

Economic Commission for Europe

Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on
Access to Information, Public Participation
in Decision-making and Access to Justice
in Environmental Matters

Working Group of the Parties

Fifteenth meeting

Geneva, 3–5 September 2012

Item 9 (c) of the provisional agenda

**Preparations for the fifth ordinary session of the
Meeting of the Parties: assessment of the current
interim scheme of contributions**

Draft ~~p~~Proposal on the preparation of an assessment of the current interim scheme of contributions

Approved, as amended at the meeting

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Note by the Bureau

Summary

The present ~~draft~~ proposal on the preparation of an assessment of the current interim scheme of contributions for activities under the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters was prepared by the Bureau of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention, with the assistance of the secretariat, pursuant to Meeting of the Parties decision IV/7 on financial arrangements (see ECE/MP.PP/2011/2/Add.1).¹

The document outlines some key elements for preparing an assessment of the current interim scheme of contributions to the Convention's trust fund and its relationship to the work of the Convention. The Working Group of the Parties ~~is invited to consider~~ the document at its fifteenth session ~~with a view to providing comments, as appropriate, and~~ ~~and~~ ~~approv~~ed ing it, as amended at the meeting.

¹ Available from

http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/pp/mop4/Documents/ece_mp.pp_2011_2_add.1_eng.pdf.

I. Purpose of the assessment

1. In accordance with decision IV/7 of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention), the Working Group of the Parties is requested to assess the current interim scheme of contributions and its relationship to the work of the Convention. The assessment, together with any budgetary constraints faced by Parties, will be taken into account when preparing the decision on financial arrangements for adoption by the Meeting of the Parties at its fifth session.

II. Objectives of the assessment

2. The objectives of the assessment are to:
- (a) Review various aspects of the flow of contributions (e.g., donors, amounts, dates when contributions were received) during the implementation of the work programmes 2006–2008, 2009–2011 and 2012–2014);
 - (b) Identify a correlation between the flow of contributions and the implementation of the work programmes;
 - (c) Identify the most effective financial scheme for supporting implementation of the Convention;
 - (d) Provide a comparative survey on the contribution models used by other multilateral environmental agreements.

III. Methodology of the assessment

3. The evaluation will be carried out by an independent consultant. To ensure a truly independent review, in preparing the first draft, the consultant will be granted the authority to include elements not derived from the comments received from Parties, stakeholders and the secretariat. The consultant will be required to take into consideration, but not necessarily to incorporate, comments received from Parties, stakeholders and the secretariat. The consultant will be required to incorporate comments of a factual or editorial nature.
4. The following approaches for data collection and analysis ~~could~~will be considered:
- (a) A desk review of relevant documents (reports on implementation of the work programmes);
 - (b) A survey (with a simple questionnaire) of national focal points;
 - (c) Discussions with national focal points, the secretariat and other experts/stakeholders, also via e-mail.
5. Active engagement of national focal points is crucial for the successful preparation of the assessment.
6. As the length of the document may exceed the word limit established for such documents at the United Nations, and as the schedule for the document's preparation is

very tight, arranging for translation outside United Nations Conference Services should be considered.²

IV. Content of the Assessment

7. Following the data collection and the interviews, the consultant will prepare a report including:

(a) A quantitative analysis of the current scheme of contributions (e.g., donors, amounts, dates when contributions were received);

(b) A qualitative analysis of how the current scheme impacts the implementation of the Convention's work programmes (e.g., human resources availability and continuity in the secretariat; support for non-governmental organizations and countries with economies in transition; financial implications of the entry into force of the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers);

(c) An identification of the legal and budgetary conditions under which Parties make contributions to the Convention, as well as to other multilateral environmental agreements;

(d) An identification of barriers that may potentially prevent Parties from deciding on a mandatory scheme of contributions, or a scheme of contributions based on a particular scale indicating the respective amount that each Party is required, recommended or encouraged to contribute.

8. On the basis of the above the consultant will prepare conclusions regarding the scheme of contributions.

V. Indicative timeline

9. Decision IV/7 specifies that the assessment shall be taken into account when preparing the decision on financial arrangements for adoption by the Meeting of the Parties at its fifth session. The indicative timeline below was prepared in accordance with that time frame. The Working Group ~~may also wish~~decided to allow for a commenting process among national focal points and stakeholders prior to finalization of the evaluation.

Timeline

- Draft proposal ~~to be~~was submitted by the Bureau to the Working Group of the Parties for discussion and approval (*fifteenth meeting, 3–5 September 2012*). The Working Group ~~may wish to~~mandated the Bureau to oversee the preparation of the assessment in the intervening period until the Working Group's next meeting.
- The consultant starts working on the draft as soon as possible after the approval of the terms of reference.
- The first draft of the assessment is distributed to the Bureau for its comments (*late December/January 2013*).

² In accordance with United Nations regulations, a document prepared by the secretariat or consultant and submitted for translation to United Nations language services should not exceed 8,500 words. The document should be finalized for formatting, editing and translation at least 12 weeks prior to the date of the meeting. The secretariat will explore the possibility of translating the document through in-kind contributions by interested Parties.

- Draft is revised by the consultant taking into consideration the comments of the Bureau; ~~as appropriate,~~ and the second draft is circulated to national focal points and stakeholders for comments.
- The third draft is prepared by the consultant taking into consideration the comments received; ~~as appropriate,~~ and sent to the Bureau for its feedback.
- The Bureau may wish to consider the draft when deliberating on the issue of a possible future decision on financial arrangements.
- The final draft is then submitted to the Working Group of the Parties (*early March 2013*) in time for its *sixteenth meeting, tentatively scheduled for June 2013*, for its consideration and adoption.

VI. Required expertise

10. The consultant should have extensive experience in conducting evaluations, in particular those having financial aspects related to multilateral environmental agreements (e.g., conventions, protocols); a sound knowledge of the Aarhus Convention and its practical implementation; extensive professional experience in programme evaluation, impact assessment and strategic recommendations for continued support/development of programmes/strategies; excellent writing skills; and strong analytical, presentation and interpersonal skills. The consultant should be impartial and not pursue his/her personal interests or the interests of any organization with which he/she might be associated. Fluency in English is essential. Recruitment of the consultant will be done by the secretariat, in accordance with United Nations administrative regulations on human resources management.
