

**Twenty-second session**

Geneva, 27 October 2020

Palais des Nations

Meeting room TPS2

Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment

Agenda Item 4: Reporting on the Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS) to support a regular process of environmental assessment

- **Final outline for the SEIS final progress review report**
- **Draft final review report on the establishment of SEIS**
- **Tentative timeline for finalization of the report**
- **Reflections on the draft report by member States**
- **Final publication: Guidelines on the SEIS reporting mechanism**



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Agenda Item 4: Reporting on the Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS) to support a regular process of environmental assessment

Final outline for the SEIS final progress review report





Background

- At its 25th session (Geneva, 6 and 7 May 2019), Working Group had asked secretariat to prepare a draft outline, for consideration by Joint Task Force on Environmental Statistics & Indicators at its 16th session (Geneva, 28 and 29 October 2019).
- Final outline based on SEIS mid-term review, updated SEIS assessment framework, draft outline presented to the Joint Task Force in October 2019 & written feedback received from member States in May 2020.



**A. Table of contents of the report**

I. Introduction to the Shared Environmental Information System and the final progress review

II. Overview of main achievements and key findings (up to three pages)

A. Working Group recommendations

B. Key findings

C. The pillars of the Shared Environmental Information System

1. Content

2. Infrastructure

3. Institutional cooperation

III. Lessons learned and challenges (up to one page)

IV. Further steps (up to one page)

A. Relevance

B. Accessibility

C. Comparability

V. Fact sheets on key findings and messages (up to three pages)

B. Table of contents of the annex

Background information

I. Assessment framework

II. Data collection

III. Indicator and national performance scores

C. Table of contents of possible supplement

This would echo the table of contents of the main report.





Proposed Decision:

The Working Group:

Adopts the revised outline of the final review report on the establishment of the Shared Environmental Information System (ECE/CEP/AC.10/2020/5/Rev.1)

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Draft final review report on the establishment of SEIS





Background

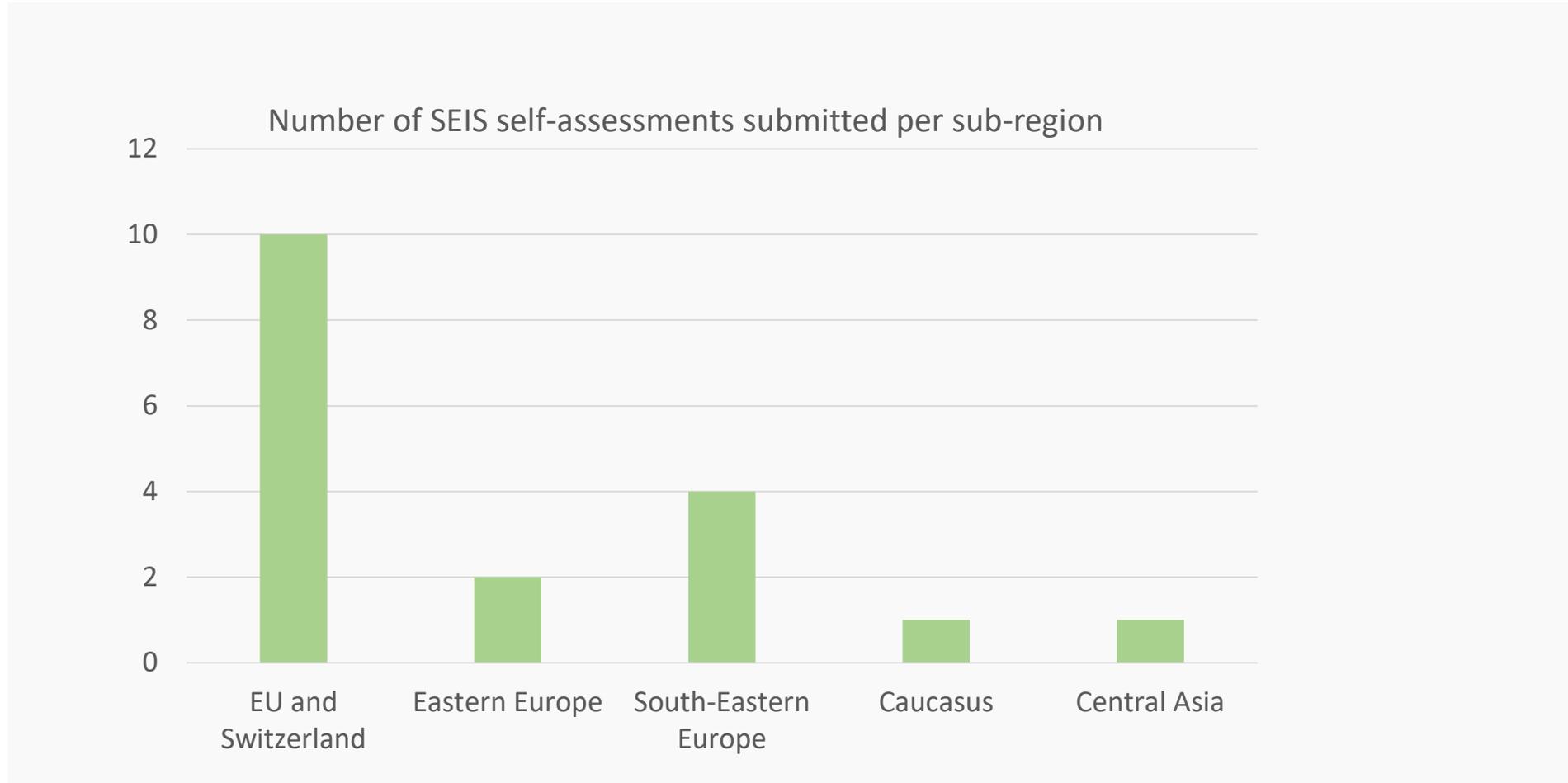
- At its 24th session, in January 2019, the Committee on Environmental Policy requested the Working Group to lead a further review of progress in establishing SEIS in Europe & Central Asia in advance of next Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference
- Draft final progress review report prepared in accordance with:
 - Revised outline of the final review report on SEIS established
 - Updated assessment framework for monitoring progress in establishing SEIS
- Data collection by using mainly the SEIS online tool, from May to July 2020
- Questions at macro, thematic and data flow level - 22 data flows underlying 18 UNECE core environmental indicators and 9 environmental themes – see SEIS Assessment Framework



Summary

- 18 out of the 53 UNECE member States (not incl. Canada, Israel and United States of America) submitted a self-assessment by 4 September 2020
- Reporting deadline was 22 July 2020 but limited number of countries submitted by then.
 - Austria, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, France, Georgia, Germany, Kazakhstan, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland. (Albania submitted its assessment after 4 September, so results not considered in draft report)
 - While all member States with economies in transition submitted self-assessments for the mid-term review, only moderate participation, in particular from Central Asia and Caucasus, in final review so far
 - 9 EU countries submitted a self-assessment
- 15 countries submitted results for all thematic questions under the 9 themes

**The secretariat would like to thank countries for
all the contributions and comments received so far!**




Overview of whether thematic level questions were answered by countries (yes or no)

Countries	Environmental theme								
	Agriculture	Air pollution and ozone depletion	Biodiversity	Climate change	Energy	Land and soil	Transport	Waste	Water
Austria	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Belarus	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Bulgaria	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Croatia	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
France	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Georgia	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Germany	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Kazakhstan	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Montenegro	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
North Macedonia	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Rep. of Moldova	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Romania	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Serbia*	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Slovakia	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Spain*	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sweden	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Switzerland	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

*Thematic questions were answered only in part.



Aim of the final progress review

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- **Purpose:** to show progress against agreed data quality criteria for countries to assess their capacities and help identify resource needs for regular environmental monitoring and assessment.

- **Envisaged key message to be conveyed** to ministers at the Ninth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference in 2022 would ideally be:
 - A Shared Environmental Information System has been largely established in Europe and Central Asia.

- **Due to limited number of self-assessments submitted, it is currently difficult to confirm full SEIS establishment in the region.**



- **Thematic performance**
 - Theme B (climate change) has the highest performance scores, followed by I (waste), C (water), A (air pollution and ozone depletion), H (transport), G (energy), D (biodiversity), E (land and soil) and F (agriculture)
- **Multi-purpose use of data flows**
 - Majority of data flows (79 %) used for more than one purpose
 - National and international reporting obligations such as for state-of-the-environment reports, thematic reports, reporting under multilateral environmental agreements, EEA/EIONET data flow reporting and for production of indicators
 - Data flows of “Annual average concentration of sulphur-dioxide” and “Annual average concentration of PM10” performed best, followed by “Mean concentration of BOD5 in major rivers”, “Mean concentration of phosphates in major rivers” and “Aggregated GHG emissions including emissions/removals from LULUCF”
 - Room for improvement for other data flows



- **Indicator-based and integrated environmental reports**
 - Majority (61 %) of reporting countries regularly (annually, every other year or every 4-5 years) produce an indicator-based national state-of-the-environment report.
 - 22 % of countries do not produce an indicator-based report or not with regular frequency, and 17 % did not reply to this question. One country reported that an indicator-based report to be produced in 2020.
 - A very positive development is that most countries (89 %) produce integrated environmental reports covering several thematic areas.





- **Content pillar**
 - Countries reported that nearly all 22 data flows are published regularly (87 %). In most cases, data flows published annually. This is a very positive development and confirms added value of SEIS as a continuous source of high-quality information and data for decision makers and the public.
 - Data flows most often presented as complete factsheets (67 %) and used to produce different types of content such as reports and visual representations. This too is a positive development.

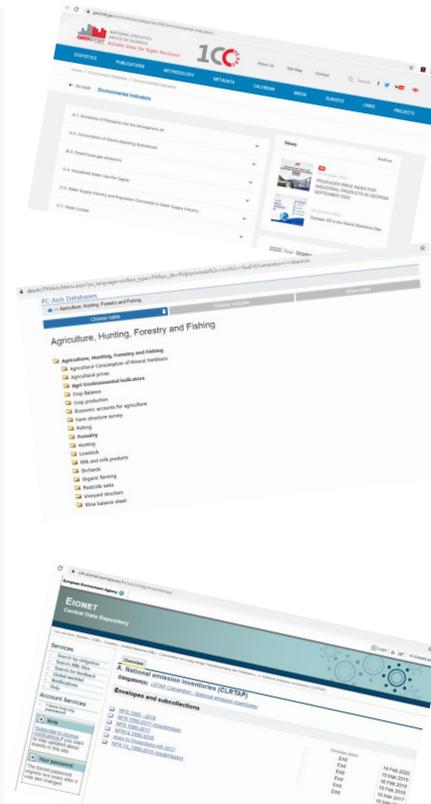


Preliminary Findings for SEIS pillars

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■ Infrastructure pillar

- 76 % of the 22 data flows readily available and accessible online for users on national platforms
- In most cases, the 22 data flows readily available and accessible on integrated platforms, with remaining limitations for some data flows.
 - Still inconsistencies regarding links provided for individual data flows: many not operational or do not indicate the data flow but rather a general source or platform
- Most countries have established procedures for data validation and revision for all 22 data flows. For 71 % of data flows, validation procedures were reported, and for 59 % of data flows procedures for data revision in place.
 - Still inconsistencies regarding some countries' replies. Some countries have formal procedures in place and apply international standards for data validation, while others follow internal validation practices without having them formalized.
- Metadata available for 73 % of the 22 data flows, ensuring greater clarity and quality of the information provided.





- **Cooperation pillar**

- Institutional arrangements in place for the regular production and sharing of data between various institutions at the national level (68 %).

Theme	Question 19.1 / Replies with Yes
Agriculture	11
Air pollution and ozone depletion	12
Biodiversity	10
Climate change	14
Energy	13
Land and soil	11
Transport	12
Waste	13
Water	14

- Mid-term review highlighted need to improve institutional cooperation between fragmented data producers and users.
- Continued process of establishment of SEIS, self-assessment questionnaire and final progress review facilitate further interaction between data producers who normally do not share or exchange information.
- This work should continue to ensure efficient interaction between stakeholders.



Making Data Meaningful

- **Improve national legislation** in place and **close legislative gaps** (23 % of data flows assessed during this review) for monitoring and reporting related to certain environmental themes.
- **Continue work on integration and harmonization of data flows**, in line with SEIS principles beyond 2021.
- Enhance **regular data production and publication of information online**
- **Establish or improve institutional arrangements** for regular production and sharing of data between various institutions at national level, including for SDGs and green and circular economy.
- **Better align data collection processes with national policy contexts and targets and improve the use** of available data flows and related indicators in the production of environmental assessments and reports.



Making Data Meaningful

- **Improve use of relevant environmental assessments and reports** to measure progress against policy targets and objectives and improve policymaking.
- **Regularly revise relevant indicators and data flows** to inform the latest policies and support decision-making related to the 2030 Agenda, a green and circular economy and other global policies.
- **Address remaining gaps in the establishment of SEIS**, covering relevant pillars, thematic categories and data flows.
- **Ensure sufficient financial resources** allocated to the establishment, operation and maintenance of environmental monitoring and information systems through national budgets and/ or international support.
- **Continue long-standing and effective cooperation** between the UNECE, UNEP and EEA on supporting the establishment of environmental information systems in Europe and Central Asia.

→ **Recommendations to be revised once additional country reports available & online reporting tool fully functional.**



- **Final progress review - Milestone:** 22 data flows of 18 UNECE core environmental indicators across 9 environmental themes & all 3 SEIS pillars
- Further steps to **motivate countries** to provide a more complete picture in preparation for the **9th Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference**
- **Regular self-assessments help** encourage countries to implement measures to **address gaps in SEIS establishment over time & ensure that regular assessments & reporting supported beyond 2021.** → **Assessment framework** is a **tool** for countries to monitor progress & identify needed resources & gaps
- Any **future reviews (beyond 2021)** to better **assess** how countries **use the data in policymaking, monitoring progress towards policy targets and streamlining reporting processes**
- Present report is based on self-assessments by countries. Inconsistencies in information provided e.g need for validation mechanism. **Any future reviews may consider gaps identified**
- **SEIS not a static instrument and may evolve over time** into fully integrated & open data systems based on SEIS principles & adapt to future developments to inform policies in a holistic manner.





- **Enhance participation in review** for next EfE Conference
- **Deadline** for report submission extended: member States invited to complete assessments in SEIS online tool by **15 December 2020 and submit to the Secretariat**
- **All member States invited to validate their replies in SEIS online tool by 15 December 2020, in line with the SEIS AF, for the final version of the SEIS progress review**
- **Identified gaps indicate further assistance needed** to fully implement the SEIS pillars and principles and for full production and sharing of all data flows associated with UNECE environmental indicators also **beyond 2021**
- Discuss and agree on whether **regular SEIS reviews should be conducted beyond 2021 and in which format. SEIS online tool to be used?**
- **Other initiatives and projects** provided valuable support for SEIS establishment – **fundraising should continue** for new projects on environmental monitoring and assessment.

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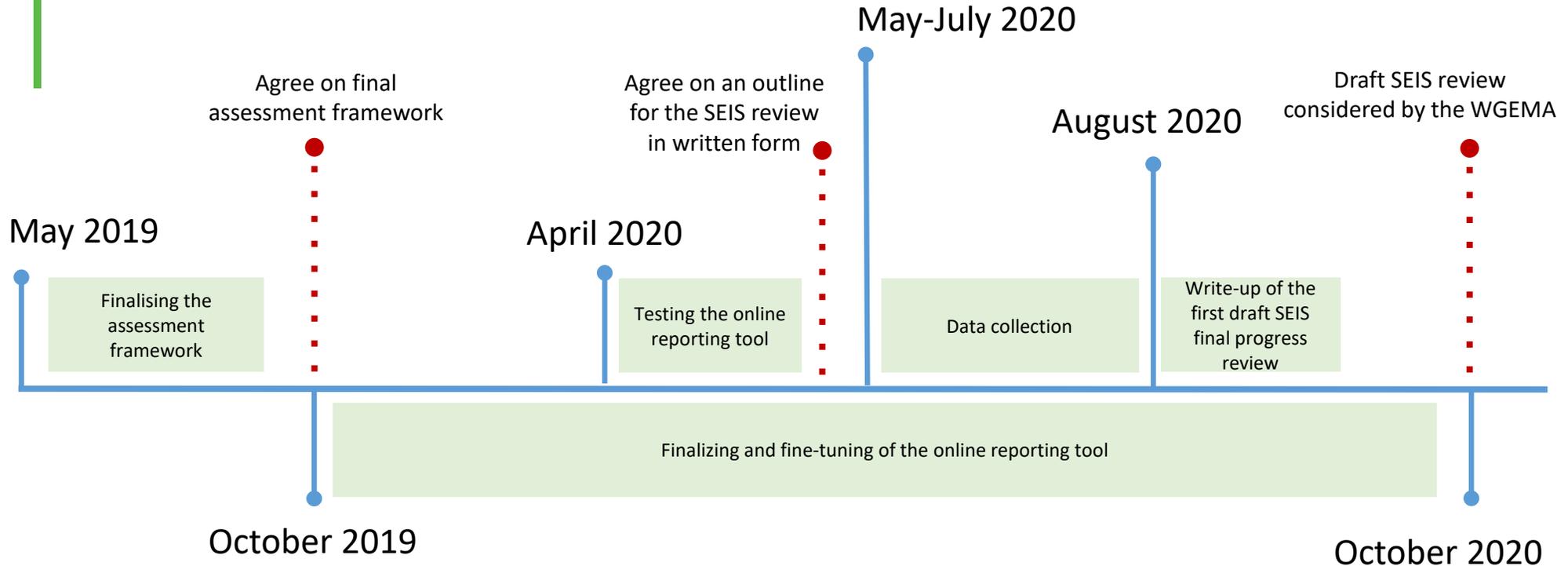
Tentative timeline for the finalization of the review of the establishment of SEIS by 2021



Timeline for the SEIS review



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Timeline for the SEIS review

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Reflections on the draft report by member States





Questions to guide a discussion on the SEIS progress review and the future of SEIS:

- What are the benefits of the SEIS progress review?
- What were the obstacles/challenges for reporting?
- Which other countries participating in the 22nd session of the Working Group are still planning to submit a self-assessment?
- How can more countries be motivated to participate in the SEIS progress review?
- How can members of the Working Group and international partners support to enhance participation in the progress review?
- What would be the benefits of regular SEIS self-assessments beyond 2021?
- Would you suggest to use the SEIS online tool for potential future reviews?

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Publication: Guidelines on the SEIS reporting mechanism





1. Introduction
2. Review process
 - Assessment framework
3. Review results
 - First progress report
 - Mid-term review report
4. Next steps

Also coming soon:

Measuring and Monitoring progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals

UNECE

Guidelines on the Shared Environmental Information System reporting mechanism





Comments and/or questions?



Proposed Decisions:

The Working Group:

- a) Takes note of the revised timeline due to the limited number of self-assessments submitted for the SEIS final progress review and requests all member States to submit their self-assessments by 15 December at the latest to the Secretariat through the use of the SEIS online tool
- b) Requests the secretariat to inform the Committee on Environmental Policy of the outcomes of the Working Group's discussion on the SEIS final progress review and invite the Committee's support in mobilizing member States to submit their self-assessments
- c) Requests the secretariat to prepare a revised version of the document ECE/CEP/AC.10/2020/7, based on additional self-assessments submitted by member States for the Working Group's next session
- d) Takes note of the finalized publication "Guidelines on the SEIS reporting mechanism"

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Thank you!

UNECE

27 October 2020, Geneva

