



**Committee on Environment Policy  
United Nations Economic Commission for Europe**

## **Self-Evaluation Report**

**Assessment of procedural steps for the preparation and conducting of the  
environmental performance reviews**

**Operational Activities and Review Section  
Environment Division**

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### **Executive Summary**

This report evaluates the process of carrying out the ECE Environmental Performance Review (EPR) programme. The main purpose of the evaluation is to examine the strengths and gaps to be filled in by the programme. The objective is to identify possible measures that could be taken to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of implementing the programme. This evaluation is a tool for internal use by the ECE EPR secretariat and its findings will be shared with other stakeholders in the EPR programme, especially members of the ECE EGEP and the CEP.

The evaluation is based on the experiences made in the course of implementing seven country reviews during the period 2009-2011. The evaluation involves views and comments collected through specific questionnaires and/or interviews from key stakeholders in the EPR review process. The quality and impact of EPR is outside the scope of this evaluation report.

The evaluation covers all phases in the review process and, based on the most important findings and conclusions, ends with a series of recommendations addressed to the ECE EPR secretariat. This report was not formally edited.

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List of abbreviations

<b>CEP</b>	Committee on Environmental Policy
<b>EGEP</b>	Expert Group on Environmental Performance
<b>ESCWA</b>	Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
<b>EPR</b>	Environmental Performance Review
<b>TOR</b>	Terms of reference
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>ECE</b>	Economic Commission for Europe
<b>UNEG</b>	UN Evaluation Group

## **I. Introduction**

### 1) Purpose and scope of the self-evaluation

The object of the evaluation presented in this report is the process of carrying out the ECE Environmental Performance Reviews (EPR). The main purpose of the evaluation is to examine the main phases of the production process in order to gauge to what extent the corresponding activities and major actors involved achieve their goals. The evaluation also aims at providing guidance in terms of actions that could be taken to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the process. An effective and efficient organization of the EPR process, in turn, is a necessary condition for ensuring that the overall goal of the EPR programme can be achieved, namely to help reviewed countries to improve their environmental performance. In line with the terms of reference (annex 1), the evaluation does not aim at an assessment of the quality of EPR reports and their impact. This self-evaluation is mainly a tool for internal use by the ECE EPR secretariat, but the findings may also be of interest to other stakeholders in the EPR programme, especially to members of the ECE EGEP and the CEP.

The evaluation is based on the experience gained during the review processes for seven countries during the period 2009-2011. These are (in alphabetical order) Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Tajikistan, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.

The structure of the report follows ECE guidelines on self-evaluations. The report was prepared by the ECE EPR secretariat with the assistance of a consultant.

### 2) Methodology

The evaluation involved the collection of information through specific questionnaires (Annexes 5 to 8) addressed to each of the following groups:

- 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.

The list of persons who responded to the questionnaires is contained in annex 9. The questionnaires were sent out by the ECE EPR secretariat by e-mail on 1 July 2011. The deadline for sending back the filled in questionnaires was 15 July 2011. The deadline was extended to 1 August 2011. A reminder was sent before the expiration of the second deadline. All answers to the questionnaires were treated as confidential, i.e. none of the findings reported below are attributed to a specific person. In total 45 persons out of 143 responded to the questionnaires.

There were 28 out of 46 international experts that responded to the questionnaire. This is a response rate of 61 per cent. The response rate to questionnaires sent to the members of the ECE EGEP was 80 per cent (8 out of 10 persons). The feedback from the CEP was quite low. Only 7 out of 80 persons filled in the questionnaire (about 9 per cent). Only two out the seven

national coordinators (28.5 per cent) that helped in the preparation and conduct of EPRs in their countries responded to the questionnaire.

In addition, individual interviews with the members of ECE EPR secretariat were conducted by the consultant.

### 3) Background information on the EPR Programme

EPRs are analytical studies prepared by a team of international experts that is assembled by the ECE EPR secretariat. EPRs are a voluntary exercise and carried out only at the request of the country. The EPR programme has been implemented since 1994.

#### *Main objectives of the EPR programme*

The EPR programme is based on the concept of peer review. A peer review conducted within the framework of an international organization can be described as the systematic examination and assessment of the performance of a State by other States in a wide range of policy areas such as economics, international trade and environment. The ultimate goal is to develop recommendations that help the reviewed State “improve its policy making, adopt best practices, and comply with established standards and principles.”<sup>1</sup> A key feature of peer reviews is that they are objective, fact-based assessments of policies in a certain area by a team of experts, which gives them credibility and explains their influence<sup>2</sup>.

The main objectives of the ECE EPR programme are

- To assist countries to improve their management of the environment and associated environmental performance (reduced pollution burden; sustainable development of natural resources) by making concrete recommendations for better policy design and implementation
- To promote the exchange of information among countries about policies and experiences
- To help integrating environmental policies into sector-specific economic policies (such as for agriculture, energy, transport and health)
- To promote greater accountability to other countries and to the public
- To strengthen cooperation with the international community.

Each report on environmental performance contains a number of standard chapters that are complemented by chapters dealing with special issues of importance to the country reviewed. Recommendations contained in the review (adopted during the peer review) are building on the experiences gained in ECE member countries with environmental policy development and implementation.

#### *Governance*

The EPR programme is under the governance of the ECE Committee on Environmental Policy (CEP). The CEP mandates the ECE EPR secretariat to prepare an EPR and carries out the formal peer review of the report.

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<sup>1</sup> Pagani, F. Peer Review: A Tool for Co-operation and Change, 2002. OECD, SG/LEG(2002)1. 11 September 2002.

<sup>2</sup> Lehtonen, M., OECD Environmental Performance Review Programme – Accountability (f)or Learning? *Evaluation*, Vol.11 (2), pp. 169-188. Lehtonen, M., Environmental Policy Integration through the OECD Peer Reviews: Integrating Economy to the Environment or Environment to the Economy? Paper presented at the IHDC conference, 3-4 December 2004, Berlin.

The peer review by the CEP is supported by a prior review of the draft report by the ECE EGEP. The ECE EGEP was established by the CEP in 1996. The terms of reference of the ECE EGEP are set by the CEP (see Annex 2). The ECE EGEP has traditionally been composed of 10-14 members, which are appointed by the CEP for a period of 2 years.

Besides carrying out the expert review process, the ECE EGEP has also the task to provide guidance to the ECE EPR secretariat and the CEP on all substantive and organizational matters related to the implementation of the EPR programme. The ECE EGEP also assists the ECE EPR secretariat in coordinating the ECE EPR programme with existing processes and programmes undertaken in other international institutions (such as the OECD, EBRD, UNEP, World Bank, WHO, and EEA ) that have a bearing on the ECE EPR programme.

The ECE EPR programme has been motivated and inspired by a corresponding programme that was launched by the OECD for its member states in 1991. ECE was mandated by the second “Environment for Europe” Ministerial Conference (Lucerne, Switzerland, 1993) to extend the EPR programme to ECE member countries that were not covered by the OECD. The current focus of the ECE EPR programme is on countries of, Eastern Europe, Caucasus, Central Asia and South-Eastern Europe.

Most of the eligible ECE countries have now been reviewed twice, and the implementation of a third review cycle under the auspices of the ECE was adopted at the seventh “Environment for Europe” Ministerial Conference (Astana, Kazakhstan, 2011). With the current staff, it should be expected that the third cycle of EPR reviews will last approximately 9 years. During the upcoming third cycle, the work of the ECE EPR secretariat would benefit greatly from a potential extension of the Shared Environmental Information Systems (SEIS) to non-EEA ECE Member States and from building a database on core set of environmental indicators by the Joint Task Force on Environmental Indicators.

Beyond UNECE Member States, work is also under way to make the know-how of ECE as regards the EPR methodology available outside the ECE region, for example in Morocco and the ESCWA region.

#### *ECE EPR secretariat*

The ECE EPR secretariat, i.e. the EPR programme team in the Operational Activities and Review Section of the Environment Division, helps Member States to implement the EPR programme. The ECE EPR secretariat currently comprises the team leader (P4), two professionals at the P3 level, a research assistant at G6 level and 50 per cent of a programme assistant at G5 level.

Among the key tasks of the team are the preparation, organization and coordination of the review missions. After the review mission the focus is on the preparation of the draft report, based on substantive chapters prepared by the EPR review team, for the expert and peer review. Members of the ECE EPR secretariat, as well as other staff of ECE have been regularly participating in the production of EPR reports as members of the EPR review team with responsibility for drafting particular chapters of the reports.

#### *The major phases of the EPR process*

The process of carrying out an EPR can be divided into six major phases:

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

Each phase consists of a number of activities to be completed by various actors (annex 3). The main actors are the Government of the country under review, the ECE EPR secretariat, the EPR review team, the ECE EGEP and the CEP. During each phase of the EPR process there is an “output” to be achieved, which depends, however, on the timely and adequate completion of activities during the preceding phase.

Each EPR project is managed on the basis of an implementation plan (see an example in Annex 3) prepared by the ECE EPR secretariat in cooperation with the country. The key challenges are to ensure that all relevant activities are implemented during each phase, that the outputs are delivered in time and that the whole project is carried out in a cost-effective way, i.e. with an economical use of resources.

#### *Funding of the EPR Programme*

The core secretariat for the EPR programme is provided by ECE. However, the operational budget for the activities carried under the EPR Programme completely depends on extra-budgetary funds provided by potential donors directly to the EPR Trust Fund or through contributions in kind, mostly in the form of country experts provided by donors or international organizations.

The requirements in extrabudgetary funding for the review of any given country may range between USD 100,000 and 200,000, depending on a number of factors, such as mission costs, number of chapters, availability of country experts and fluctuations in currency exchange rates. This cost requirements cover the preparatory mission, fact-finding mission, consultancies, participation of representatives from the countries under review in the meeting of the ECE EGEP and the Peer Reviews that take place during the sessions of the CEP, the launch event and the translation and printing in local languages.

The fund-raising exercise requires considerable time and energy from the ECE EPR secretariat, which needs to perform quite frequently fundraising that takes two forms, general and more targeted. Twice a year the secretariat sends requests to potential donors to support the running of the general programme. In addition to general fund-raising and following the preparatory mission to a country that has expressed its wish to be reviewed, an email is sent to donor countries requesting funding as well as contributions in kind. Unlike general fundraising, these requests are targeted since the scope of the review and its potential costs become more concrete after the preparatory mission.

The most important determinant of the number of EPR Reviews undertaken per year is the capacity of the ECE EPR secretariat. Under current arrangements, the ECE EPR secretariat is designed to undertake a maximum of 2 reviews per year. In recent years, due to programmatic obligations but also high demand by countries in the run-up to the 2011 Astana Ministerial Conference, the pace of the EPR Programme increased to cover 3 countries in 2010 and 4 in 2011.

At the same time, it should be recalled that with the current capacity of the ECE EPR secretariat (3 P-staff), the third cycle concerning 18 countries will last approximately 9 years. The duration of the cycle could be reduced to about 6 years should 3 reviews of ECE Member States be organized a year. In addition to its current duties the ECE EPR team is facing challenges to: create and maintain an EPR web-portal; organize a second launch event for each new publication, in addition to the existing practice of launch events in the reviewed countries; prepare executive summaries of EPR reports for CEP; promote sharing of ECE know-how on EPR methodology to countries outside the ECE region. The implementation of the above tasks would require additional resources including the provision of the ECE EPR secretariat with an additional professional post.

## **II. The EPR process and its evaluation**

### 1) Preparations

The main goals of the preparation phase are to define the scope of the review, usually during a preparatory mission to the country to be reviewed; establish an EPR review team; and collect relevant documentation and data so that the EPR review team is well informed about environmental problems and environmental policy in the country.

#### *National coordinator*

The effectiveness of the preparatory phase depends significantly on close cooperation of the country reviewed. One of the first important steps is the nomination of a national coordinator in the national environmental authority who liaises with the ECE EPR secretariat on all major issues during the whole EPR process.

Experience shows that 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, who is in almost all cases a person of adequate seniority and experience to support the mission. Despite this positive experience, national coordinators have not always been able to deliver the expected outcomes, their work sometimes being hindered by weak communication channels and poor governance.

#### *Preparatory mission*

After the decision has been taken to carry out an EPR, the ECE EPR secretariat organizes a preparatory mission, which, in general, is scheduled for two to three working days. It takes place, in general, some 3 to 4 months before the review mission. Before the mission, the ECE EPR secretariat prepares, in consultation with the country to be reviewed, a draft implementation plan for the whole EPR process, which indicates the dates for each of the major steps in the process and the roles and responsibilities of the major actors involved.

The main objectives of the preparatory mission are to:

- inform the decision-makers and national experts about the EPR process and roles and responsibilities of the country under review;
- consult with national experts to better understand environmental problems in the country;
- consult and agree with the Government on an outline of the EPR, which specifies the main issues and the various chapters of the report;
- discuss the implementation plan with the Government, notably as regards the dates of the review mission, the peer review as well as the launching of the report.

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- start collecting documentation and data that are relevant to the major issues to be covered by the EPR;
  - agree with the Government on relevant documentation and data to be submitted to the ECE EPR secretariat by a specific deadline after the preparatory mission.

### *Implementation plan*

After return from the preparatory mission, the ECE EPR secretariat finalizes the implementation plan and sends it back, together with the agreed structure (chapters) of the review, to the national authority responsible for environmental policy for official confirmation. The total time planned from the preparatory mission to the launch event depends on a number of factors such as the dates for the review mission that are suitable for the country, the number and complexity of issues (chapters) to be dealt with and the human resources available for the review. An example of the implementation plan is contained in annex 4.

It is also important to make sure that the completion of the report is harmonized with the meeting calendar of the CEP. A too long period of time between the completion of the report on the one hand and the expert and peer review on the other hand risks reducing the relevance of the EPR because of policy developments that may have taken place in the meantime. The expected time planned for the implementation of an EPR is based on the cumulative experience gained with past EPRs. This allows estimating an expected production time, which was typically within a range of some 19 to 30 months.

Most phases of the reviews were completed within the planned timeframe, with the exception of launch events (see a relevant section later in the report).

### *National focal points*

A step as consequential as the nomination of the national coordinator is the nomination for each chapter of the report of a national focal point, who will be the main counterpart to the expert of the EPR review team. The main tasks and duties of national focal points are listed in terms of reference prepared by the ECE EPR secretariat.

These include:

- setting aside sufficient time for consultations with members of the EPR review team;
- preparing written answers to questionnaires submitted before the review mission;
- helping international experts to meet with other relevant national experts;
- after the mission, helping clarifying outstanding issues and providing comments on the draft report.

At this stage of the process, the country should have nominated all national focal points for each of the EPR review chapters, so that they can be effectively “twinned” with the corresponding member of the EPR review team.

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.

### *Establishing the EPR review team*

Once the structure of the EPR has been determined and the date of the review mission agreed, the ECE EPR secretariat puts together an EPR review team. This involves requesting ECE member States to provide funds for co-financing the project and/or allocate competent experts as an in-kind contribution. Most EPR review teams consist of experts provided by ECE member Governments and international organizations, staff members of ECE, and consultants. In general, the team is established some 2-3 months before the EPR review mission. In some cases pledges for in-kind contributions of experts are not honored, something that creates additional stresses on the ECE EPR secretariat to fill out in short notice vacant spots in the review team.

The ECE EPR secretariat assists the preparation of the EPR review team with a concise “Manual for international experts”, which provides general guidance with regard to the purpose of the review, the kind of output expected from the experts, the drafting process and the structure of the chapter, the conduct of the review mission, as well as deadlines for submission of the chapter to the ECE EPR secretariat after the review mission. There are also guidelines concerning the writing style. The ECE EPR secretariat routinely provides new and more experienced experts with guidance and advice during their engagement with the review of a country. Also experienced experts from earlier missions are encouraged to share their insights and experiences on the review with new experts.

Each member of the EPR review team is, moreover, given specific terms of reference (TOR) for the chapter to be produced for the report. The TOR indicate the major issues to be covered and the thematic sequence and structure of the chapter. The aim is to define a general framework for the exploratory work to be accomplished and indicate major areas that should be worth exploring. Experts are then free to make some adjustments to the proposed structure of the chapter, reflecting specific problems in their area and in the light of information and data collected.

Although relatively standardized, the TOR were found to be helpful by members of the EPR review teams. About two-thirds (19 out of 28) of respondents judged them to be very useful. The large majority (24 out of 28) indicated that they largely followed the TOR in structuring their chapter. The TOR were also judged to be informative because they refer to other chapters of the report that deal with related relevant issues. This, in turn, facilitates further discussions and coordination with the corresponding expert(s) on these matters.

### *Collection of information and data*

Substantive preparation of the EPR review team involves collecting and analyzing relevant data and information material from various sources, for example national Government sector, NGOs, international organizations and academic research. The information collected should allow each expert to become acquainted with the existing environmental problems, the legal and institutional framework for environmental policy and other relevant facts. Indeed, the review mission itself is not intended to be only a fact-finding mission but rather to be devoted to consultations with national experts focusing on the assessment of environmental performance.

While each member of the EPR review team is responsible for collecting the relevant information material in her/his area, this process needs to be supported by the country, which should – as agreed during the preparatory mission - supply documentation on relevant policy, legal and regulatory instruments, and other official documents and data to the ECE EPR secretariat sufficiently in time before the review mission. This is an essential condition for the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the review mission, especially because often language barriers necessitate additional time for the study and analysis of such materials.

Countries often failed to meet their commitments in this respect. 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. As stipulated in the terms of reference for the national focal points, these questionnaires should be answered, in cooperation with competent other national experts, before the review mission. 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 the striking feature is that 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. Only one EPR review team member judged the quality of responses to have been “good”. 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. One is that national focal points were too busy with their daily workload and did not therefore find the necessary time to respond to the questionnaire. Another reason is that at the time the questionnaires arrived, national focal points for a specific environmental domain were still not nominated by the country. It has also been reported that some 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 (see below). 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 ECE EPR secretariat is supporting the information collection process by own searches for pertinent information sources on the internet and by disseminating relevant information received from national and other sources to the EPR review team. Traditionally this has been done by establishing a web-portal, which functions as a point of access to electronic files of publications and indicated also web-addresses, where relevant documents can be retrieved. The ECE EPR secretariat has also mailed electronic files of relevant documents directly via e-mail to the EPR review team. Documents that are not available in electronic form from the Government are either scanned or photocopied and mailed directly to the EPR review team.

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.

#### *Planning of meetings with local experts during the review mission*

Members of the EPR review team prepare, moreover, a list of questions they want to discuss with experts of the national authority responsible for environment policy and management, and other governmental and non-governmental bodies in the country. This list is sent by the ECE EPR secretariat to the national coordinator, who is expected to arrange together with the national focal points for the corresponding individual or group meetings during the review mission.

The ECE EPR secretariat also prepares a brochure for distribution to interviewees during the review mission, which explains the EPR process, indicates the various chapters of the report as well the names of the corresponding responsible team member.

The experience is mixed but overall positive. In few cases, questionnaires prepared by the international experts were not up to standard but in these cases the secretariat intervened to improve the quality of these questionnaires. Planning of meetings is sometimes weak, largely due to weaknesses in the designation of qualified national focal points. As a result, the ECE EPR secretariat needs to compensate for these weaknesses during the review mission, a process which is generally facilitated by the relatively long stay of the review team in the country.

## 2) Review mission

The main objective of the review mission is to make an independent and unbiased evaluation of the environmental performance. During the review mission the EPR review team members meet with experts from central and local governments, civil society, academics, foreign assistance organizations operating in the country, etc. Members of the EPR review team have also the opportunity to go on field visits. The basis for this should, in principle, have been laid by the collection of relevant information on the situation in the country during the preparatory phase.

Logistics in the country are mostly managed through UNDP as the partner organization in cooperation with the ECE EPR coordinator of the country in question. Logistics include arrangements for interpretation (simultaneous and consecutive), translation and transport (field trips).

#### *Plenary meeting*

The first day of the review mission is typically devoted to a plenary meeting with participation of all national experts involved in the review and members of the EPR review team. The main purpose is for national experts to make presentations on major environmental issues, the current state of environmental policy and its legal foundations. This is an important first occasion for the EPR review team members to check how well informed they are about the environmental situation and environmental policies. It is also an occasion to establish first personal contacts with national focal points and other experts.

With few exceptions, these meetings have proven to be very useful both because they are informative and due to the opportunities offered to international experts to liaise across sectors and the narrow confines of their own chapters.

#### *Meetings with NGOs and international organizations*

During the first week of the review mission two separate meetings are organized with representatives of environmental NGOs and international community of donors and international institutions which are based in the country under review. The meetings with NGOs are organized almost invariably in close cooperation with environmental authority, who often deals with preparing and sending out invitations. The meetings with the representatives of the international community are usually prepared by the ECE EPR secretariat.

Attendance in meetings with environmental NGOs is satisfactory although there were cases when the numbers of participating NGOs far below expectations. The insights derived by such meetings are invariably valuable for international experts. Meetings with the international community are well attended in most countries and are very useful as they give perspectives that often enrich official narratives of the realities of environmental protection and management in the country under review.

#### *Consultations with national experts*

The remaining days of the review mission are mainly dedicated to direct consultations – individual or small group meetings – with national experts. While the main emphasis of these meetings should be the assessment of environmental performance, more than one third of the team members (10 out of 28) noted that they had to spend most of their time during the review mission on fact-finding. A large majority of other members indicated that they had to spend “a lot of time” on gathering factual information. Broadly in line with this, some 40 per cent of the EPR review team members found that too much of their time during the review mission had to be devoted to fact-finding.

This reflects that significant information gaps that could not be closed during the preparatory phase because the corresponding documents were not made available and/or the questionnaires were left unanswered. As a consequence, many members of the EPR review team (more than 40 per cent) judged that the time available for substantive consultations was ‘just sufficient’; nearly 15 per cent indicated that the available time was not sufficient. The remaining team members found the distribution of time to be adequate.

The availability of national focal points and other experts for consultations with the EPR review team members was in some cases problematic, mainly due to emergencies or conflicting schedules of missions/meetings. The effectiveness of the consultations depends also on the quality of interpretation (if needed) from national language into English. Interpreters are, in general, recruited for the review mission with the help of the local office of UNDP. Progress in the assessment process during the review mission was also in some cases affected because of the need to wait for the translation of documents from national language into English.

#### *Teamwork and coordination*

During the review missions, the ECE EPR secretariat organized daily wrap-up meetings of the team held at the end the working day. This provided an occasion for EPR review team

members to exchange information on progress made and problems encountered; it also helped to coordinate forthcoming meetings with various national experts.

In addition to the daily evening sessions, the ECE EPR secretariat traditionally also organized a full day meeting of the review team at the mid-point of the mission where each team member presented the progress achieved, existing information gaps and possible directions of recommendations to be made in the EPR. This was followed by comments and suggestions by the other team members.

The wrap-up meetings were found to be very useful by EPR review team members and the time allocated to them was judged to be sufficient by the large majority. These meetings stimulated the discussions among the review team members throughout the mission and afterwards (via e-mail) during the drafting phase.

### 3) Preparation of draft report

The main goal of this phase is to prepare the complete draft report and submit it in time for the expert and peer reviews. After returning from the review mission, the EPR review team members have to prepare a draft of their chapter and send it to the ECE EPR secretariat within the given timeframe (normally about three weeks). The large majority of members of the EPR review teams indicated that the time available for delivering a draft to the ECE EPR secretariat was sufficient. But there was nearly always some slippage; in general, some three quarters of chapters of each report are typically delivered on time.

A major obstacle in meeting the deadline was the need to search for additional information after the review mission. This was the case for about half of the EPR review team members. This search in many cases was not adequately supported by national focal points.

Some team members also found it difficult to meet the deadline for submitting their chapter because of the need to devote adequate time to other professional obligations. This is typically the case for experts that were on secondment from their government or international institutions and who find themselves confronted with the need to draft the report besides carrying out their normal functions. That points to the need to be well prepared before going on the review mission and to make some progress in drafting of a chapter already during the review mission.

The ECE EPR secretariat reviews each draft chapter in detail in order to ensure consistency, correctness, coherence, and quality of text within and across chapters as well as the pertinence of recommendations. The revised text is then sent back to the author with comments and suggestions. Providing substantive feedback on the drafts is not always straightforward, given the large number of specialized issues covered in the various chapters and the small number of staff available in the ECE EPR secretariat dealing with the EPR Programme. This required therefore often consultations with other ECE staff on specific issues. The majority of authors judged the quality of this feedback to be “very good”; more than forty per cent found it “adequate”. Only in one case was the feedback deemed not to be helpful.

When time constraints allow it, completed chapters are subject to English editing by an UN-accredited professional editor. English editing within the UN system is most of the times of very high quality, however it almost always requires prohibitively long periods of wait after the completion of the drafts before UN editors can start their work. As a result, the ECE EPR secretariat needs to resort to external editing to expedite the completion of the manuscript in

order to proceed in a timely way with the other stages in the review process. External editing by contracted editors is significantly faster than UN editing but more costly for the EPR budget and occasionally faces quality issues.

After editing, the complete draft is sent for expert review. On average, some 5-6 months after the country mission were needed for producing the complete draft report before submitting it to the ECE EGEP. The complete draft report is also sent to the reviewed country for comments and corrections of factual information. The CEP members also receive the draft report at the same time as the ECE EGEP, except in one case.

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.

To better illustrate the size of a final report, the first EPR of Kazakhstan is 242 pages long with 14 chapters, while the second EPR is 217 pages long with 9 chapters. For Azerbaijan, the first EPR is 191 pages long with 14 chapters and the second EPR is 231 pages long with 9 chapters.

#### 4) Expert and peer review

Given the complexity of issues involved and the specialized knowledge required, the CEP decided from the onset of the ECE EPR programme to delegate the authority for a detailed review of the assessment of environmental performance and associated recommendations to an expert group on EPR: the ECE EGEP. The outcome of the work of ECE EGEP is then presented to the CEP, which formally adopts the recommendations contained in the EPR as agreed during the expert review. The large majority of members of the ECE EGEP are not delegates to the CEP.

##### *Expert review*

The main focus of the expert review is on the recommendations contained in the report. Each of the experts acts as lead discussant for a particular chapter. The reviewed country is represented at the meeting by a small delegation and has an opportunity to comment on the assessment and recommendations proposed. Recommendations will not be finalized before the country delegation has provided its consent.

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 some divergence in views whether the draft report was made available in time (specified as 4 weeks before the meeting) by the ECE EPR secretariat. Half of the ECE EGEP indicated that this was always the case; the other half noted that this was the case most of the time. (This suggests that not all ECE EGEP members have kept track of the dates when

the report was mailed by the ECE EPR secretariat.) In fact, some draft chapters were submitted at a late moment by the ECE EPR secretariat, reflecting the late delivery of drafts by the authors and the time necessary for revisions and harmonization of the text. In one case, the draft report submitted was even incomplete for this reason, missing one or two chapters. These were then reviewed by the ECE EGEP later.

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.

The expert review is supported by the ECE EPR secretariat. The discussion of recommendations is facilitated by the use of display tools that project the text on a screen that can be seen by all participants. There is then line-by-line editing of recommendations that requires the ECE EPR secretariat to enter all suggested modifications until final agreement is reached.

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.

#### *Peer review*

The CEP formally adopts the recommendations of the report. In general, the ECE EGEP and the CEP are meeting back-to-back. CEP members receive the draft report at about the same time as the members of the ECE EGEP. Among the seven CEP delegates that responded to the questionnaire, four indicated that the report was always made available in time (specified as some 4 weeks) before the meeting. Two judged that this was the case most of the time. (One of the seven members did not respond to the corresponding question.)

The results of the expert review are presented to the CEP by one of the members of the ECE EGEP. The sections of the chapters on conclusions and recommendations with the changes are also printed for easy reference. A high-level representative of the reviewed country then presents the most recent developments of significance in the country, as well as its main environmental problems, priorities and adopted policy measures. Thereafter, there is an opportunity for CEP members to comment on the report, ask questions, and report on relevant experiences from their own country as well as making suggestions how certain problems in the reviewed countries could possibly be better addressed. The peer review concludes with the CEP formally adopting the recommendations made in the EPR. It is seldom the case that the CEP introduces modifications to recommendations prepared by the ECE EGEP. In general, the CEP devotes some 2 hours to a peer review. The predominant view (5 out of 7) was that the time allocated by the CEP to the peer review was always sufficient.

In order to facilitate the preparation by CEP delegates for the peer review some respondents suggested that the ECE EPR secretariat makes available an executive summary as well as the conclusions and recommendations of the report before the CEP meeting. Also a power point presentation by the ECE EPR secretariat to inform about the main messages contained in the

report was judged to be useful. The ECE EPR secretariat could also offer its help to the country as regards the presentation made by its representative on national environmental issues and the selection of discussion points.

Other suggestions made by the respondents to the questionnaire go into the direction of raising the overall interest in and the profile of the peer reviews. To stimulate the discussion of the report, it was suggested that the traditional presentations by the member of the ECE EGEP and the country representative be supplemented by interventions of two discussants (from the CEP or from outside) who would present their views on selected parts of the report as well as major issues raised in the report. This would then be followed by comments and questions from the floor.

Another suggestion is to link the peer review with a seminar that could even be formally separated from the CEP meeting. (It could have a special chair for moderating the discussions.) The purpose would be to discuss issues that are of relevance not only to the reviewed country but to other countries as well. Another option would be to engage in a comparative examination of countries with similar circumstances (economic; social, environmental, geographic). The general aim would be to draw lessons of more general significance for policy makers.

#### 5) Publication and dissemination of the report

Immediately after the peer review, the EPR is prepared by the ECE EPR secretariat for publishing, which usually lasts between 5-8 months after the peer review. This preparation requires incorporating the changes made to the report during the expert and peer review as well as correcting any erroneous factual information signaled by the reviewed country. All reports are published in English. English versions, after being formatted, are uploaded on the EPR's website, approximately 3-4 months after the peer review. Paper copies, after having been formatted, may take between 2-4 months to print, depending on the workload of UNOG's printing services.

Reports for countries in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia are translated and published also in Russian. The main focus of the dissemination of the report is on decision-makers and civil society in the reviewed country. Some reports have therefore also been published in national language, depending on the preferences of the reviewed countries. This has been the case for recent second reviews of Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia and Uzbekistan, and will also be the case for the review of Turkmenistan.

Translation into Russian is done either through UN translators or through external translators. Translation into national language is in general organized with the support of the corresponding national office of UNDP, which usually maintains a roster of qualified translators for its operations. From time to time, OSCE also supports the translation in local languages. Before printing, the version in national language is submitted to the authority responsible for environment matters of the reviewed country for checking and approval.

When possible time-wise, UN-accredited professional translators translate and edit into Russian finalized English versions. This type of Russian translation and editing is most of the times of very high quality, however, it also requires prohibitively long periods of waiting. As a result, the ECE EPR secretariat often needed to resort to external editing to accelerate the translations in order to proceed in a timely way with the launch events. External translation by contracted editors is significantly faster but more costly for the EPR programme and

sometimes quality issues arise. In addition to Russian translation, the quality of translation into national languages was found on occasion inadequate by the ECE secretariat and the Government environmental experts, leading them to request modifications of the text. This led to some delays in the publication process.

Apart from the report in national language, the reviewed country also receives a large number of copies in English and/or Russian for internal distribution free of charge. ECE member states also receive copies of the English and/or Russian version free of charge. The general distribution list is maintained by UN headquarters. ECE has a separate distribution list for CEP delegates, including IGOS and NGOs.

The print version of the EPR may stop, starting from 2012. ECE provides unrestricted access to electronic versions of the reports in all languages on its website (<http://www.unece.org/env/epr/>).

#### 6) Launching of publication

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. The publication of four of the countries covered in this paper were completed in or before 2011: Uzbekistan, Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Only two of them 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.).

### **III. Conclusions and recommendations**

The process of producing the ECE environmental performance reports has six major sequential phases. Before the central goal of one phase is achieved it is not possible to move to the next one. It is therefore important that each major actor involved in the production process is made well aware of her/his role and responsibilities during each phase to ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of the process, i.e. that the targets set for each phase are achieved in terms of both quality standards and time with the available resources.

The record suggests that the EPR production process was well planned and managed by the ECE EPR secretariat. Communication with and among the members of the EPR review team was always well organized. The expected outputs during each of the major phases were produced mostly in time, despite frequent slippages in some of the phases due to factors that were outside the control of the ECE EPR secretariat. The most important slippages have occurred during the preparatory phase for the review mission. They have a negative impact on the effectiveness of activities in the next two phases, i.e. the review mission and the drafting of the report.

The preparation for the review mission is not only slowed down but that the EPR review team has in general to spend too much time during the review mission on obtaining relevant documents and the collection of factual information. This, in turn, subtracts often too much from the time available for the assessment of the environmental performance, which is the main focus of the mission. The experts feel that in some cases, the text has to be updated because of developments that occurred in the country after the fact-finding mission. This for example applies to newly adopted laws and policies.

### **Recommendation 1**

*The ECE EPR secretariat should*

- a) *already before the preparatory mission provide the country to be reviewed with a detailed checklist of tasks to be completed within a given timeframe before, during and after the review mission;*
- b) *prepare a standard list of relevant legal and policy documents that should be supplied by the country directly to the ECE EPR secretariat at the time of the preparatory mission or, at latest, at a specified deadline before the review mission.*

### **Recommendation 2**

*The ECE EPR secretariat should emphasize how important it is for the EPR review team and for the EPR report that the country under review:*

- a) *nominates qualified national experts as national focal points and ensures their availability during the fact-finding mission and its aftermath;*
- b) *answers to the questionnaires in time before the review mission -the same holds, mutatis mutandis, for additional questions that arise after the review mission.*
- c) *updates the EPR review team on new developments that take place in the country after the fact-finding mission is completed.*

The ECE EPR secretariat has traditionally collected relevant information and data from the reviewed country as well as other relevant information (based on own research) and made it available to all members of the EPR review team to a dedicated web-portal. This tool has been found very useful by the teams. Alternatively, the corresponding electronic files were sent to all team members via e-mail. It is important that this support to the EPR review teams be continued given that it helps effective preparations for the review mission and drafting of the report.

### **Recommendation 3:**

*The ECE EPR secretariat should re-establish a dedicated web-tool and ensure that information in it is easily accessible to members of the EPR review team.*

After finalization of all draft chapters by the ECE EPR secretariat, the full report is sent for expert review to the ECE EGEP. It is noteworthy that those members of the EPR review team that are not part of the ECE EPR secretariat do not have an opportunity to comment on the complete draft report, notably as regards the sections containing the assessment of environmental performance and associated recommendations. This appears to be an important missing part in the EPR process, a view which is supported also by the majority of team members surveyed.

While the ECE EPR secretariat has in the past done a very good job in preparing the consolidated draft text for expert review, there are potential benefits of a review of the draft report by all the members of the EPR review team given their wide range of expertise across the various environmental domains. The modalities for such comments, notably the platform for the comments (e-mail or dedicated web-page) and the timeframe, would have to be agreed

upon. There could e.g. be a provision that in case of controversy the final decision on the text lies with either the ECE EPR secretariat and/or the ECE EGEP.

**Recommendation 4:**

*The ECE EPR secretariat should provide an opportunity for the EPR review team members to comment on the complete draft report before ECE EGEP meetings. The corresponding modalities should be worked out by the ECE EPR secretariat, in consultation with the ECE EGEP.*

The delivery of the draft report for expert review was, in general, within the timeframe that the members of the ECE EGEP find acceptable. But on occasion, the delivery was late and made effective preparation, at least for some of the members of ECE EGEP, more difficult. These delays resulted in the slippage in the delivery of drafts to the ECE EPR secretariat.

The time allocated to the peer review by the CEP is judged to be sufficient. The support by the ECE EPR secretariat in preparing the peer reviews is appreciated. But the interest of delegates in the peer review could be increased by making available before the meeting an executive summary of the report as well as the text of the draft recommendations. The issue of increasing the participation of CEP members in the work of the ECE EGEP has been addressed by recent measures agreed by the CEP. It is outside the scope of this evaluation report.

**Recommendation 5:**

*The ECE EPR secretariat should:*

- (a) *aim at submitting the draft report to the ECE EGEP and the CEP three weeks before the expert review.*
- (b) *supply CEP delegates with the executive summary of the draft report.*

One full meeting day was found by the large majority of the ECE EGEP to be sufficient in order to deal with a report of standard length in an appropriate manner. Dealing with reports that are longer than standard during a single meeting day, however, was found difficult, at least on occasion, and it can also be a source of dissatisfaction. But extending the meeting time may be difficult and costly. But the overall effectiveness of the work of the group could possibly be enhanced by organizing a pre-meeting exchange of views on recommendations contained in the report; suggestions for alternative formulations of existing recommendations, or proposals for additional recommendations. This could be done by means of telephone conferences, video-conferences, exchanges of e-mails and/or using a dedicated web-portal for the exchange of views. Such a more systematic preparation may even allow shortening the time required for dealing with reports of standard length.

**Recommendation 6:**

*The ECE EPR secretariat should help the ECE EGEP organizing before the expert review a pre-meeting exchange of views and comments on draft EPR review reports and their recommendations.*

The EPR programme currently organized launch events of its publications in countries that have been reviewed. This is one way to raise awareness on environmental matters in the country under review, while enhancing the Programme's visibility in other countries in the ECE region. Launch events organized thus far have proven highly successful and attracted senior leadership and a wide array of state and non-state stakeholders in the countries where they took place.

However launch events are often unduly delayed, among other reasons because of delays in the publication of translated versions of the review. This situation creates a dilemma. On the one hand, by virtue of tact and diplomacy it is understandable that reviewed countries expect launch events to be accompanied with the release of the review in their national language or in Russian, when relevant. On the other hand a time lag of one or two-years between the publication of the review in English and its launching reduces the relevance of the review, which may look increasingly outdated. Thus these delays impact adversely the visibility and relevance of the programme for the reviewed country, while limiting the opportunities for outreach and diffusion of the ideas and ideals enshrined in the report to the broader ECE region.

**Recommendation 7:**

*The ECE EPR secretariat, in consultation with the ECE EGEP and CEP, should strive to organizing two complementary launch events for each EPR review. The first would take the form of a high-level launch event in Geneva upon the publication of the EPR review in English. The second would continue the current practice of organizing a launch event in each reviewed country after the publication of the translated version of the country's review.*



## Annex 1: Terms of Reference

### **Self Evaluation 2010-2011: Assessment of procedural steps for the preparation and conducting of the environmental performance reviews**

#### *1. Purpose and scope of the evaluation*

The purpose of the 2010-2011 self-evaluation is to analyze the procedural steps for the preparation and conducting of the environmental performance reviews (EPR). The evaluation will involve assessing the status of the current project, i.e. the first EPR of Turkmenistan, throughout 2011, and will finish with an evaluation report.

#### *2. Relevant background information about the activity*

The environmental performance reviews are analytical studies drafted by international experts and conducted at the request of South-East European, Caucasus and Central Asian member States. Environmental performance reviews assess a country's efforts to reduce its overall pollution burden and manage its natural resources; to integrate environmental and socio-economic policies; to strengthen cooperation with the international community; to harmonize environmental conditions and policies throughout Europe and North America; and to contribute to sustainable development in the UNECE region. The reviews have three main objectives: (i) Helping countries in transition to improve their management of the environment by establishing baseline conditions and recommending better policy implementation and performance; (ii) Promoting continuous dialogue between UNECE member countries by sharing information about policies and experiences; and (iii) Stimulating greater involvement of the public in environmental discussions and decision-making. As an integral part of the study, policy recommendations on ways to improve problem areas and environmental strategies and policies are extended to the host government.

#### *3. Issues to be addressed and questions to be answered through the evaluation*

The evaluation will look at how to streamline the procedural steps of the EPR exercise, to improve cooperation between the partners involved, and to minimize possible delays. It will also examine the efficiency in carrying out the review.

#### *4. Methodology for data collection*

A standard procedure for an environmental performance review is displayed in the annex I. It distinguishes procedural steps and estimates the time required to complete them. A standard EPR would take more than one year from the official request of the member country to the publication and dissemination of the report. The implementation of the individual steps of the current project will be closely monitored in order to gather data for the evaluation.

#### *5. Schedule and required resources*

The evaluation will take place from November 2010 to December 2011. In November 2010, Turkmenistan requested the secretariat to carry out an environmental performance review, which constitutes the starting point for the review. During the evaluation period, time requirements for and delays occurring in carrying out each of the steps will be noted. The objective is to identify the underlying causes for deviations from the benchmark. The evaluation will be conducted by the secretariat (P-3 post in consultation with the P-4 post) within available resources, and is estimated to take 2 working weeks for the P-3 and 2 working days for the P-4.

#### *6. Use of the findings*

The findings of the evaluation will be used to optimize the cooperation between the host authorities, the international experts and the secretariat in carrying out this activity, and to avoid unnecessary delays in the preparatory process. The outcomes and recommendations will be presented to the Expert Group Meeting and possibly to the 2012 session of the Committee on Environmental Policy.

## Annex 2: Revised terms of reference for the Expert Group on Environmental Performance Reviews

1. The core of the Expert Group should comprise 10 to 14 members, with due consideration to geographical balance among countries in the region. It is suggested that, when new members are chosen, due regard should be given to experts from countries that have recently been reviewed, as well as to those who have undergone or will soon undergo second reviews.
2. Participation, as observers, in the meetings of the Expert Group will be open to Committee on Environmental Policy delegates, who shall act as advisers to review the report and its recommendations.
3. In addition, participation in the meetings of the Expert Group on any reviewed country will be open to experts nominated by the Committee on Environmental Policy delegates, and agreed by the members of the Expert Group in consultation with the secretariat.

### **Terms of reference**

4. The mandate of the core members of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Expert Group on Environmental Performance Reviews is renewed for a period of two 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 UNECE secretariat and the Committee on Environmental Policy on all substantive and organizational matters arising in the implementation of the UNECE programme of Environmental Performance Reviews (EPRs);
  - (c) Assisting the UNECE secretariat in coordinating the UNECE EPR programme with processes under way in other international institutions that have a bearing on it, inter alia, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), the Asian Development Bank, and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) EPR programme and its work in the region of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia.
5. The guidance of the Expert Group to UNECE and the Committee will include:
  - (a) Identification of opportunities and requirements for improving the conduct of the EPRs;
  - (b) Assessment of environmental trends relevant to the EPR process in countries in transition, including the organization of joint meetings, seminars and workshops at the regional and subregional levels, where these are demand-driven;
  - (c) Review and improvement of the data and information used for the EPR; ECE/CEP/161
  - (d) Drawing up proposals on how to improve the adoption of the recommendations contained in the EPR country reports and their implementation.
6. The core members of the EPR Expert Group are elected by the Committee on Environmental Policy upon the recommendation of the Bureau. The secretariat will invite international institutions pursuing related work to participate in the work of the EPR Expert Group.
7. While taking decisions on an EPR report under review and its recommendations, the Expert Group shall take into consideration the inputs by the reviewing countries and Committee delegates who participate in the meeting.
8. The EPR Expert Group shall elect its Chair and Vice-Chair.
9. The EPR Expert Group will report annually on its activities to the Committee on Environmental Policy, and may raise any issue with the Committee that it deems necessary for the implementation of its mandate.

### **Timetable**

10. The mandate of the Expert Group will cover a two-year period, from 2011 to the end of 2012.

## Annex 3: Main phases of the production of an Environmental Performance Review

Stage	Main activities	Main actors	Duration (average)
<b>1. Preparations</b>	Nomination of national coordinator  Preparatory mission Implementation plan  Nomination of national focal points  Establishment of EPR review team  Collection of information and data  Planning of meetings with local experts during the review mission	Government  ECE EPR secretariat; Government.  ECE EPR secretariat  ECE EPR secretariat  Government; ECE EPR secretariat; EPR review team.  EPR review team	3 – 4 months
<b>2. Review mission</b>	Plenary meeting Plenary meetings with NGOs and international organizations Individual meetings (Consultation with national experts) Site visits Teamwork and coordination	EPR review team; national experts etc.	10-12 days
<b>3. Preparation of draft report</b>	Preparations of draft chapters  Consolidation; checking; restructuring  Editing (English)  Submission of draft for comments to national authorities of reviewed country	EPR review team  ECE EPR secretariat; EPR review team  ECE EPR secretariat  Government experts	4-6 months
<b>4. Expert review / Peer review</b>	Submission of draft for preparation of review Expert review meeting  Peer review meeting	ECE EPR secretariat  ECE EGEP; Government; ECE EPR secretariat CEP	Some 4 weeks before the meeting  1 full day  2 hours
<b>5. Publication and dissemination</b>	Finalization of report Translation (Russian/national language) Printing  Posting of report on ECE web-site  Distribution of printed copies	ECE EPR secretariat  ECE EPR secretariat  ECE; UNOG; UNHQ; Government.	5-8 months
<b>6. Launching of publication</b>	Launching of the EPR report in the reviewed country	Government; ECE EPR secretariat	6-12 months
<b>Total time</b>			19 - 30 months



## Annex 4: Example of an implementation plan: Bosnia and Herzegovina

Step	Related task	Implemented by	Time schedule
Preparatory mission (3 days)	Organization of meetings	ECE EPR secretariat and Bosnia and Herzegovina	18-20 January 2010
Information gathering	Transmission of paper and electronic-based documentation, background information on selected EPR issues to the ECE EPR secretariat	ECE EPR secretariat and Bosnia and Herzegovina	1 April 2010
International expert team setting		ECE EPR secretariat	1 April 2010
National contact persons (focal points)	List of national contact experts/facilitators responsible for each chapter	Bosnia and Herzegovina	1 April 2010
List of questions	A list of questions to national contact persons	EPR review team	15 April 2010
Answer to the questions by Bosnia and Herzegovina	Answers sent back by the national experts or prepared for replies during the mission	Bosnia and Herzegovina	15 May 2010
Drafting	Preliminary draft by international experts	EPR review team	15 May 2010
Mission (10 days)	Individual interviews, group meetings, field visits and other activities by experts	EPR review team; Bosnia and Herzegovina	24 May – 4 June 2010
Report drafting	Submission of chapters by EPR international experts to the ECE EPR secretariat	EPR review team	30 June 2010
Finalization of the report	Assembling, restructuring, checking	ECE EPR secretariat	by 31 July 2010
Editing	Editing of the draft chapters	ECE EPR secretariat	1 – 31 August 2010
Translation of the draft report	Unofficial advanced translation	ECE EPR secretariat	1 - 30 September 2010
Submission of the draft report and recommendations to Bosnia and Herzegovina and feedback from national experts	The draft report will be submitted for comments to Bosnia and Herzegovina Team before the Peer review; response from Bosnia and Herzegovina experts expected before the Expert Group meeting.	ECE EPR secretariat; Bosnia and Herzegovina	1 October 2010
Expert review preparation	Organization of the Expert Group meeting in Geneva and preparation of the national experts for discussion with the Expert Group	ECE EPR secretariat; Bosnia and Herzegovina	October 2010
Expert review meeting (in Geneva)	Discussion of the EPR report, conclusions and recommendations	ECE EPR secretariat; ECE EGEP; Bosnia and Herzegovina	1 November 2010
Peer Review Meeting	Presentation of the review at the CEP session and adoption of the recommendations	CEP Bosnia and Herzegovina high-level representative of environmental protection	CEP regular session, 2-4 November 2010
EPR publication, English	Posting on the ECE website	ECE EPR secretariat	January 2011
Launch event	With hard-copy publications in E, B languages	ECE EPR secretariat; Bosnia and Herzegovina	December 2011

## Annex 5: Questionnaire on EPR process for the EPR review teams

### **Note for the respondents:**

The data collected with this questionnaire will be used for the evaluation of the various steps necessary for carrying out the ECE Environmental Performance Reviews. The evaluation is organized by the ECE EPR secretariat in order to analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the current process of carrying out an EPR. The analysis, findings and recommendations based on information collected through this questionnaire will be presented in a Self-Evaluation Report. While this evaluation report is mainly produced for internal use, it may also be of interest to pertinent intergovernmental bodies, i.e. the ECE's Expert Group on Environmental Performance and the Committee on Environmental Policy (CEP).

The self-evaluation is based on the experiences made and lessons learned from the EPRs produced during 2009-2011 for Azerbaijan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Georgia, Tajikistan, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

It should be noted that the self-evaluation is only covering the process that leads to the production of an EPR and does not deal with the assessment of the final country report itself.

The list of respondents to the questionnaire will be given in the Annex to the report, but the information provided will be treated as confidential.

### **Your personal data and contact details:**

Family name:

First name:

Full name of institution where you work:

Your present position:

Your contact details:

e-mail:

Telephone:

### **Question 1:**

Please indicate in which of the following EPRs you have participated (tick the box on the right) and for what area (legislative framework, waste, water, energy etc.) you were responsible:

Reviewed country	Area for which you were responsible
Azerbaijan	
Bosnia and Herzegovina	
Georgia	
Tajikistan	
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	
Turkmenistan	
Uzbekistan	

### **Question 2:**

For the preparation of your chapter in the country report you were supplied by the ECE EPR secretariat with terms-of-reference (TOR) indicating the main topics and issues to be covered.

a) How useful were these TOR to start preparing your chapter? Please tick the corresponding box!

Very useful	Useful	Not useful

b) Have you followed the TOR to draft your chapter?

Yes	To some extent	No

*Please add any comments you may have:*

### Question 3:

The preparation of the EPR involves the collection of information (such as legal, descriptive and analytical documents; statistics) on the specific topics to be addressed. For this purpose the ECE EPR secretariat has traditionally established a web-portal which gives access to relevant Government documents and documents issued by other institutions (international organizations etc.).

a) How useful did you find this service? Please tick the corresponding box!

Very useful	Useful	Not useful

b) How often was it the case that relevant Government documents were not available at the ECE web-portal? Please tick the corresponding box!

Always	Sometimes	Never

*Please add any comments you may have:*

### Question 4:

An integral part of the collection of relevant information before the review mission is a questionnaire that the ECE EPR secretariat asks you to prepare on specific issues concerning your chapter in the report and which is send to the Government of the reviewed country before the review mission.

a) Have you always prepared such a questionnaire? Please tick the corresponding box.

Always	Sometimes	Never

b) Have you received answers to the questionnaire? Please tick the corresponding box.

	Before the mission	During the mission	After the mission
Always			
Sometimes			
Never			

c) If you received the answers to the questionnaire before the review mission what has been the average quality of responses to the questionnaire? Please tick the corresponding box.

Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory

*Please add any comments you may have:*

**Question 5:**

How much time did you have to spend during the review mission on fact-finding rather than on the analysis and assessment of the environmental performance? Please tick the corresponding box.

Most of the time	A lot of time	Hardly any time at all	No time at all

*Please add any comments you may have:*

**Question 6:**

How do you rate the amount of time you have to spend on fact-finding during the review mission rather than on substantive consultations with local experts on the analysis of major problems and possible recommendations for action? Please tick the corresponding box.

Excessive	Adequate	Insufficient

*Please add any comments you may have:*

**Question 7:**

How do you rate the amount of time you have available during the review mission for substantive consultations with local experts on the analysis of problems and possible recommendations for action? Please tick the corresponding box.

More than sufficient	Sufficient	Just sufficient	Not sufficient

*Please add any comments you may have:*

**Question 8:** How do you rate the time that you had during the review missions for an exchange of information and discussion of substantive issues concerning the environmental performance review with the other members of the review team? Please tick the corresponding box.

More than sufficient	Sufficient	Just sufficient	Not sufficient

*Please add any comments you may have:*

**Question 9:**

How do you rate the time frame for delivering a draft of your chapter (at an adequate level of quality) after the return from the review mission? Please tick the corresponding box.

More than sufficient	Sufficient	Just sufficient	Not sufficient

*Please add any comments you may have:*

**Question 10:**

What were the main obstacles for meeting the deadline for your chapter?  
Please tick the corresponding box.

Search for essential additional information	Other professional commitments	Other (please specify)

*Please add any comments you may have:*

**Question 11:**

How do you rate the feedback you obtained from the ECE EPR secretariat concerning your draft chapter?  
Please tick the corresponding box.

Very good	Adequate	Not helpful

*Please add any comments you may have:*

**Question 12:**

Do you think that the members of the review team should have the possibility to review the complete draft report before the peer review?

Yes	No

*If yes, please elaborate on the procedure to follow:*

**Please indicate below any additional comments you might have on the process of producing an EPR!**

**THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR TIME!**

## Annex 6: Questionnaire on EPR process for Members of ECE EGEP

### **Note for the respondents:**

The information collected with this questionnaire will be used for the evaluation of the various steps necessary for producing the ECE Environmental Performance Reviews. The evaluation is organized by the ECE EPR secretariat in order to analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the current process of producing an EPR. The analysis, findings and recommendations based on information collected through this questionnaire will be presented in a Self-Evaluation Report. While this evaluation report is mainly produced for internal use, it may also be of interest to pertinent intergovernmental bodies, i.e. the ECE Expert Group on Environmental Performance and the Committee on Environmental Policy (CEP).

The self-evaluation is based on the experiences made and lessons learned from the EPRs produced during 2009-2011 for Azerbaijan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Georgia, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan.

It should be noted that the self-evaluation is only covering the process that leads to the production of an EPR and does not deal with the assessment of the final country report itself.

The list of respondents to the questionnaire will be given in the Annex to the report, but the information provided will be treated as confidential.

### **Your personal data and contact details**

Family name:

First name:

Full name of institution where you work:

Your present position:

Your contact details:

e-mail:

Telephone:

### **Question 1:**

In which of the reviews by the EPR Expert Group of the recent EPRs listed in the table below have you participated? Please tick the corresponding box.

<b><i>Country</i></b>	<b>Yes (x)</b>
Azerbaijan	
Bosnia and Herzegovina	
Georgia	
Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	
Tajikistan	
Uzbekistan	

### **Question 2:**

Was the country report to be examined made available in good time before the meeting of the Expert Group to allow for adequate preparation? Please tick the corresponding box (x):

Always	
In most cases	
Sometimes	
Never	

Comments

**Question 3:**

What is the minimum time that the report should be available to you before the examination? Please tick the corresponding box (x)!

	(x)
Six weeks	
Four weeks	
Two weeks	

Comments

**Question 4:**

A full meeting day is allocated in general to the examination of a country report. Is this time frame sufficient for a thorough examination, or would more time often be needed? Please tick the corresponding box (x).

One full day is sufficient	
Another full day would often be better	
Half a day more would often be better	

Comments

**Question 5:** Do you consider that the ECE EPR secretariat could do more to help preparing the meetings of the Expert Group? Please elaborate!

**Please indicate below any other comments / suggestions you may have!**

**THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR TIME!**

## Annex 7: Questionnaire on EPR process for CEP Members

### **Note for the respondents:**

The data collected with this questionnaire will be used for the evaluation of the various steps necessary for producing the ECE Environmental Performance Reviews. The evaluation is organized by the ECE EPR secretariat in order to analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the current process of producing an EPR. The analysis, findings and recommendations based on information collected through this questionnaire will be presented in a Self-Evaluation Report. While this evaluation report is mainly produced for internal use, it may also be of interest to pertinent intergovernmental bodies, i.e. the ECE's Expert Group on Environmental Performance and the Committee on Environmental Policy (CEP).

The self-evaluation is based on the experiences made and lessons learned from the EPRs produced during 2009-2011 for Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan.

It should be noted that the self-evaluation is only covering the process that leads to the production of an EPR and does not deal with the assessment of the final country report itself.

The list of respondents to the questionnaire will be given in the Annex to the report, but the information provided will be treated as confidential.

### **Your personal data and contact details**

Family name:

First name:

Full name of institution where you work:

Your present position:

Your contact details:

e-mail:

Telephone:

#### **Question 1:**

At which of the recent peer reviews have you participated as a member of the CEP? Please tick the corresponding box (x) in the table below!

Peer reviewed country	(x)
Azerbaijan	
Bosnia and Herzegovina	
Georgia	
Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	
Tajikistan	
Uzbekistan	

#### **Question 2:**

Was the report on the reviewed country made available in good time (some 4 weeks) before the meeting of the CEP? Please tick the corresponding box (x):

Always	
In most cases	

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Sometimes	
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Comments:

**Question 3:** Do you consider the time devoted to peer reviews by the CEP to have been sufficient?  
Please tick the corresponding box (x)!

Always sufficient	
In most cases	
Sometimes	
Always too short	

Comments:

**Question 4:**  
Do you consider that the ECE EPR secretariat could do more to support the peer review by the CEP?  
Please elaborate!

**Please indicate below any other comments / suggestions you may have!**

**THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR TIME!**

## Annex 8: Questionnaire on EPR process for National Coordinators

### **Note for the respondents:**

The information collected with this questionnaire will be used for the evaluation of the various steps necessary for producing the ECE Environmental Performance Reviews. The evaluation is organized by the ECE EPR secretariat in order to analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the current process of producing an EPR. The analysis, findings and recommendations based on information collected through this questionnaire will be presented in a Self-Evaluation Report. While this evaluation report is mainly produced for internal use, it may also be of interest to pertinent intergovernmental bodies, i.e. the ECE's Expert Group on Environmental Performance and the Committee on Environmental Policy (CEP).

The self-evaluation is based on the experiences made and lessons learned from the EPRs produced during 2009-2011 for Azerbaijan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Georgia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

It should be noted that the self-evaluation is only covering the process that leads to the production of an EPR and does not deal with the assessment of the final country report itself.

The list of respondents to the questionnaire will be given in the Annex to the report, but the information provided will be treated as confidential.

### **Your personal data and contact details**

Family name:

First name:

Full name of institution where you work:

Your present position:

Your contact details:

E-mail:

Telephone:

### **Question 1:**

Did the preparatory review mission conducted by the ECE EPR secretariat allow clarifying the key environmental issues to be addressed by the EPR and the overall structure of the report? Please tick the corresponding box (x) below!

YES	<input type="checkbox"/>
NO	<input type="checkbox"/>

In case, of "No" please elaborate.

### **Question 2:**

Did the preparatory review mission conducted by the ECE EPR secretariat allow clarifying your and your government's role and responsibilities in the EPR process? Please tick the corresponding box (x) below!

YES – fully	<input type="checkbox"/>
YES – but only partly	<input type="checkbox"/>
NO	<input type="checkbox"/>

In case, of "YES – but only partly" or "No" please elaborate.

**Question 3:**

At what stage was the complete list of national focal points for the various environmental issues communicated to the ECE EPR secretariat? Please tick the corresponding box (x) below!

Before the preparatory review mission	
During the preparatory review mission	
6 weeks before the main review mission	
4 weeks before the main review mission	
2 weeks before the main review mission	
Less than 2 weeks before the main review mission	

**In case of “less than 2 week” please elaborate.**

**Question 4:**

Was the ECE EPR secretariat provided with relevant Government documents (text of laws, regulations, Government strategies, etc.) within the agreed time frame before the review mission? Please tick the corresponding box (x) below!

Yes, with all	
Yes, with most	
Yes, with few	
No	

**Remarks:**

**Question 5:**

a) In order to better prepare the review mission, the ECE EPR secretariat send out questionnaires on specific issues to be addressed by the various chapters of the report. Were responses to these questionnaires sent back to the ECE EPR secretariat before the review mission? Please tick the corresponding box (x)!

Yes - for all questions	
Yes – for most questions	
Yes – for a few questions	
NO	

If you answered “Yes – for all questions”, please proceed to question 6

b)

What were the main reasons for not responding to the questionnaire before the review mission? Please elaborate.

**Question 6**

On the first day of the review mission, did you organize a general briefing session – with participation of the national focal points and other Government experts - to inform the review team about the state of the environment in your country and major legislation in place? Please tick the corresponding box (x)

YES	
NO	

**Remarks:****Question 7:**

a) Do you think that during the review mission the members of the review team had sufficient time to consult with your national experts on the evaluation of the environmental performance in the areas to be covered by the report? Please tick the corresponding box (x).

Yes, there was sufficient time.	
No, not all major problems could be addressed during the mission	

b) In case of “No”, what do you think were the main reasons?

**Question 8:**

a) After you received the full draft report, was there sufficient time available to prepare for the expert review of the report conducted by the ECE Expert Group and the peer review by the CEP in Geneva? Please tick the corresponding box (x).

Yes, there was sufficient time	
Time was too short	

b) In case time was too short, what was the major reason? Please elaborate.

**Question 9:**

During the meeting with the ECE Expert Group in Geneva, was there sufficient time to discuss all major issues raised in the report on your country, notably the assessment by the international experts and the recommendations made? Please tick the corresponding box (x).

Yes, one full day was sufficient.	
No, one full day was not sufficient.	
One full day more would have been appropriate.	
Half a day more would have been appropriate	

**Question 10:**

a) Was the time devoted to the peer review by the Committee on Environmental Policy (CEP) adequate? Please tick the corresponding box (x).

Yes	
No	

b) In case of “No”, please elaborate.

**Question 11:**

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How do you judge the time it took from the review mission to the launching of the report in your country? Please tick the corresponding box (x)

Too long	<input type="checkbox"/>
Acceptable	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Remarks:**

**Question 12:** Do you have any suggestions how the process of carrying out an environmental performance review could be improved? Please elaborate.

**Please indicate below any other comments / suggestions you may have!**

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME!**

## Annex 9: List of persons that responded to the questionnaires

### **I. International experts**

Mr. Badaker, Victor  
Ms. Berling, Wenke  
Mr. de Bettencourt, José  
Mr. Bizek, Vladislav  
Mr. Bulych, Yaroslav  
Ms. Clément-Arnold, Elisabeth  
Ms. Dalbokova, Dafina  
Ms. Etopolska, Vania  
Mr. Farkaš, Juraj  
Mr. Garsteck, Tobias  
Mr. Georgiadis, George  
Ms. Grigorova, Vania  
Mr. Hesse, Dieter  
Mr. Hirvonen, Jyrki  
Mr. Klügel, Benno  
Mr. Korotkov, Alexander  
Mr. Kujawa, Greg  
Ms. Melen-Zebramna, Olga  
Ms. Nurse, Jo  
Mr. Palacin, José  
Ms. Quintas da Silva, Elisabete  
Ms. Ruis, Barbara  
Ms. Sardellitti, Emanuela  
Mr. Schrepfermann, Matthias  
Mr. Shestakov, Alexander  
Ms. Silveira, Mary Pat  
Mr. Skrylnikov, Dmytro  
Ms. Stoyanova, Nina

### **II. Members of the ECE Expert Group on Environmental Performance Reviews**

Ms. Dotsenko, Nadeja  
Ms. Grigorova, Vania  
Mr. Hermann, Hans-Joachim  
Mr. Liiv, Harry  
Mr. Oudeman, Adriaan  
Mr. Poutanen, Martti  
Ms. Rohn-Brossard, Martine  
Mr. Tushishvili, Mikheil

### **III. Selected members of the ECE Committee on Environmental Policy**

Mr. Cozzone, Massimo  
Mr. Liiv, Harry  
Ms. Mikulaskova, Lubica  
Mr. Oudeman, Adriaan  
Mr. Pokorny, Lukas  
Ms. Rohn-Brossard, Martine  
Ms. Quintas da Silva, Elisabete

### **IV. National Coordinators**

Ms. Medic, Vanda  
Ms. Shukova, Kaja

## Annex 10: Follow-up action plan to the self evaluation

No.	Recommendation	Follow-up action	Start/End	Staff member	Status
1	<p><i>The ECE EPR secretariat should</i></p> <p><i>a) already before the preparatory mission provide the country to be reviewed with a detailed checklist of tasks to be completed within a given timeframe before, during and after the review mission;</i></p>	<p>The implementation of this recommendation is in the process. The ECE EPR secretariat will extend the current list.</p>	Since 2012	ECE EPR secretariat	Already started
	<p><i>b) prepare a standard list of relevant legal and policy documents that should be supplied by the country directly to the ECE EPR secretariat at the time of the preparatory mission or, at latest, at a specified deadline before the review mission.</i></p>	<p>Based on the past experience, the ECE EPR secretariat will draft a list of relevant legal and policy documents. This list would be subject to updating later on.</p>	Spring 2012	ECE EPR secretariat	

2	<p><i>The ECE EPR secretariat should emphasize how important it is for the EPR review team and for the EPR report that the country under review:</i></p> <p><i>(a) nominates qualified national experts as national focal points and ensures their availability during the fact-finding mission and its aftermath;</i></p> <p><i>(b) answers to the questionnaires in time before the review mission - the same holds, mutatis mutandis, for additional questions that arise after the review mission.</i></p> <p><i>(c) updates the EPR review team on new developments that take place in the country after the fact-finding mission is completed.</i></p>	<p>(a) and (b) The ECE EPR secretariat will be preparing letters to be sent by the ECE Management to countries to be reviewed. The evaluation will be also shared with the counterparts in the country under review.</p> <p>(c) The ECE EPR secretariat will regularly remind the authority responsible for environment to update the EPR Review team on latest developments, which could affect the report.</p>	Since 2012	ECE EPR secretariat	
3	<p><i>The ECE EPR secretariat should re-establish a dedicated web-tool and ensure that information in it is easily accessible to members of the EPR review team.</i></p>	<p>The ECE EPR secretariat in cooperation with ECE/ISU will develop a tool to facilitate access to the information to the EPR Review team. NB: Other ECE teams implementing country programmes will be involved in the development of the tool.</p>	Since spring 2012	ECE EPR secretariat and ECE/ISU	Already started. The scope of the tool was defined by the 2 teams. The development of the tool will start soon.

4	<p><i>The ECE EPR secretariat should provide an opportunity for the EPR review team members to comment on the complete draft report before ECE EGEP meetings. The corresponding modalities should be worked out by the ECE EPR secretariat, in consultation with the ECE EGEP.</i></p>	<p>The draft report of the Turkmenistan was sent to the EPR review team. The ECE EPR secretariat will continue this practice.</p>	<p>Since 2012</p>	<p>ECE EPR secretariat</p>	<p>Already started</p>
5	<p><i>The ECE EPR secretariat should:</i>  <i>(a) aim at submitting the draft report to the ECE EGEP and the CEP three weeks before the expert review.</i>  <i>(b) supply CEP delegates with the executive summary of the draft report.</i></p>	<p>The ECE EPR secretariat already started to implement this recommendation. The ECE EGEP was provided with the executive summary of the EPR of Turkmenistan.</p>	<p>Since 2012</p>	<p>ECE EPR secretariat</p>	<p>Already started</p>
6	<p><i>The ECE EPR secretariat should help the ECE EGEP organizing before the expert review a pre-meeting exchange of views and comments on draft EPR review reports and their recommendations.</i></p>	<p>For the up-coming EPR EGEP meetings in 2012, the agendas will reflected this recommendation.</p>	<p>Since 2012</p>	<p>ECE EPR secretariat</p>	<p>Already started</p>

7	<i>The ECE EPR secretariat, in consultation with the ECE EGEP and CEP, should strive to organizing two complementary launch events for each EPR review. The first would take the form of a high-level launch event in Geneva upon the publication of the EPR review in English. The second would continue the current practice of organizing a launch event in each reviewed country after the publication of the translated version of the country's review.</i>	To be agreed with the senior management.	Since 2012	ECE EPR secretariat	
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