

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE
COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY
UNECE Steering Committee on Education for Sustainable Development
Fifth meeting
Geneva, 18-19 March 2010
Item 5 of the provisional agenda

Information Paper No. 5
16 March 2010

Preparation and submission of national implementation reports in 2010

Note by the secretariat

On 1 October 2010, States participating in the UNECE Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) are due to submit National Implementation Reports (NIRs) reflecting the progress made in the implementation of the Strategy at national/State level.

This note is aimed at facilitating the discussion on the reporting process under Agenda Item 5 of the Fifth meeting of the UNECE Steering Committee on ESD and at drawing the attention of ESD National Focal Points to the relevant reporting steps, timelines and considerations.

I. Background

The Strategy and its implementation phases

In 2005 the environment and education ministers of United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) member States adopted the UNECE Strategy for ESD. The UNECE Strategy for ESD is a policy tool that helps the countries of the region to introduce and promote ESD in national formal, non-formal and informal education in their respective countries. It aims at developing policy, regulatory and operational frameworks to support ESD, equipping educators with the necessary competences, ensuring that adequate tools and materials for ESD are accessible, promoting research on and development of ESD, and strengthening regional cooperation on ESD.

The implementation of the Strategy is a continuous process. However, in order to facilitate assessment of its progress, three phases were proposed in the Framework for implementation:

Phase I (2005-2007) was aimed at developing a *good basis to start implementation*. It was recommended that each country should identify what it was already doing that would fit within the remit of the Strategy. The focus was on the *review of existing policies*, legal and operational frameworks, financial mechanisms, and educational activities, and *identification of any obstacles* or gaps. At regional level the Phase also focused on developing evaluation methods and indicators for the implementation of ESD, and on political support for the implementation (reaffirmed by Ministers at the Belgrade conference).

Phase II (2008-2010), which is now in its final year, is focused on the *implementation of the Strategy's*

provisions which should be by now fairly advanced. Countries should review progress made in the implementation of their respective national strategies and revise them, if necessary.

Phase III (2011-2015 and beyond) will be aimed at *making considerable concrete progress* in implementing ESD.

Purpose of reporting

To facilitate and evaluate the Strategy's implementation and raise awareness at the national level, as well as share experience within the region, the member States agreed to periodically assess the implementation process based on a unified reporting format and a clear set of indicators. This periodic assessment provides information about countries' performance in implementing ESD and about the economic, environmental, and social impacts of ESD.

The value of the reporting process is not limited to the sharing of information among UNECE Member States but also benefits the implementation process at the national and local level by raising awareness, engaging all the relevant stakeholders and allowing to take stock and to identify main successes and challenges.

First round of reporting in 2007

The first set of implementation reports was submitted on a voluntary basis as part of a pilot exercise. 36 countries participated in this process and the reports, although varying in the level of detail, provided a wealth of information on the implementation of the Strategy. A synthesis of the reports was presented at the Joint Session of Environment and Education Ministers during the Belgrade Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe".

II. 2010 reporting

(a) Proposed timeline

Process	Time required	Timing in 2010	Key actors
Preparatory process (e.g. identification of relevant stakeholders, sources of information, review of the 2007 report, where available, etc).	1 month	April 2010	2 National Focal Points (NFPs): ministries of education and ministries of environment, in consultation with any other relevant stakeholders
Preparation of the 1 st draft	1 month	1 – 31 May 2010	2 NFPs
Multistakeholder consultation on the draft	1-3 months	1 June – 31 Aug 2010	Initiated by 2 NFPs, with the participation all of all the relevant stakeholders (e.g. ministries other than ESD focal points, educational institutions, non-governmental organizations, local authorities, capacity-building organizations, educator training institutions).
Finalization of the report (including translation into Eng, Fre, or Rus, where relevant)	1 month	1 – 31 September 2010	2 NFPs
Formal submission to the secretariat		1 October 2010	One of the NFPs

(b) Relevant documents and guidance

Key documents

- (a) UNECE Strategy for ESD (CEPAC.13/2005/3/ Rev.1);
- (b) Reporting format (ECE/CEP/AC.13/2009/10);
- (c) Guidance for reporting (ECE/CEP/AC.13/2009/5)

Other important documents

- (d) Vilnius framework for the implementation of the UNECE Strategy for ESD (CEP/AC.13/2005/4/Rev.1);
- (e) Explanatory notes to the draft UNECE Strategy on ESD (CEP/AC.13/2004/8/Add.2);
- (f) Joint Statement on ESD by Ministers of Education and of Environment (ECE/BELGRADE.CONF/2007/4/Add.1);
- (g) Ministerial Declaration of the Sixth Ministerial Conference “Environment for Europe” (ECE/BELGRADE.CONF/2007/8, paras.11 and 12); the Chair’s Summary of the Conference (ECE/BELGRADE.CONF/2007/9, paras. 17–26); and the Chair’s Summary of the Joint Session on ESD at the Conference (ECE/BELGRADE.CONF/2007/4/Add.3);
- (h) Two workplans (for phase I and for phase II) for the implementation of the UNECE Strategy on ESD (CEP/AC.13/2005/8 and ECE/CEP/AC.13/2008/5);
- (i) First progress report on the implementation of the UNECE Strategy for ESD, “Learning from each other: achievements, challenges and the way forward” (ECE/BELGRADE.CONF/2007/INF/3-ECE/CEP/AC.13/2007/2), and its addendum “Conclusions on the reporting process and on the use of indicators” (ECE/BELGRADE.CONF/2007/INF/3/Add.1-ECE/CEP/AC.13/2007/2/Add.1);
- (j) Pilot reports submitted by the UNECE member States (available on <http://www.unece.org/env/esd/Implement.Gov.htm>);
- (k) Compilation of Good Practices in ESD in the UNECE region (ECE/BELGRADE.CONF/2007/INF/3) as further developed on the website www.unece.org/env/esd/GoodPractices/index.html;
- (l) Reports of the first, second and third meetings of the UNECE Steering Committee on ESD (CEP/AC.13/2005/7; ECE/CEP/AC.13/2006/3 and ECE/CEP/AC.13/2008/2);
- (m) Progress reports of the Expert Group on Indicators for ESD (CEP/AC.13/2005/9; ECE/CEP/AC.13/2006/5, ECE/CEP/AC.13/2008/4 and ECE/CEP/AC.13/2009/4);
- (n) International Standard Classification of Education, ISCED 1997 (UNESCO, November 1997).

These documents can be found on the UNECE web-site at the following addresses:

www.unece.org/env/esd/Strategy&Framework.htm;
www.unece.org/env/esd/SC.Meet.htm;
www.unece.org/env/esd/belgrade.htm;
www.unece.org/env/esd/Implementation.htm;
www.unece.org/env/esd/GoodPractices/index.html;
www.unece.org/env/esd/SC.EGI.htm.

(c) National consultations

Transparent and participatory process of the NIR preparation is very important for the comprehensiveness and quality of the reports and in raising awareness and engaging stakeholders in the implementation. Early-stage identification of all possible relevant stakeholders and their engagement in defining the scope and the content of the assessment are therefore important parts of the process.

Allocating sufficient time for consultations is another important aspect, particularly taking into account that in order to meet the submission deadline for the reports (1 October 2010), such consultations will necessarily take place over the summer months.

(d) The role of the secretariat

The UNECE secretariat stands ready to offer any support and assistance it can to the national Focal Points in the preparation and submission of the report.

The secretariat will also ensure the availability of the reports on its website and the distribution of hard copies to the UNECE member States and key stakeholders.

Last but not least, the secretariat will prepare on the basis of the reports received a synthesis report on the implementation of the Strategy. The Synthesis report for Phase II will be presented to the sixth meeting of the UNECE Steering Committee on ESD in spring 2011.

III. Link with UN DESD and the UNESCO DESD Monitoring and Evaluation exercise

Work under the UNECE Strategy for ESD constitutes an important contribution of the UNECE region to the United Nations Decade on ESD (UN DESD). The UNECE indicators and the established reporting mechanism provide the region's input to the global monitoring and evaluation process for the United Nations Decade of ESD, ensuring synergies and mutual benefits.

The decisions by the Vilnius High-level Meeting and by the ministers of education and environment in their Joint Statement on ESD at the Belgrade Ministerial Conference provide for the submission of a **single report** on the implementation of the Strategy that would also serve as a report on the implementation of the United Nations Decade of ESD.

UNESCO is at the moment finalizing the specifics of Phase II (2009-2011) of the DESD Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) exercise. The UNECE and UNESCO reporting cycles with regard to the DESD run parallelly in many ways. This was evident with the reporting under the UNECE Strategy in 2007 and Phase I of the DESD M&E exercise. .

The UNESCO report resulting from Phase II of the DESD M&E exercise will be finalized by June 2011. Processes and learning for ESD is the focus of Phase II of the DESD M&E exercise..

With the UNESCO framework for Phase II of the DESD M&E exercise expected to be finalized in April 2010, and having in mind the overall goal of enhancing synergies and avoiding duplication of national reporting by States in the UNECE region, we would like to encourage the national Focal Points **to take the specific issues of the UNESCO framework for Phase II of the DESD M&E exercise** (once determined) **into account when preparing answers under the UNECE reports**. Any such in the reports prepared under the ECE Strategy will then be used as the region's input to the global assessment of Phase II of the DESD Monitoring and Evaluation exercise.

UNESCO and UNECE will distribute the information related to the UNESCO framework for Phase II of the DESD M&E exercise as soon as it is finalized (tentatively, in April 2010).