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Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment

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(Item 6 of the provisional agenda)

WORK PLAN FOR THE PERIOD UP TO THE BELGRADE CONFERENCE ^{*/}

Note by the secretariat

SUMMARY

This note presents elements for the work programme that the Working Group is expected to implement from summer 2005 to autumn 2007. They stem from the revised mandate of the Working Group and build on the results achieved since 2000. The Working Group will agree on its work plan and submit it to the Committee on Environmental Policy.

Introduction

1. The fifth Ministerial Conference “Environment in Europe” held in May 2003 in Kiev supported the Ad Hoc Working Group on Environmental Monitoring, particularly its activities on strengthening the environmental information and observation capacity in the 12 countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA). The Ministers requested that the cooperation framework provided by the Working Group should be further developed and invited donors to support the Working Group (ECE/CEP/94/Rev.1, para. 31). According to its revised mandate (ECE/CEP/116, annex I), the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment should focus on strengthening environmental information and observation capacities in EECCA countries and on contributing to the fourth assessment report on the state of the environment for the next “Environment for Europe” Conference in Belgrade.

2. The Committee on Environmental Policy, at its eleventh session in October 2004, invited the Working Group to establish its work programme and in particular to focus on supporting the

^{*/} This document was submitted late as it required inputs from parties concerned.

European Environment Agency (EEA) in the preparation of the Belgrade assessment report and on further building monitoring and assessment capacities in EECCA countries including their reporting according to international environmental obligations (ECE/CEP/124, para. 41). In preparing its plan of activities for the period up to the time of the sixth Ministerial Conference “Environment for Europe” in autumn 2007, the Working Group is expected to take into account and follow up the results achieved and progress made so far.

I. WORK ACCOMPLISHED OR IN PROGRESS

3. During its initial period in 2001-2003, the Working Group contributed to the preparations by EEA of the third pan-European assessment report on the environment (Kiev Assessment). It reviewed the draft content, the guidelines for data collection, the country questionnaires, the draft chapters and the draft executive summary of the report. Country representatives in the Working Group assisted in data collection for the report. The report, its summary and the document on lessons learned from the data collection were submitted to the Kiev Ministerial Conference.

4. The Working Group also reviewed the situation with monitoring and information in individual EECCA countries, and launched a series of capacity-building activities that resulted in:

- (a) Recommendations on Strengthening National Environmental Monitoring and Information Systems in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia, and Guidelines for the Preparation of Governmental Reports on the State and Protection of the Environment (Ministers endorsed both at the Kiev “Environment for Europe” Conference) and in a trilingual state-of-the-environment report of Armenia as a case study of the practical application of the above-mentioned Guidelines;
- (b) An electronic database of officials responsible in EECCA for the main environmental data flows and information systems, and an electronic catalogue of environmental data sources in EECCA that were developed thanks to the computer equipment and training provided to all EECCA countries;
- (c) An in-depth study of the situation with air emission inventories and atmospheric air pollution monitoring and modelling in Kazakhstan, and recommendations for rationalizing and strengthening air pollution monitoring in the EECCA countries that were new Parties to the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution;
- (d) An assessment of the situation regarding waste classifications and inventories in the Caucasian and Central Asian countries, and recommendations to all EECCA countries in this regard;
- (e) An in-depth study of inland surface water monitoring in EECCA, proposals for a basic EUROWATERNET network for each EECCA country; and recommendations for achieving a fully representative network of EUROWATERNET stations for EECCA;
- (f) A review of environmental indicators in EECCA, a core set of environmental indicators for use in EECCA countries and a trial compendium of selected indicators from the

core set;

(g) A review of the potential of remote-sensing for environmental assessments and the proposals for building EECCA capabilities in this area using indicators derived from remote-sensing data;

(h) The bilingual (English-Russian) publication Environmental Monitoring and Reporting: Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia, the CD-ROM Environmental Monitoring and Assessment: Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia and the web site of the Working Group at <http://www.unece.org/env/europe/monitoring/> presenting all studies and recommendations.

5. In 2004, two workshops were organized to develop further some of the activities launched. The first workshop was organized in Moscow to evaluate the electronic database of officials responsible for the main environmental data flows in EECCA and the catalogue of environmental data sources in EECCA, and to consider the development of an EcoReporting electronic database. A second workshop, held in Chisinau, discussed the preparation of a manual for the application of environmental indicators in EECCA. The outcome of these workshops and follow-ups are presented in documents CEP/AC.10/2005/3 and 4. In addition, a number of companies active in environmental monitoring and assessment were contacted to identify their possible interest in the activities of the Working Group and, more specifically, in building environmental observation capacities in EECCA. A round table with business representatives is being prepared for the fifth session of the Working Group.

II. WORK PLAN FROM SUMMER 2005 TO AUTUMN 2007

Task 1: Strengthening environmental monitoring and reporting capacities in EECCA

6. One of the major tasks of the Working Group is to serve as facilitator to achieve the objectives on environmental monitoring and information management of the Environment Strategy for EECCA adopted in Kiev (ECE/CEP/105/Rev.1). This will strengthen national environmental monitoring and assessment systems and, at the same time, help to improve the comparability of environmental information and facilitate the preparation of the next pan-European assessment report. This will also assist in the implementation of provisions of the Aarhus Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters regarding the collection and dissemination of environmental information (art. 5). The specific activities will be:

Sub-task 1.1: Manual on environmental indicators

7. The Working Group will organize a workshop to finalize the manual on the application of key environmental indicators in EECCA with recommendations on data collection, measurement and calculation methods, and with references to relevant international standards, policy targets and methodologies. The manual should assist in improving environmental reporting in EECCA countries and harmonizing their environmental assessments with those of EEA countries as well as facilitate data gathering for regional environmental assessment reports. Duration: end 2005 – spring 2006.

Sub-task 1.2: Adaptation of monitoring networks to international reporting requirements

8. The Working Group will assess the conformity of existing monitoring networks in EECCA with data collection and reporting requirements under applicable multilateral environmental agreements and programmes. This will be done by testing the manual on the application of key environmental indicators. A workshop will be organized to prepare recommendations to EECCA countries covering issues such as updating environmental quality standards, applying international measurement guidelines, optimizing and extending station networks, upgrading monitoring equipment and devices, and improving data validation and transmission. Duration: spring 2006 – spring 2007.

Sub-task 1.3: Environmental monitoring and reporting by enterprises

9. The Working Group will review the current situation with enterprise monitoring and reporting in EECCA and promote the exchange of experiences and good practices by public authorities and the private sector. A workshop will be organized to prepare practical guidance to EECCA on legal, regulatory, institutional, financial and technical measures to improve enterprise compliance reporting to environmental authorities and voluntary environmental reporting by companies. Duration: mid-2005 – spring 2007.

Sub-task 1.4: Application of the Kiev Guidelines on state-of-the-environment reporting

10. Following up on the case study of Armenia on the application of the Guidelines for the Preparation of Governmental Reports on the State and Protection of the Environment, the Working Group will assist other EECCA countries that have not set mechanisms for periodic state-of-the-environment reporting to do so using the above-mentioned Guidelines. Assistance will be provided to Azerbaijan and Tajikistan to publish national reports according to modern requirements. A network of focal points responsible in EECCA for state-of-the-environment reporting will be established to exchange experiences and to assist those in need. Duration: 2006 – autumn 2007.

Sub-task 1.5: EcoReporting electronic catalogue

11. The national administrators in EECCA, in cooperation with the secretariat, will continue developing the online catalogue of national periodicals on the environment (state-of-the-environment reports, environmental statistics bulletins, etc.) and environmental reports submitted to international bodies like the governing bodies of multilateral environmental conventions. The EcoReporting will follow the ReportNet system of EEA and ensure access online to the publications and reports referred to in the catalogue. A workshop will be organized to exchange experiences among national administrators including practical approaches to improving access to environmental reports through national official web sites. Duration: 2005 – autumn 2007.

Sub-task 1.6: Specific monitoring activities

12. Under the second Tacis monitoring project EEA will keep EECCA informed of some of its tools and instruments, in particular in such areas as reporting of air-quality information (AIRBASE) and water reporting (EUROWATERNET). Training and capacity-building

workshops will be organized. EEA will keep the Working Group informed about the progress in the project implementation and will submit the final results for consideration and approval.

Duration: mid-2005 – end 2006.

Task 2: Support to the development of the Belgrade assessment report

13. The general aim of the 2007 Belgrade report will remain the same as it was for previous reports in this series: to provide a pan-European, policy-relevant, up-to-date and reliable assessment of the interactions between environment and society and of the state of the environment in Europe (see CEP/AC.10/2005/7). The specific activities will be as follows:

Sub-task 2.1: Overall guidance and review

14. EEA will submit to the Working Group a draft content of the Belgrade assessment report, guidelines for data collection, country questionnaires (if any), draft individual parts and the executive summary of the report. The Working Group, at its sessions, will review the documents submitted and progress made by EEA, and it will provide comments and guidance. Duration: 2005 – early 2006.

Sub-task 2.2: Assistance in data collection

15. The Working Group, through its country members, will assist EEA in data collection should this be undertaken at the country level. Outputs will be submitted to the Working Group for verification, gap analysis and comments. Duration: 2006.

Sub-task 2.3: Coordination with related assessments and data collections

16. The Working Group, at its sessions, will consider progress made in other international environmental assessments and data collection activities of relevance to the Belgrade assessment report, such as the fourth Global Environment Outlook of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the development of a pan-European environment and health information system by the World Health Organization/Europe, the Questionnaire on Environment Statistics of the United Nations Statistics Division and UNEP, an assessment report on progress in the implementation of the EECCA Environment Strategy by the Task Force for the Implementation of the Environmental Action Programme for Eastern and Central Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia, and a second Environment Outlook of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. The Working Group will explore synergies between various reports and provide comments. Duration: 2005 – spring 2006.

III. TARGET AUDIENCE AND PARTNERS

17. As before, central public authorities that are responsible for environmental monitoring and information in EECCA and other UNECE countries will be the main target audience. Activities will be pursued in cooperation with the organizations that are mentioned above and with the secretariats of the governing bodies of relevant multilateral environmental agreements. Regional environmental centres, the European EcoForum and the private sector will also be involved.

IV. RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS

18. The regular budget of the United Nations provides core support to the Working Group. It covers the costs of the Secretary to the Working Group and associated staff costs, and conference services by the United Nations Office in Geneva including meeting, translation, interpretation, publication (in English) and distribution costs. Voluntary contributions are indispensable, however, to allow the Working Group to implement its mandate, especially with regard to capacity-building.

19. In 2001-2003, Denmark provided UNECE with some US\$ 100,000 for the participation of experts from countries in transition in the Working Group's meetings. It also financed three workshops in EECCA through bilateral arrangements with the host authorities. EEA, under the € 1,5 million EC/Tacis project on strengthening environmental information and observation capacity in EECCA, provided UNECE with some € 384,000 to support activities of the Working Group in 2002 (end)-2003.

20. The activities in 2004-early 2005 including the participation of EECCA experts in the fifth session of the Working Group were supported financially by Austria, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. These countries contributed some US\$ 150,000 in total to the Trust Fund on Environmental Monitoring.

21. After the Working Group's session in June 2005, some US\$ 45,000 (including United Nations administrative costs and contingency reserve) may remain unspent in the UNECE Trust Fund. Some funds may be forthcoming in 2005 from EEA to support EECCA representatives' participation in meetings of the Working Group in 2006 to discuss the Belgrade report preparations. These funds would originate in fact from the second (€ 1,0 million) Tacis monitoring project that EEA intends to implement in 2005-2006 under a grant agreement with EC. Additional contributions will be required to support specific sub-tasks of the Working Group's work plan. These should allow the organizing of workshops in EECCA, the hiring of consultants to prepare background papers, the producing of publications in Russian and the secretariat travelling to relevant meetings outside Geneva. There is also a need to recruit a short-term staff member to support sub-task 1.5 on EcoReporting and to assist in organizational and financial matters.

22. A detailed breakdown of the extrabudgetary resources required for the Working Group is presented in the annex below.

Annex

**DONOR SUPPORT NEEDS FOR THE ACTIVITIES OF THE WORKING GROUP ON
ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT
FROM SUMMER 2005 TO AUTUMN 2007 (in €)**

Expenses	# of units	Unit rate (in €)	Costs
Sub-task 1.1			
1.1.1 Workshop (travel, per diem, logistics)	1	18,000	18,000
1.1.2 Consultants	2	3,000	6,000
1.1.3 Publication in Russian	1	5,000	5,000
Subtotal			29,000
Sub-task 1.2			
1.2.1 EECZA experts	12	300	3,600
1.2.2 Workshop (travel, per diem, logistics)	1	18,000	18,000
1.2.3 Consultants	2	5,000	10,000
1.2.4 Publication in Russian	1	5,000	3,600
Subtotal			35,200
Sub-task 1.3			
1.3.1 Workshop (travel, per diem, logistics)	1	18,000	18,000
1.3.2 Consultants	2	5,000	10,000
1.3.3 Publication in Russian	1	5,000	5,000
Subtotal			33,000
Sub-task 1.4			
1.4.1 Two meetings of focal points (travel, per diem)	24	1,500	36,000
1.4.2 Local experts in two EECZA countries	20	300	6,000
1.4.3 Travel of international experts	6	2,000	12,000
1.4.4 Two publications in two languages	2	6,000	12,000
Subtotal			66,000
Sub-task 1.5			
1.5.1 Workshop (travel, per diem, logistics)	1	18,000	18,000
1.5.2 Short-term staff at UNECE	25	5,000	125,000
1.5.5 Computer equipment	1	5,000	5,000
Subtotal			143,000
Task 2			
2.1 EECZA travel to three Working Group meetings	51	1,500	76,500
2.2 United Nations staff travel	12	1,500	18,000
Subtotal			76,500
Total costs*			382,700

*including UN administrative costs and contingency reserve.