



# Economic and Social Council

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## Economic Commission for Europe Committee on Environmental Policy

**Twenty-fourth session**  
Geneva, 29–31 January 2019  
Item 6 of the provisional agenda  
**Environmental performance reviews**

### **Extension of the mandate of the Expert Group on Environmental Performance Reviews**

#### **Note by the secretariat**

##### *Summary*

The Committee on Environmental Policy, at its twentieth session in October 2014, highly appreciated the work of the Expert Group on Environmental Performance Reviews and adopted the renewed mandate of the Expert Group for 2015–2018 (ECE/CEP/2014/13). The terms of reference stipulate that the mandate of the Expert Group covers a four-year period, from 2015 to the end of 2018.

The present document contains a review of the Expert Group's achievements for the mandated period, and presents, in an annex, a draft decision on the renewal of the Group's mandate for a further four-year period, for the consideration of the Committee on Environmental Policy at its twenty-fourth session.

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## **Achievements of the Expert Group on Environmental Performance Reviews in 2015–2018**

1. To implement its terms of reference for the period 2015–2018 (ECE/CEP/2014/13, annex), the Expert Group on Environmental Performance Reviews undertook a series of activities focusing on improving environmental performance in the countries of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia and, on an exceptional basis, in Mongolia, a member State of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. The Expert Group reported annually to the Committee on Environmental Policy on the progress made on those activities. The main results are presented below.

2. At its twenty-sixth meeting, held in Geneva in October 2015, the Expert Group examined the report of the third review of Belarus, comprising 14 chapters, and agreed with the Belarus delegation on 64 recommendations. It also considered the report of the third review of Georgia, comprising 14 chapters, and agreed with the Georgia delegation on 67 recommendations. At its twenty-seventh meeting, held in Geneva in December 2016, it examined the report of the third review of Tajikistan, comprising 15 chapters, and the report of the third review of Bulgaria, comprising 10 chapters, and agreed with the relevant delegations on 83 and 47 recommendations, respectively.

3. At its twenty-eighth meeting, held in Geneva in October 2017, the Expert Group reviewed the report of the third review of Albania, comprising 11 chapters, the report of the third review of Bosnia and Herzegovina, comprising 12 chapters, and the report of the review of Mongolia, comprising 15 chapters. It agreed with relevant delegations on 58, 72 and 85 recommendations, respectively. At its twenty-ninth meeting, to be held in Geneva in January 2019, the Expert Group will review the reports of the third reviews of Kazakhstan and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, comprising 13 and 11 chapters, respectively.

4. At the Eighth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference (Batumi, Georgia, 8–10 June 2016), ministers highlighted the role that the Environmental Performance Review Programme could play in supporting the achievement and monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals in the pan-European region (ECE/BATUMI.CONF/2016/2/Add.1, para. 9). In response, the Expert Group on Environmental Performance Reviews provided guidance to the ECE secretariat and the Committee on Environmental Policy on the process of addressing Sustainable Development Goals in the reviews. At an extended meeting, held back to back with its twenty-seventh session in December 2016, the Expert Group prepared a document on the role of environmental performance reviews in supporting the achievement and monitoring of Sustainable Development Goals in the pan-European region (ECE/CEP/2017/11). The Committee considered and approved the document at its twenty-third session in 2017.

5. In October 2017, at an open-ended meeting back to back with its twenty-eighth session, the Expert Group discussed the experience of integrating the Sustainable Development Goals in the framework of three reviews conducted in 2017 (the third reviews of Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina and the review of Mongolia). It highly valued this first experience and provided recommendations on how the review of environmental performance review-relevant goals and targets could be improved in future reviews.

### **Future work**

6. As the current mandate of the Expert Group expires at the end of 2018, the secretariat prepared revised terms of reference for the Group, which are annexed to the present note. The Committee on Environmental Policy is invited to adopt these terms of reference and to transmit them to the Executive Committee for endorsement.

## Annex

### **Mandate and terms of reference for the Expert Group on Environmental Performance Reviews for 2019–2022**

1. The Expert Group on Environmental Performance Reviews is mandated until the end of 2022 to support the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) Environmental Performance Review Programme in accordance with the terms of reference set out below.

#### **Membership**

2. The core membership of the Expert Group for 2019–2022 should consist of 10 to 14 participants, with due consideration given to a balanced geographical representation from the countries in the region. When new members are chosen, due regard should be given to experts from countries that have recently been reviewed and to those that have undergone or will soon undergo reviews.

3. Members of the Committee on Environmental Policy may participate in the meetings of the Expert Group as observers and act as advisers to review the report and its recommendations.

4. In addition, experts nominated by members of the Committee on Environmental Policy, and agreed by the members of the Expert Group in consultation with the secretariat, may participate in the meetings of the Expert Group on any country under review.

#### **Terms of reference**

5. The mandate of the core members of the Expert Group is renewed for a period of four years for the purposes of:

(a) Carrying out the expert review process, prior to the peer review to be undertaken by the Committee on Environmental Policy;

(b) Providing guidance to the ECE secretariat and the Committee on Environmental Policy on all substantive and organizational matters arising in the implementation of the ECE Environmental Performance Review Programme;

(c) Assisting the ECE secretariat in coordinating the Environmental Performance Review Programme with processes that have a bearing on it that are under way in other international institutions, inter alia, the European Environment Agency, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the United Nations Environment Programme and the World Health Organization.

6. The guidance of the Expert Group to the ECE secretariat and Committee on Environmental Policy will include:

(a) Identification of opportunities and requirements for improving the conduct of reviews, including in response to existing and emerging environmental challenges and global processes such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

(b) Assessment of environmental trends relevant to the environmental performance review process in non-OECD member countries, including through the organization of joint meetings, seminars and workshops at the regional and subregional levels, where these are demand-driven.

7. The core members of the Expert Group are nominated by the ECE member States. The secretariat will invite international institutions pursuing related work to participate in the work of the Expert Group.
8. While taking decisions on an environmental performance review report under review and its recommendations, the Expert Group shall take into consideration the inputs by the reviewing countries, the members of the Committee on Environmental Policy and experts delegated by the Committee who participate in the meeting.
9. The Expert Group shall elect its chair and vice-chair(s).
10. The Expert Group shall report annually on its activities to the Committee on Environmental Policy and may raise any issue with the Committee on Environmental Policy that it deems necessary for the implementation of its mandate.

### **Timetable**

11. The mandate of the Expert Group will cover a four-year period, from the beginning of 2019 to the end of 2022.
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