





UNECE Committee on Environmental Policy

The twenty-fourth session of the UNECE Committee on Environmental Policy was successfully held on 29 to 31 January 2019 in the Palais des Nations, Geneva. The session covered, amongst other things, the mid-term review of the main outcomes of the Eighth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference. This included the Environmental Performance Reviews, UNECE multilateral environmental agreements in support of the 2030 Agenda, greening the economy, cleaning the air, and developing the Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS).

We are happy to report that the Committee welcomed the mid-term review report on the establishment of the SEIS, as prepared by the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment. It moreover requested the Working Group to lead a further review of progress in establishing the SEIS in Europe and Central Asia in advance of the next Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference, which is expected to be held in 2021.

The Committee furthermore considered options for the next pan-European environmental assessment as part of addressing the activities being carried out under environmental monitoring, assessment and reporting. It requested the Working Group, working in close cooperation with the European Environment Agency (EEA) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), to prepare a detailed proposal for the next pan-European environmental assessment to be presented to the Committee at its next session in November 2019.

All documents and presentations from the Committee session can be found here: <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=50063>

Mid-term review report on the establishment of the SEIS

The launch of the mid-term review report on the establishment of the Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS), during the twenty-fourth session of the CEP, included a panel discussion on developing SEIS. The discussion was moderated by Hans Bruyninckx, Executive Director of the European Environment Agency, including an intervention by Kumi Kitamori from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and a panel consisting of Régis Farret from the Ministry of Ecology in France, Faig Mutallimov from the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources in Azerbaijan and Olivera Kujundžić from the Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism in Montenegro.

The Committee welcomed the self-assessment of progress by the majority of UNECE member States and, in particular, by all countries in the region with economies in transition. The SEIS mid-term review report confirmed that many countries across the pan-European region have continued to harmonize relevant environmental data flows and improve the quality of the selected environmental indicators and underpinning data flows since 2016. The report showcased the inherent value in continued monitoring of the establishment of SEIS through a regular self-assessment of progress, particularly helping to improve the use of relevant environmental data and information for multiple purposes, knowledge-based policy-making and better environmental governance.

The mid-term review report on the establishment of SEIS, as presented in document ECE/CEP/2019/7, can be found here: <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=50823>



Heads of international organizations refresh commitment to **sharing of environmental information** across pan-European region

On 30 January 2019, in parallel with the twenty-fourth session of the UNECE Committee on Environmental Policy in Geneva, the executive heads of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), the European Office of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP/Europe) and the European Environment Agency (EEA) met as part of their long-standing common approach in support of national, regional and global reporting on the state of the environment. UNECE, UNEP and EEA work together closely on environmental monitoring, reporting and assessment, thus supporting the achievement of SDGs.

They have agreed to cooperate on establishing a regular environmental assessment process and extending the Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS) across the pan-European region supporting countries' efforts to have SEIS in place by 2021, as stated in the Ministerial Declaration from Batumi, Georgia (June 2016). According to the SEIS principles, information should be: managed as close as possible to its source; collected once and shared with others for many purposes; readily available to easily fulfil reporting obligations;

easily accessible to all users; accessible to enable comparisons at the appropriate geographical scale and the participation of citizens; fully available to the general public and at national level in the relevant national language(s); and supported through common, free, open software standards. In pursuit of this goal, the three organizations have held regular high-level dialogues supported by coordination and information exchange meetings at the operational level.

The meeting of the executive heads on 30 January focused on the latest developments and opportunities in environmental monitoring, reporting and assessment and ways to further strengthen linkages between various networks involved in these areas. The meeting coincided with the successful completion of a [mid-term review in support of the implementation of the outcomes of the Eighth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference](#) (Batumi, 2016). The mid-term review report demonstrated how the three organizations have strengthened cooperation and promoted the sharing of environmental information and streamlining assessment activities.



Twenty-first session of the Working Group

Following up on decisions made during the twentieth session of the Working Group (3–4 September 2018), and in preparation for the twenty-first session, the secretariat has submitted a [revised version of the assessment framework](#) of the Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS), as well as an updated [draft concept for next pan-European environmental assessment](#).

The Working Group will be asked to consider the revised SEIS self-assessment. This will include deciding on a revised set of questions, performance scores, comparability issues between the 2016, 2018 and planned 2020 performance scores, the distinction between mandatory and non-mandatory questions, etc. The Working Group will need to decide on the final version of the questionnaire leading up to the Ninth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference.

Following up on the request from the Committee, the Working Group will also be asked to discuss and decide on options for the next pan-European environmental assessment to be presented to the Committee at its twenty-fifth session (November 2019). The current proposal includes a timetable, budget and expanded outline for each option to be considered by the Working Group.

For more details on the programme and all the meeting documents, please see the meeting page:

<http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=50823>

It is still possible to register online for the next session of the Working Group using the following link:

<https://uncdb.unece.org/app/ext/meeting-registration?id=8hFTgn>

Revising the **SEIS** assessment framework and the **UNECE** set of environmental indicators

The secretariat is inviting the Working Group and the Joint Task Force to contribute actively to this work during the drafting phase. It has therefore launched a small survey covering the indicator themes that national experts can help the secretariat in reviewing, as well as the upcoming discussion on the revised SEIS assessment framework. You are kindly invited to respond to the survey by 29 March using the following links.



For English:

https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/WGEMA_ENG

For Russian:

https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/WGEMA_RUS



Upcoming Events

Twenty-first session of the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment.

6–7 May 2019, Geneva.

<http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=50823>

Regional Conference on Environmental Data

8 May 2019, Geneva.

<http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=50826>

23rd International Transport and Air Pollution Conference

13–15 May 2019, Thessaloniki, Greece.

<https://www.tapconference.org>

UN High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development

9-18 July, New York, USA

<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf/2019>

World Water Week

25-30 August, Stockholm, Sweden

<http://www.worldwaterweek.org>

Sixteenth session of the Joint Task Force on Environmental Indicators and Statistics

28–29 October 2019, Geneva

<http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=50800>

The Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment was established in 2000 by the Committee on Environmental Policy to serve as an instrument for UNECE member States to provide recommendations, propose action plans, and improve coordination of international initiatives concerned with environmental monitoring, assessment and reporting.

For more information on the Working Group please visit:

<http://www.unece.org/environmental-policy/environmental-monitoring-and-assessment>

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