two countries, ECE teams of international experts from a wide range of countries and organizations visited each of the countries and reviewed progress. The reviews are to help countries identify key environmental challenges, evaluate advances on relevant SDGs and establish concrete recommendations to improve environmental sustainability across all sectors.



The EPR of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia assessed progress since 2011 on air quality, water management, biodiversity, forestry and protected areas, waste and chemical management, climate change and greening the economy. The review also assessed the country's progress towards relevant targets and indicators of the SDGs, examined how the SDGs are being adapted to the national context and put into practice, whether the necessary resources have been allocated and responsibilities are clear, what obstacles have been encountered when targeting the Goals and what concrete results have already been achieved.



Figure 20.2. Public awareness-raising on air quality through the AirKz smartphone application

In Kazakhstan, the EPR focused on the country's progress in greening its economy, particularly the energy, industry, agriculture and health sectors. It evaluated past efforts and recommended to the Government actions to address air pollution, improve water quality, reduce waste and manage protected areas.

Building on the analysis of progress made in implementing the recommendations from the second EPRs of the countries, the third reviews resulted in about 120 practical recommendations to improve environmental governance and boost national efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Both countries have acted upon the majority of recommendations from the previous EPRs. As illustrated in the review of Kazakhstan, earlier recommendations in the area of public access to environmental information and participation in decision making resulted in improved national legislation and its application in practice. For example, this is evidenced by enhanced public information on the quality of air and provision of real-time data from measuring selected air pollutants. Kazhydromet, an agency under the Ministry of Energy of Kazakhstan, has developed an application for smartphones called "AirKz" and launched it in January 2018 (as illustrated in figure 20.2). This and other actions taken by the Government foster public awareness and debate on air pollution, which may also influence public policy.

The result of applying the EPR methodology demonstrates progress made in 2018 towards collective attainment of the objective of the subprogramme. The methodology has continued to attract the attention of countries outside ECE region, leading to requests for a transfer of know-how from ECE to other regions. For example, in 2018, Mongolia launched its Environmental Performance Review carried out by ECE in cooperation with ESCAP.

4. The planned result for 2018, improved environmental performance of interested countries, referred to in the proposed programme budget for 2018-2019, was achieved as planned, as evidenced by the implementation of earlier EPR recommendations by the two reviewed countries. With the EPRs, the subprogramme contributed to the nexus areas on sustainable use of natural resources; sustainable and smart cities; and measuring and monitoring SDGs implementation.

D. Highlighted planned result for 2020

Lifetime Extension of Nuclear Power Plants

Despite its Parties having recognized the valuable contribution of the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (or Espoo Convention) to the achievement of the SDGs, challenges remain in the application of the Convention, both in specific subregions and for addressing key types of economic development. One area where agreement has yet to be reached is on the applicability of the Convention to decisions on the extension of the lifetime of nuclear power plants. The next decade is expected to see many such decisions being taken each year in the ECE region, as a number of operational European reactors will reach their original technical design life-time.

At present, countries have differing views about when such decisions should be subject to the procedure set out in the Convention. That procedure includes public participation and the notification of other Parties that might be affected by the decision. The workplan adopted by the Convention's Parties for 2017-2020 addresses such challenges.

In response, for 2020, the subprogramme plans to revise guidelines on environmental impact assessment in transboundary context in Central Asia. In addition, it plans to prepare guidance that will help Parties to the Convention to decide whether and how to apply the Convention to decisions on the lifetime extension of nuclear power plants.

In 2020, at their next regular meeting, Parties will take stock on the delivery of the above planned work. The expected result would be the broad use of these guidance materials, which will clarify and strengthen the application of the Convention, thus more closely aligning economic development with the objectives of the 2030 Agenda. The result, if achieved, will be evidenced by the possible consensus decision on the adoption of the guidance materials, as shown in the figure below.

2018	2019	2020
Absence of guidelines on the lifetime extension of nuclear power plants	Development of guidelines on the lifetime extension of nuclear power plants	Guidelines on the lifetime extension of nuclear power plants in place and contributing to decision-making process on the matter

Figure 20.3: Guidelines on the lifetime extension of nuclear power plants

The expected result, if achieved, will demonstrate progress made in 2020 towards the collective attainment of the objective of the subprogramme. It will contribute to the nexus areas on sustainable use of natural resources; and sustainable and smart cities.

5. The subprogramme will continue to be guided by all mandates entrusted to it, which provide the legislative framework for its deliverables.

E. Deliverables for the period 2018–2020

6. The below table lists all deliverables, by category and subcategory, for the period 2018-2020 that would contribute to the attainment of the objective stated above.

	2018	2018	2019	2020
<i>Category</i>	<i>Planned</i>	<i>Actual</i>	<i>Planned</i>	<i>Planned</i>
Quantified deliverables				
A. Facilitation of the intergovernmental process and expert bodies				
Parliamentary documentation (number of documents)	310	117	231	211
Substantive services for meetings (number of three-hour meetings)	264	223	283	251
B. Generation and transfer of knowledge				
Seminars, workshops and training events (number of days)	36	83	46	48
Publications (number of publications)	7	7	14	11
Non-quantified deliverables				
C. Substantive deliverables				
Consultation, advice and advocacy				
D. Communication deliverables				
Outreach programmes, special events and information materials				
External and media relations				
Digital platforms and multimedia content				

F. Most significant relative variances of deliverables

Variances between the actual and planned figures in 2018

7. The variance in Facilitation of the intergovernmental process and expert bodies was mainly driven by Parliamentary documentation, owing to (i) a decision of the Committee on Environmental Policy to move its 2018 annual session to January 2019; and (ii) decisions of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters and of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers, which enable the Parties and members of the public to submit ad hoc communications and requests for review of their respective compliance committees. The number and volume of these communications and requests is impossible to predict at the budget planning stage.

8. The variance in Facilitation of the intergovernmental process and expert bodies was driven also by Substantive services for meetings, owing to (i) the decision of the Committee on Environmental Policy to move its 2018 annual session to January 2019; and (ii) a decision of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters on the Work programme for 2018–2021, which resulted in the decreased number of meetings days of the Task Force on Public Participation in Decision-making in 2018.

9. The variance in Generation and transfer of knowledge was mainly driven by Seminars, workshops and training events, owing to the requests from Parties to the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution and availability of extra-budgetary resources at the end of 2018.

Variances between the planned figures for 2019 and 2020

10. The variance in Facilitation of the intergovernmental process and expert bodies is driven by Parliamentary documentation, owing to the decision of the Committee on Environmental Policy to move its 2018 annual session to January 2019 which resulted in the increased number of documents for two Committee sessions in 2019.

11. The variance in Facilitation of the intergovernmental process and expert bodies is driven also by Substantive services for meetings, owing to (i) decisions of the Committee on Environmental Policy to move the date of its 2018 annual session to January 2019, as well as to shorten the duration of its annual sessions to up to six half-day meetings; and (ii) the cycles of conferences (meetings) of the parties to the multilateral environmental agreements.

28. The variance in Generation and transfer of knowledge is mainly driven by Publications, owing to the cycles of conferences (meetings) of the parties to the multilateral environmental agreements, as well as high-level meetings of other processes, which requested the issuing of these publications before the respective meetings.

Draft ECE proposed programme budget for 2020
Part II. Programme plan and programme performance information
Supplementary information

Subprogramme 1
Environment

S.20.1. The subprogramme will continue to be guided by all mandates entrusted to it as detailed in the list below.

List of mandates:

General Assembly resolutions

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| 27/2994 | United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (observance of the World Environment Day) |
| 47/193 | Observance of World Day for Water |
| 62/68 | Consideration of prevention of transboundary harm from hazardous activities and allocation of loss in the case of such harm |
| 64/200 | International Strategy for Disaster Reduction |
| 67/291 | Sanitation for All |
| 69/172 | Human rights in the administration of justice |
| 69/215 | International Decade for Action, “Water for Life”, 2005-2015, and further efforts to achieve the sustainable development of water resources |
| 69/235 | Industrial development cooperation |
| 70/169 | The human right to water and sanitation |
| 70/209 | United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014) |
| 71/222 | International Decade for Action, “Water for Sustainable Development”, 2018-2028 |
| 71/313
E/CN.3/2017/2,
Annex III | Work of the Statistical Commission pertaining to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development- Adoption of SDG global indicator framework and the Report of the Inter-agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators |
| 72/222 | Education for sustainable Development in the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable development |
| 73/226 | Midterm comprehensive review of the implementation of the International Decade for Action, “Water for Sustainable Development”, 2018–2028 |

Economic Commission for Europe decisions

- [CEP/AC.13/2005/3/Rev.1](#) UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development adopted at the High-Level Meeting of Environment and Education Ministries, 2005
- [ECE/BELGRADE.CONF/2007/4/Add.1](#) Statement on Education for Sustainable Development by the Ministers of Education and of the Environment of the UNECE region adopted at the joint session on education for development of the Sixth Ministerial Conference entitled “Environment for Europe”, 2007
- [ECE/AC.21/2014/2](#) Report of the High-level Meeting on Transport, Health and Environment, 2014
- [ECE/ASTANA.CONF/2011/2/Add.1](#) Declaration: “Save water, grow green!” by Ministers of the region of UNECE, report of the Seventh Ministerial Conference entitled “Environment for Europe”, 2011
- [ECE/BATUMI.CONF/2016/2/Add.1](#) Declaration: “Greener, cleaner, smarter!” by Ministers of the region of ECE, report of the Eighth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference, 2016
- [ECE/BATUMI.CONF/2016/2/Add.2](#) Batumi Ministerial Statement on Education for Sustainable Development adopted by the High-level Meeting of Education and Environment Ministries of the region of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, report of the Eighth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference, 2016
- [ECE/AC.21/2019/2](#) Report of the fifth High-level Meeting on Transport, Health and Environment, 2019

Relevant decisions of the governing bodies of the multilateral environmental agreements of the Economic Commission for Europe

- [ECE/EB.AIR/14/0 and Add.1](#) Report of the Executive Body for the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution on its thirty-seventh session.
- [ECE/MP.PRTR/2017/6 and Add.1](#) Report of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers to the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters on its third session
- [ECE/MP.PP/2017/2 and Add.1](#) Report of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention) on its sixth session
- [ECE/MP.PP/2017/16 - ECE/MP.PRTR/2017/2 and Add.1](#) Report of the joint High-level Segment of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention) on its sixth session and the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers on its third session, and the Budva

Declaration on environmental democracy for our sustainable future adopted by the two Meetings of the Parties

- [ECE/MP.EIA/23](#) - [ECE/MP.EIA/S EA/7 and Add.1, Add.2 and Add.3](#) Report of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context on its seventh session and of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment on its third session.
- [ECE/CP.TEIA/38 and Add.1](#) Report of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents on its tenth meeting
- [ECE/MP.WAT/49 and Add.1 and Add.2](#) Report of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes on its seventh session
- [ECE/MP.WAT/54 and Add.1 and Add.2](#) Report of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes on its eighth session
- [ECE/MP.WH/13 and Add.1 and Add.2](#) Report of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Water and Health to the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes on its fourth session

S.20.2. The planned and actual deliverables of 2018, and the deliverables planned for 2019 and 2020, as guided by the mandates, are presented in the table below:

<i>Deliverables</i>	<i>2018 plan</i>	<i>2018 actual</i>	<i>2019 plan</i>	<i>2020 plan</i>
Quantified deliverables				
A. Facilitation of the intergovernmental process and expert bodies:				
Parliamentary documentation (Number of documents)	310	117	231	211
1. Parliamentary documentation for Committee on Environmental Policy and subsidiary bodies	25	15	85	82
2. Parliamentary documentation for Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes and subsidiary bodies and Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Water and Health and subsidiary bodies	39	17	34	8
3. Parliamentary documentation for Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents and subsidiary bodies	24	17	0	18
4. Parliamentary documentation for Executive Body for the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution and subsidiary bodies	34	34	34	34
5. Parliamentary documentation for Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context and subsidiary bodies and Meeting of the Parties to the Espoo Convention serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment and subsidiary bodies	8	8	22	24
6. Parliamentary documentation for Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters and subsidiary bodies and Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Register and subsidiary bodies	169	20	45	38

<i>Deliverables</i>	<i>2018 plan</i>	<i>2018 actual</i>	<i>2019 plan</i>	<i>2020 plan</i>
7. Parliamentary documentation for High-level Meeting on Transport, Health and Environment and subsidiary bodies	11	6	11	7
Substantive services for meetings (Number of 3-hour meetings)	264	223	283	251
8. Meetings of the Committee on Environmental Policy and subsidiary bodies	21	16	50	40
9. Meetings of the Parties to the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes and subsidiary bodies and Meetings of the Parties to the Protocol on Water and Health and subsidiary bodies	48	40	57	47
10. Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents and subsidiary bodies	40	36	21	30
11. Meetings of the Executive Body for the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution and subsidiary bodies	30	26	30	30
12. Meetings of the Parties to the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context and subsidiary bodies and Meetings of the Parties to the Espoo Convention serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment and subsidiary bodies	36	36	50	33
13. Meetings of the Parties to the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters and subsidiary bodies and Meetings of the Parties to the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Register and subsidiary bodies	85	65	69	67
14. Meetings of the High-level Meeting on Transport, Health and Environment and subsidiary bodies	4	4	6	4
B. Generation and transfer of knowledge:				
Seminars, workshops and training events (Number of days)	36	83	46	48
15. Workshops on environmental issues, including on air quality, water, industrial safety, public participation, environmental assessment, monitoring and performance and education for sustainable development, for Government officials and other stakeholders in the UNECE region to improve environmental governance and performance	36	83	46	48
Publications (Number of publications)	7	7	14	11
16. Guidance, policy briefs, good practices publications on environmental issues and multilateral environmental agreements administered by the subprogramme	2	2	8	6
17. Progress reports and performance reviews on environmental issues	4	4	2	2
18. Reprint of the multilateral environmental agreements administered by the subprogramme, after amendments enter into force	1	1	1	1
19. Brochures on the multilateral environmental agreements administered by the subprogramme	0	0	3	2
Non-quantified deliverables				
C. Substantive deliverables:				
• Consultation, advice and advocacy: Advisory services for Government officials and other stakeholders of countries members of the Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia on water, energy and other environmental issues				
D. Communication deliverables:				
• Outreach programmes, special events and information materials: Environmental performance review (synopsis and highlights); Electronic newsletter of the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment				
• External and media relations: Press releases on environmental issues				
• Digital platforms and multimedia content: Update and maintenance of a website of the subprogramme				