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## Economic Commission for Europe

Committee on Environmental Policy

Conference of European Statisticians

### Joint Task Force on Environmental Indicators

#### Tenth session

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Item 4 of the provisional agenda (abstract)

### **Abstract: Progress in the production and sharing of core environmental indicators in countries of South-Eastern and Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (updated analysis as of March 2015)<sup>1</sup>**

Note by the secretariat

## I. Introduction

1. The countries of South-Eastern and Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia<sup>2</sup> (target countries) have been working together since 2009 in the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Joint Task Force on Environmental Indicators (Joint Task Force) to enhance the comparability of environmental statistics between each other and within the entire pan-European region. The ongoing work for the establishment of the national Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS) in those countries is implemented in close cooperation with the ENPI-SEIS project led by the European Environment Agency (EEA) and funded by the European Union.

2. The Joint Task Force serves as a forum for joint work on improving environmental data collection, reporting and assessment. In their efforts to achieve the above-mentioned goals, the countries have reviewed and agreed to apply a set of 41 environmental indicators

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<sup>1</sup> For further reading, the complete paper “Progress in the production and sharing of core environmental indicators in countries of South-Eastern and Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (updated analysis as of March 2015)” is available online:  
<http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=35516#/>.

<sup>2</sup> Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Montenegro, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Serbia, Tajikistan, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

contained in the Online Guidelines for the Application of Environmental Indicators (Indicator Guidelines).<sup>3</sup> The countries have the common ambition to produce and share all the indicators and their underpinning datasets in the near future, which is an important step towards establishing SEIS. With this, the target countries aim at having a solid set of indicators ready for use for a possible pan-European assessment cycle.

3. The availability of data flows and the calculation of meaningful environmental indicators are important to help policy makers at national and international levels to better understand the undergoing changes to the environment, to compare the results with neighbouring countries, and to take informed policy actions for safeguarding the environment. They also enable citizens to access comprehensive information about the ambient environment in an effective manner.

4. The process focused on the production and sharing of the environmental indicators has accelerated since 2013 under the Joint Task Force. The countries, in this process, have started working with eight indicators and fourteen of their underpinning data flows referred to as 'core indicators'. Those cover five thematic areas: air, climate change, water, biodiversity and waste. At its Ninth Session in November 2014 the Joint Task Force decided to expand their focus by taking up additional six indicators into the agreed core set. The new core set of 14 indicators and 44 data flows (the core set) contains further indicators on water and biodiversity and opens up to the thematic areas of agriculture and transport.

## **II. Abstract – Availability of online data flows for the core set of indicators and progress between May 2014 and March 2015**

5. The analysis as of March 2015 shows that the majority of the 14 core indicators and underpinning data flows are produced and shared by the twelve target countries that submitted links (see figure 1). All of these countries produce and share data for each of the eight indicators that have been in the focus since 2013, with only two exceptions (Bosnia and Herzegovina for the air indicators as well as Georgia for the indicator on waste). With regard to the additional six core indicators that were selected only in November 2014, the analysis also finds a good performance: five of those are already produced and shared by the vast majority of the countries, while only the indicator *Renewable freshwater resources (CI)* is not yet produced and shared by a number of countries.

6. Besides these encouraging results, however, the analysis also points out a number of cases in which further improvements are necessary by the countries. On the one hand, those gaps include cases in which not all data flows under certain indicators are shared or are not produced according to the agreed methodology of the Indicator Guidelines (see chapter III of the full version of the analysis). On the other hand, the analysis suggests tailored improvements in terms of providing background information and a brief interpretation with the shared data as well as making it available to the national public and international community.

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.unece.org/env/indicators.html>

Figure 1  
Production and Sharing of 14 core indicators by 12 target countries

Indicator	Data flow	ARM	AZE	BLR	BIH	GEO	KAZ	KGZ	MNE	MDA	RUS	SRB	MKD
Emissions of pollutants into the atmospheric air (A1)	SO <sub>2</sub>	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	NO <sub>x</sub>	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	NMVOCS	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓
	NH <sub>3</sub>	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
	CO	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	CH	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	POPs	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓	✗
	Heavy metals	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗
	PM	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
Ambient air quality (A2)	NO <sub>2</sub>	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	SO <sub>2</sub>	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	O <sub>3</sub>	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓
	PM <sub>10</sub>	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Consumption of ozone-depleting substances (A3)	Total consumption of ODS	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓
	ODS broken down by different substances	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Total GHG emissions	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Greenhouse gas emissions (B3)	LULUCF	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗
	GHGs broken down by different gases	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓
	Total renewable freshwater resources	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗
Freshwater abstraction (C2)	Fresh surface water abstracted	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Fresh groundwater abstracted	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Total freshwater abstraction	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Water Exploitation Index	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓
Total water use (C3)	Total freshwater available	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓
	Losses of water during transport	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Total freshwater use (by economic activities)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓
BOD <sub>5</sub> and concentration of ammonium in rivers (C10)	BOD <sub>5</sub> in rivers	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Ammonium in rivers	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Nutrients in freshwater (C11)	Nitrates in lakes	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Total phosphorus in lakes	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓
	Phosphates in rivers	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Nitrates in rivers	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Nitrates in groundwater	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗
Protected areas (D1)	Total protected areas by IUCN categories	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Threatened and protected species (D4)	Number of species protected	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Number of species threatened	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓
Fertilizer Consumption (F2)	Agricultural area	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Total consumption of mineral fertilizers	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
	Area treated with mineral fertilizers	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Total consumption of organic fertilizers	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗
	Area treated with organic fertilizers	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
Passenger transport demand (H1)	Total passenger transport demand	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
	Passenger transport demand by different modes of transport	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
Waste generation (I1)	Annual municipal waste generation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

**Legend**

- ✓ Data flow produced and shared
- ✗ Data flow not shared
- ✗ Data flow shared with issues in data structure

### III. Conclusion

7. This analysis reveals that the target countries are striving to share all indicators they produce while improving the content and user-friendliness of the websites where information on the indicators is shared. Almost all of the indicators produced by the twelve target countries that provided links for this analysis are available to the local public as well as to the international community. While many countries already publish background information on the applied methodology with their indicators, further efforts have to be invested into the publication of brief interpretations of the shared data flows and trends.

8. Moreover, the vast majority of the target countries produce indicators that are compliant with the international standards and formats that they agreed upon in the UNECE Joint Task Force on Environmental indicators. This assessment as of March 2015 finds progress in meeting the recommendations of the Joint Task Force in comparison with previous analyses in May 2014 and November 2014, which is highlighted in a case study of five target countries.

9. At the same time, in a number of cases it is noted that additional data flows have to be produced and shared and production methodology has to be further adjusted to fully implement all requirements of the Indicator Guidelines. This is in particular true with regard to the ambitious goal of the target countries to produce and share a total of 13 data flows on different parameters under the air indicators.

10. It seems evident that given the progress of the countries in production and sharing highlighted in this report, there is optimism that the majority of target countries can ensure the establishment of national SEIS with a solid set of environmental indicators and data flows.

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