



Economic Commission for Europe**Committee on Sustainable Energy****Twenty-ninth session**

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Item 6(d) of the provisional agenda

Future work of the Committee on Sustainable Energy:**Any other business****Report on regional advisory services in sustainable energy****Note by the secretariat****I. Introduction**

1. The regional advisory services in sustainable energy are provided in accordance with the Guidelines of the Regular Programme for Technical Cooperation (RPTC). Its objective, in the context of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) region, is to support, through the transfer of knowledge and expertise, countries with economies in transition in their efforts to develop the capacity to achieve internationally agreed development goals and the outcomes of United Nations conferences and summits. There are 17 ECE member States¹ eligible to receive regional advisory services. In this context, technical cooperation is a core component of ECE's support to member States for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. The regional advisory services complement and reinforce the regular and extrabudgetary programmes.

2. Description of operational activities under the regional advisory services is provided in the document Report on regional advisory services in sustainable energy (ECE/ENERGY/2018/9) presented to the Committee on Sustainable Energy at its twenty-seventh session in September 2017.

3. The regional advisory services are in line with the Programme of Work for 2020 of the sustainable energy subprogramme² and support the work of subsidiary bodies of the Committee. Regional adviser works in cooperation with the focal point on RPTC in the Housing and Land Management Subprogramme, in particular in energy efficiency in buildings, as this area is under the Joint Task Force on Energy Efficiency Standards in Buildings established jointly by the Committee on Sustainable Energy and the Committee on Housing and Land Management.

4. The regional adviser is working in close cooperation with colleagues in the Sustainable Energy Division (SED), other ECE Divisions, other UN Regional Commissions,

¹ Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Montenegro, Republic of Moldova, Republic of North Macedonia, Serbia, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan.

² Draft programme of work of the sustainable energy subprogramme for 2020 (ECE/ENERGY/2019/3)

UN Resident Coordinator Offices (RCO) in eligible ECE member States, organizations of UN system, international and national organizations in support of needs of countries eligible for technical cooperation activities based on demand expressed by countries.

5. During the period under review, technical assistance was provided to countries of South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia.

6. In the period under review (October 2019 - November 2020), the following projects were managed by the regional adviser:

(a) United Nations Development Account (UNDA) project Sustainable Energy for All (SE4All) in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia in cooperation with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP); ECE – lead agency;

(b) UNDA project Integrated energy and water resource management in support of sustainable development in South-East Europe and Central Asia in cooperation with ESCAP; ECE – lead agency;

(c) UNDA project Global Initiative towards post-Covid-19 resurgence of the micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSME) sector; The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) – lead agencies and ECE – one of the participating agencies;

(d) Extrabudgetary project Enhancing national capacities to develop and implement energy efficiency standards for buildings in the ECE region (funded by the Russian Federation); and

(e) Project Improving capacity of the Government of Ukraine to develop infrastructure for production and use of hydrogen to support green post-COVID-19 recovery (funded by RPTC).

7. Provision of regional advisory services in the period under review was significantly hampered by the COVID-19 pandemic. In particular, missions to the countries and in-person capacity-building workshops became almost impossible since March 2020. New ways to provide regional advisory services had to be considered and implemented.

II. Key regional advisory services (October 2019 - November 2020)

8. Outreach and engaging partners have been a focus of efforts of the regional adviser in the period under review. Internally, Environment Division, Forests, Land and Housing Division, and Sustainable Transport Division were the main partners for joint activities. Externally, it was possible to leverage limited RPTC funds by working actively with and attracting in-kind and/or financial contributions from the following international organizations, governments, and academic institutions: ESCAP, ESCWA, UNCTAD, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), Copenhagen Centre on Energy Efficiency (UNEP-Technical University of Denmark (UNEP DTU) Partnership), Passive House Institute, Institute for Energy Efficiency in Production (EEP), Governments of Armenia, Georgia, and Russian Federation.

A. Capacity-building activities

9. The regional adviser organized several capacity-building workshops in the framework of the Tenth International Forum on Energy for Sustainable Development, 7-8 October 2019, Bangkok, Thailand: (1) Workshop on Industrial Energy Efficiency: making better use of existing resources (summary: http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/energy/se/pdfs/geee/geee6_Oct2019/6GEEE_IEE_summary.pdf); (2) Workshop on Energy Efficiency in Buildings (summary: http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/energy/se/pdfs/geee/geee6_Oct2019/6GEEE_BEE_summary.pdf); and (3) National Sustainable Energy Action Plans – from Commitments to Actions (see also para. 14 below) (summary:

http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/energy/se/pdfs/geee/geee6_Oct2019/6GEEE_NSEA_P_summary.pdf). Over 100 delegates participated in the workshops, including from the following RPTC-eligible countries: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Republic of Moldova, Serbia, Tajikistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan. The workshops were organized in partnership with (1) UNIDO and Institute for Energy Efficiency in Production (EEP); (2) ECE Forests, Land and Housing Division; and (3) UN ESCAP. The regional adviser also contributed to the organization of the capacity-building workshop Sustainable Energy and Gender Empowerment led by ESCWA (summary: https://www.unescwa.org/sites/www.unescwa.org/files/events/files/report-thailand-7-8_october_2019.pdf). The International Forum on Energy for Sustainable Development is a unique mechanism that allows to bring participants from member States of the UN Regional Commissions, including the majority from countries eligible for technical cooperation, and provide capacity-building activities and peer learning on a variety of topics in the energy area. Having several capacity-building workshops at the Forum allowed to maximize synergies both among these workshops and between them and other plenary sessions and workshops at the Forum.

10. The regional adviser organized Training Workshop on High Performance Buildings jointly with UNDP Office in Armenia under the auspices of the UNECE Joint Task Force on Energy Efficiency Standards in Buildings in Yerevan, Armenia on 21-22 November 2019 (<http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=52433>). The training was intended for professionals at construction and design companies, scientific and educational organizations, testing laboratories, government officials, independent experts, including engineers and architects, and other stakeholders. Over 80 participants attended the training workshop, including from the following RPTC-eligible countries: Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, North Macedonia, Republic of Moldova, and Ukraine. The Passive House Institute provided information on Passive House fundamentals and components, including construction systems, windows, facades, air tightness and heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems. Training included presentation of examples of buildings constructed and retrofitted to Passive House standard under various climatic and socio-economic conditions and software demonstration. The second day of the workshop was focused on discussions of countries' experiences in applying high performance buildings principles in practice and on contribution from international organizations in assisting countries in implementing high performance standards in buildings. Panellists and participants looked at the challenges in implementing High Performance Buildings principles and Passive House standard in their countries and at the missing links for adoption of more advanced energy efficiency standards in buildings. It also included sessions under the UNDP-Green Climate Fund (GCF) project "De-Risking and Scaling-up investment in Energy Efficient Building Retrofits" under implementation in Armenia. News item on the workshop is available at: <http://www.unece.org/info/media/news/sustainable-energy/2019/unece-and-partners-help-improve-buildings-energy-performance-in-armenia-georgia-kyrgyzstan-north-macedonia-republic-of-moldova-russian-federation-and-ukraine/doc.html>.

11. The regional adviser organized two capacity-building Workshops on Data Solutions for Evidence-based Policies and Stakeholder Collaboration targeted primarily for government officials and other stakeholders in Armenia (on 12 May 2020) and in Georgia (on 14 May 2020). The objective of these workshops was to identify key elements needed to develop data solutions to support energy transition of buildings. The workshops initially planned as physical events in Yerevan and Tbilisi had to be organized as on-line workshops using WebEx platform due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The workshop for Armenia (held in Russian) was organized in close cooperation with the UNDP Office in Armenia and the Urban Development Committee of the Republic of Armenia. The workshop for Georgia (held in English) was organized in close cooperation with the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia and the National Statistics Office of Georgia. In addition to government officials, the workshop brought together representatives of authorities at the national, regional, and municipal levels, statistical office representatives, urban planners, utilities and grid operators, building management companies, architects, engineers, and researchers. Around 80 participants attended each of the two workshops, including from the following RPTC-eligible countries: Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, and North

Macedonia. ESCWA facilitated attendance of participants from Jordan and Tunisia in the workshop for Georgia. News item on the workshops is available at: <http://www.unece.org/info/media/news/sustainable-energy/2020/data-solutions-help-develop-evidence-based-policies-to-improve-energy-efficiency-in-buildings-in-armenia-and-georgia/doc.html>.

12. At the time of preparing the document, the following capacity-building events are under preparation: Subregional workshop on attaining carbon neutrality in Central Asia and other countries of the ECE region (Geneva, 23-24 November 2020); Workshop on implementation of national sustainable energy action plans developed under the UNDA project Sustainable Energy for All in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia (Almaty or on-line, October-November 2020, jointly with ESCAP); Workshop on how to tackle key bottlenecks, find solutions and enhance investments to increase the uptake of renewable energy in the Caucasus and Central Asia (Tbilisi or Geneva or on-line, October 2020, jointly with the ECE Environment Division). Due to the uncertainty created by the COVID-19 pandemic, it is not clear whether it will be possible to organize all or some of these events.

B. Field projects

13. The regional adviser completed implementation of the project Sustainable Energy for All (SE4All) in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia. The project was funded by UNDA. The project was implemented in cooperation with ESCAP (ECE – lead agency). One of the main outcomes of the project was draft National Sustainable Energy Action Plans (NSEAPs) developed for each beneficiary country (Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan). The draft NSEAPs focus on energy aspects that most directly relate to the SDGs, poverty reduction and meeting environmental goals, in particular: the gender issue as it relates to the development of the energy sector and the role of sustainable energy in achieving SDG5 on achieving gender equality; water-energy nexus (in relation to SDG6); and the role of sustainable energy in achieving Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) for the Paris Agreement (SDG13). The documents outline current energy production, distribution and consumption; government's targets of generation growth for economic development; national targets to meet SDG7; leverages to perform actions to meet SDG7; and cross-cutting issues of energy efficiency, renewable energy and energy access. Each draft NSEAP contains information on specific actions, the timeframe for their implementation, and entities responsible for these actions.

14. Final validation workshop of the project National Sustainable Energy Action Plans – from Commitments to Actions was held in Bangkok, Thailand on 8 October 2019 in the framework of the Tenth International Forum on Energy for Sustainable Development: From Targets to Action. In presentations and discussions, speakers and participants confirmed the value of developed draft NSEAPs for the beneficiary countries, which can and should be used as an instrument for implementation of practical steps in transition to sustainable energy. The concept of NSEAP can be used by other countries that wish to speed up their transition to sustainable energy. Possible future steps outlined at the workshop include: adoption of NSEAPs by Governments of beneficiary countries; implementation of NSEAPs; support of NSEAP implementation by international organizations; development of NSEAPs by other countries; and making use of project results by other projects, strategies, programmes, and plans. All project materials are available at: <http://www.unece.org/info/open-unece/pmt/regular-budget/1617x-sustainable-energy-for-all-se4all-in-eastern-europe-the-caucasus-and-central-asia.html>.

15. The regional adviser manages UNDA project Integrated energy and water resource management in support of sustainable development in South-East Europe and Central Asia. The project is implemented in cooperation with ESCAP (ECE – lead agency). Beneficiary countries: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Serbia. The project aims to develop an integrated management and monitoring tool focused on interconnecting energy and water systems and helping to manage the impact of energy production on water systems. More specifically, the project assists the beneficiary countries to identify and develop best practices and measures to apply a cross-cutting approach to energy and water resource management. The focus this year is on the development of case studies in the beneficiary

countries, with the main objectives: to understand the benefits of using the United Nations Framework Classification for Resources (UNFC) for integrated energy and groundwater resource management; to assess the constraints in the use of UNFC in integrated energy and groundwater resource management in Kyrgyzstan; to outline the basic rules of harmonization of the national classification of energy and groundwater resources to UNFC through a mapping scheme; and to analyze how UNFC could enable integrated management of energy and groundwater resource endowments in the country to be aligned with the SDGs. In addition, in response to the COVID-19 crisis, a study on the impact of COVID-19 on critical raw material supplies needed for the healthcare sector and possible mitigation actions will be undertaken.

16. The regional adviser manages energy-related part of the UNDA project Global Initiative towards post-Covid-19 resurgence of the MSME sector (UNCTAD and ESCWA are lead agencies and ECE is one of the participating agencies). Under Phase 1 of the project, two sets of Guidelines and best practices have been developed: Guidelines and best practices for MSMEs to assure resiliency and progress towards a circular economy in sustainable resource management and critical raw material supply chain solutions and Guidelines and best practices for MSMEs in delivering energy efficient products and in providing renewable energy equipment. The on-line trainings are to be organized in September-October 2020. Under phase 2 of the project, the first set of Guidelines and best practices will be customized for Tajikistan and Ukraine, and the second set – for Georgia and North Macedonia.

17. The regional adviser manages extrabudgetary project Enhancing national capacities to develop and implement energy efficiency standards for buildings in the UNECE region funded by the Russian Federation. It is a follow-up project to a set of projects on energy efficiency standards in buildings completed last year. Among the project activities are conducting a gap analysis between the performance objectives set forth in the Framework Guidelines for Energy Efficiency Standards in Buildings and current energy efficiency standards and their implementation in the countries of South-Eastern and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, Central Asia, and in the Russian Federation; development of three national studies with a more detailed gap analysis (to be selected among Armenia, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, Republic of Moldova, and Serbia); and national training seminars in the three selected ECE member States on high-performance energy efficiency standards in buildings. The project started in July 2020 and will continue until March 2022.

18. The regional adviser manages project Improving capacity of the Government of Ukraine to develop infrastructure for production and use of hydrogen to support green post-COVID-19 recovery funded by RPTC. The Government of Ukraine requested ECE to provide technical assistance in preparing a Roadmap for the hydrogen technologies market development. The project is implemented in close cooperation with colleagues from SED, Environment Division, Sustainable Transport Division, and UNDP Office in Ukraine. The project started in August 2020 and will be implemented by the end of 2020.

C. Other technical assistance activities

19. The regional adviser undertook advisory missions to Tirana, 10-11 December 2019, Tbilisi, 17-18 December 2019, and Kyiv (Kiev), 7-8 July 2020. Missions' objectives were to provide advice on possible steps to attract and facilitate investments in renewable energy and energy efficiency, on diversifying energy sources to provide security of energy supply, on implementation of strategies and action plans for sustainable energy development, and on implementation of sustainable energy related policies and legislation. Mission to Tirana identified necessary steps in preparation of Renewable Energy Hard Talks that was planned in the first half of 2020 but is postponed indefinitely due to COVID-19 pandemic. Mission to Tbilisi led to confirmation of the organization of the Eleventh International Forum on Energy for Sustainable Development in Georgia in September 2020, which had to be postponed to 2021 due to COVID-19 pandemic. One of the concrete results of the mission to Kyiv is development of the RPTC-funded project Improving capacity of the Government of Ukraine to develop infrastructure for production and use of hydrogen to support green post-COVID-19 recovery at the request of the Ministry of Energy of Ukraine and the State Agency on Energy Efficiency and Energy Saving of Ukraine.

20. The regional adviser oversees preparation of the report Women entrepreneurship in natural resource management: Challenges and opportunities for the MSME sector in the post-COVID-19 socio-economic recovery. The study was requested by the Government of Kyrgyzstan. It will analyse COVID-19 related challenges and opportunities for women in the MSME sector related to resource management; promote women entrepreneurship in the post-pandemic economic recovery a specific focus on start-up ecosystem, finance, business networks, and training and skills development; and present case studies on women participation in Kyrgyzstan and several other ECE member States.

D. Future regional outreach, partnerships, fundraising and other activities

21. The regional adviser continues to be engaged in maintaining and expanding partnerships with other organizations of the UN system and other international organizations. The regional adviser has been working on several capacity-building activities with ESCAP and ESCWA. The regional adviser has been working with colleagues from SED and other Divisions, in particular, Environment Division, Forests, Land and Housing Division and Sustainable Transport Division on developing project proposals for extrabudgetary, UNDA, and RPTC projects. The regional adviser actively participates in the work of the ECE Working Group on Technical Cooperation (WGTC). Work of the regional adviser will continue to be based on demand from member States and in support of the Programme of Work of the Sustainable Energy Subprogramme. Assistance to countries to achieve progress in implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and in particular targets of SDG 7, remains the focus of regional adviser's activities at the country and regional level, subject to availability of resources.

22. The regional adviser, jointly with colleagues from SED, developed project proposal "Improving the energy efficiency of the global building supply chain industry and its products to deliver high performance buildings" under a call for proposals by the International Climate Initiative (IKI) of the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU) of Germany (IKI Thematic Selection Procedure 2019 (2.0)). ECE is the lead agency (joint project coordinator). Beneficiary countries of the proposed project are Armenia, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Republic of Moldova, Tajikistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan. Implementing partners include UNDP Offices in all beneficiary countries, Green Building Alliance (GBA), Passive House Institute, Institute for Energy Efficiency in Production (EEP), UNEP DTU Partnership, and ESCAP. At the time of preparing the document the project proposal was under review by IKI.

23. The regional adviser participated in development of project proposals under the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Fund call for proposals led by the UN Country Teams in Belarus and Serbia (project proposals were not selected). The regional adviser is engaged with the UN Country Teams in North Macedonia and Republic of Moldova for potential participation of ECE as an implementing partner in the projects that were pre-selected for potential funding ("Green financing facility to improve air quality and combat climate change in North Macedonia" and "Climate Investment and Innovation Fund Program in Moldova"). The regional adviser is engaged in consultations with the Environment Division regarding participation of SED in the project "Regional mechanisms for the low-carbon, climate-resilient transformation of the energy-water-land Nexus in Central Asia" pre-selected by IKI for funding. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is the lead agency (joint project coordinator) and ECE is one of the implementing partners. Beneficiary countries are Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.

24. The regional adviser responded to challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic by focusing on developing new field projects, adjusting existing projects to respond to COVID-19 challenges, organizing capacity-building activities on-line when possible, actively seeking information from Governments of RPTC-eligible countries on their needs in response to the COVID-19 crisis, and following up on these requests.