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Economic Commission for Europe

Committee on Environmental Policy

Conference of European Statisticians

Joint Task Force on Environmental Statistics and Indicators

Twenty-first session

Geneva, 17 and 18 October 2024

Item 1 of the provisional agenda

Adoption of the agenda

Annotated provisional agenda for the twenty-first session

To be held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, starting at 10 a.m. on
Thursday, 17 October 2024

I. Provisional agenda

1. Adoption of the agenda.
2. Adoption of the report of the twentieth session.
3. Implementing the mandate and terms of reference.
4. Ongoing developments with relevance for the work of the Joint Task Force.
5. Guidelines for the Application of Environmental Indicators: 2023 Edition.
6. Ongoing and planned capacity development activities.
7. Data needs, statistics and indicators to manage environment-related human health issues.
8. Other business.
9. Closure of the meeting.

II. Annotations

According to its terms of reference (ECE/CEP-CES/GE.1/2021/3, annex), the Joint Task Force on Environmental Statistics and Indicators assists the countries of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia in their efforts to:

- (a) Correctly apply the Shared Environmental Information System data methodologies in line with international statistical standards;
- (b) Analyse and communicate environmental data;
- (c) Implement the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting;



(d) Apply environmental indicators in the context of sustainable development and green economy initiatives.¹

The Joint Task Force also assists the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment in evaluating the application of internationally accepted methodologies and statistical standards in data production.² The Joint Task Force is composed of experts representing national statistical offices and ministries or agencies dealing with environmental statistics and assessment from the countries of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia. Other member States of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) are welcome to participate in the work.

The work of the Joint Task Force is supported by the European Environment Agency (EEA), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). Representatives of other international organizations dealing with environmental statistics are welcome to participate in the meetings of the Joint Task Force.

The twenty-first session of the Joint Task Force is expected to be held on 17–18 October 2024 as a two-day meeting. Participation by eligible delegates is supported financially by Austria, Portugal, Switzerland and the European Union.

1. Adoption of the agenda

The Chair will invite the Joint Task Force to adopt the agenda for its twenty-first session as set out in the present document.³

2. Adoption of the report of the twentieth session

The secretariat will summarize the outcomes of the twentieth session of the Joint Task Force (Geneva, 16–17 October 2023), as contained in the corresponding report (ECE/CEP-CES/GE.1/2023/2), and invite the Joint Task Force to adopt the report. The secretariat will inform the Joint Task Force of the status of implementation of the decisions and recommendations made at the twentieth session.

3. Implementing the mandate and terms of reference

At its nineteenth session (Geneva, 3–4 November 2022), the Joint Task Force supported its conversion into a standing body with a broadened mandate, scope and geographical coverage, named the Joint Working Group on Environmental Statistics and Indicators,⁴ and approved the revised version of the mandate and terms of reference through a 14-day silence procedure.

At its twentieth session, the Joint Task Force approved the proposed outline of activities (workplan) for the period 2024–2028 of the Joint Working Group on Environmental Statistics and Indicators (ECE/CEP-CES/GE.1/2023/5), and requested the secretariat to forward the outline of activities to the Committee on Environmental Policy and the Conference of European Statisticians for consideration.⁵

In June 2023, the Conference of European Statisticians endorsed the mandate and terms of reference for a Joint Working Group on Environmental Statistics and Indicators as

¹ ECE/CEP-CES/GE.1/2021/3, annex, para. 6 (a)–(d).

² *Ibid.*, para. 7.

³ Documentation for the meeting and other relevant information will be posted on the meeting web page: <https://unece.org/info/Environmental-Policy/Environmental-Monitoring-and-Assessment/events/392462>.

⁴ ECE/CEP-CES/GE.1/2022/2, para. 21 (a).

⁵ ECE/CEP-CES/GE.1/2023/2, para. 18 (a)–(b).

a standing body under the Conference of European Statisticians and the Committee on Environmental Policy, pending approval also by the Committee.⁶

The Committee on Environmental Policy, at its twenty-eighth session (Geneva, 1–3 November 2023), took note of the proposal made to convert the Joint Task Force into a Joint Working Group, decided to defer its decision until the next regular session of the Committee in November 2024, and also decided to extend the mandate and terms of reference of the Joint Task Force until end-2025.⁷

At its 132nd meeting (Geneva, 13 February 2024), the Executive Committee of the Economic Commission for Europe extended the mandate and terms of reference of the Joint Task Force on Environmental Statistics and Indicators, as contained in the annex to document ECE/CEP-CES/GE.1/2021/3, until 31 December 2025.⁸

The Joint Task Force will be invited to discuss further steps regarding the proposed conversion to a Joint Working Group.

4. Ongoing developments with relevance for the work of the Joint Task Force

At its twentieth session, the Joint Task Force committed to support the implementation of the outcomes of the Ninth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference (Nicosia, 5–7 October 2022), subject to the availability of resources, and decided to integrate those outcomes into its work. The Joint Task Force also invited the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment to regularly inform the Joint Task Force of relevant outcomes of its sessions and activities, and requested international and regional organizations and its members to continue to provide it with regular updates on recent developments in the implementation of their activities.⁹

The Joint Task Force also took note of the information provided on the priority areas of sustainable infrastructure, an e-waste management partnership, plastic waste and green finance, and decided to consider those areas to be priorities with regard to its work programme.¹⁰

The secretariat will provide an overview of activities implemented in support of the outcomes of the Nicosia Conference and the main outcomes of the twenty-sixth session of the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment (Geneva, 18–19 April 2024), including related to the progress review on the Shared Environmental Information System related to air and waste and circular economy, further planned progress reviews and the envisaged eighth pan-European environmental assessment.

The Joint Task Force will be invited to discuss a preliminary selection of environmental indicators (ECE/CEP-CES/GE.1/2024/3) that could inform the eighth pan-European assessment and that ECE member States are strongly encouraged to produce in support of improved decision-making.

The secretariat will furthermore provide an overview of the main outcomes of relevant meetings, including the ninth joint OECD/ECE seminar on the implementation of the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (Geneva, 18–20 March 2024), the related outcomes of the seventy-second plenary session of the Conference of European Statisticians (Geneva, 18–20 June 2024) and the Expert Forum for Producers and Users of Climate Change-related Statistics (Geneva, 29–30 August 2024).

Other international and regional organizations, including EEA, UNEP, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research, the World Health Organization, OECD and the United Nations Statistics

⁶ ECE/CES/105, para. 46.

⁷ ECE/CEP/2023/2, para. 43.

⁸ ECE/EX/2024/L.2, para. 6 (c).

⁹ ECE/CEP-CES/GE.1/2023/2, para. 29 (a), (d) and (g).

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, para. 29 (f).

Division, will be invited to provide an update on their activities related to the production and sharing of environmental statistics and indicators. The Joint Task Force will discuss and identify possible areas where collaboration could be strengthened (e.g., measuring circular economy, sustainable infrastructure, chemicals and waste).

The secretariat will also inform the meeting about activities of other related expert groups, such as the ECE Task Force on Measuring Hazardous Events and Disasters and the ECE Task Force on Measuring Circular Economy.

Representatives of member States will then be invited to share the latest developments and experience related to the production and use of environmental statistics and indicators with the Joint Task Force, including on air-, waste- and circular economy-related statistics and indicators.

5. Guidelines for the Application of Environmental Indicators: 2023 Edition

At its twentieth session, the Joint Task Force welcomed the progress made towards finalizing the Guidelines for the Application of Environmental Indicators and requested the secretariat to continue work on the final version of the Guidelines for the Application of Environmental Indicators: 2023 Edition, taking into account discussions at the session, and requested the secretariat to prepare the final version of the Guidelines as an official publication in English, French and Russian in electronic and paper editions.¹¹

At the current session, the secretariat will present the latest developments related to the Guidelines. The Joint Task Force will be invited to discuss possible next steps.

6. Ongoing and planned capacity-development activities

The secretariat, UNEP and other international and regional organizations, including EEA and OECD, will report on ongoing and planned capacity-development activities related to environmental statistics and indicators, the Shared Environmental Information System and Sustainable Development Goal indicators. The secretariat and Environment Agency Austria will provide an update on a European Union-funded project entitled “EU4 Environment – Water Resources and Environmental Data” and other capacity-development activities, as appropriate.

Members of the Joint Task Force will be invited to present national capacity-development activities and identify concrete capacity-development needs.

7. Data needs, statistics and indicators to manage environment-related human health issues

At its twentieth session, the Joint Task Force decided to consider future work on health and chemicals, as well as on disaster-related statistics in its future work programme. The Joint Task Force also reiterated its invitation to its members, international organizations and partners to continue to provide it with regular updates on recent developments related to environment and health statistics and indicators.¹²

International and regional organizations and country representatives will be invited to share their experience in producing environment- and health-related data and indicators and their use for policymaking.

¹¹ Ibid., para. 37 (a) and (c).

¹² Ibid., para. 47 (b)–(c).

8. Other business

The Joint Task Force will be invited to discuss any other business that might be brought to its attention. Members of the Joint Task Force wishing to propose items are invited to inform the secretariat as soon as possible.

9. Closure of the meeting

The Chair, with the assistance of the secretariat, will sum up the conclusions of the Joint Task Force, present the decisions and close the meeting. The report of the meeting will be finalized by the secretariat after the meeting and will be posted on the meeting web page in due course.

III. Organization of work

Detailed information on the organization of work will be released closer to the meeting date and will be posted on the meeting web page.
