

## PROJECT CONCEPT NOTE

Project Title	Environmental Performance Reviews Programme
Project Manager	Antoine Nunes
Subprogramme	Environment
Implementing Entity	UNECE
Start Date	1 January 2017
End Date	31 December 2019
Budget	
Beneficiary Countries	Countries interested to have an EPR, in particular Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Romania
Cooperating Entities within the UN System	OCHA, UNDP, UNEP, UNISRD, WHO/ROE, World Bank
Other Implementing Partners	EC, EEA, IUCN, OECD, OSCE

### Background

An Environmental Performance Review (EPR) is an assessment of the progress a country has made in reconciling its environmental and economic targets and in meeting its international environmental commitments. The EPR Programme assists countries to improve their environmental management and performance; promotes environmental sustainability; promotes information exchange among countries on policies and experiences; helps integrating environmental policies into economic sectors; promotes greater accountability to the public and strengthens cooperation with the international community.

The process of carrying out an EPR can be divided into six major phases:

1. Preparatory mission
2. Review mission
3. Drafting
4. Expert and peer review
5. Publication and dissemination of the final report
6. Launching of publication.

In 1993, European Environment Ministers requested UNECE at the Second Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe" (EfE) held in Lucerne, Switzerland, to undertake Environmental Performance Reviews (EPRs) in Europe's countries in transition. Since then, in all EfE ministerial conferences, ministers and heads of delegation reaffirmed their support to EPR Programme. The 7th EfE Ministerial Conference, held in Astana, Kazakhstan in 2011, encouraged UNECE to pursue with the third cycle of Reviews. The EPR Programme is currently conducting the third cycle.

At the Eighth EfE Ministerial Conference, held in Batumi, Georgia, in June 2016, ministers and heads of delegation also acknowledge the important contribution of the EPR Programme over the past 20 years as an effective and practical policy tool, and highlighted the role it can play in supporting the achievement and monitoring of Sustainable Developments Goals in the pan-

European region<sup>1</sup>.

The EPR programme is based on the concept of peer review. A peer review conducted within the framework of an international organization can be described as a systematic examination and assessment of the performance of a State by other States in a wide range of policy areas such as economics, international trade and environment. A key feature of peer reviews is that they are objective, fact-based assessments of policies in a certain area by a team of experts. This gives to the EPRs credibility and also explains their success during the past 20 years. The peer review process related to EPR is carried out under the auspices of the Committee on Environmental Policy (CEP).

Furthermore, EPRs have an inbuilt peer learning aspect in them. Three steps in the EPR process are instrumental for exchange of information and learning from experiences of others:

1. Personal - during the review mission, between the international experts and national experts
2. Delegation - In the EPR Expert Group, between the delegation of the country under review and the EPR Expert Group, which is representatives of UNECE member states
3. Intranational – Committee on Environmental Policy between member countries

The core secretariat for the EPR programme is provided by UNECE. However, the operational budget for the activities carried out under the EPR Programme is completely extra-budgetary. Funds are provided by donors directly to the EPR Trust Fund or through in kind contributions, mostly in the form of country experts provided by donors or international organizations.

### **Relationship to the Strategic Framework and the Sustainable Development Goals**

The EPR Programme is part of the approved programme of work of subprogramme 1, Environment for the biennium 2016-2017 (ECE/CEP/2015/4).

The EPR Programme contributes to achieving the expected accomplishments (d) "Improved environmental performance of interested countries " of subprogramme 1, Environment, of the UNECE Strategic Framework for 2016-2017 (A/69/6 - Prog. 17) and of subprogramme 1, Environment, of the UNECE Strategic Framework for 2018-2019 (A/71/6 - Prog.17). It continues to produce the series of environmental performance reviews carried out by the subprogramme 1.

Recently acknowledged by the eighth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference, EPRs can support the achievement and monitoring of Sustainable Developments Goals in the pan-European region.

The EPR Programme has a long experience of assisting countries to review their progress to achieve MDGs. Not only MDG-7 (ensure environmental sustainability), but also other MDGs often have been assessed in relevant chapters of the reviews.

This knowledge and understanding of development is used to support the achievement and

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/documents/2016/ece/ece.batumi.conf.2016.2.add.1.e.pdf>

monitoring of the SDGs. Integrating a review of progress in achieving SDGs into the current EPR process would address those SDGs that are relevant for the particular country under review. EPRs assess the progress a reviewed country is making in achieving relevant SDGs and provide recommendations to overcome the challenges. In this way, EPRs effectively contribute to the follow up and review of SDGs at national and regional levels. Ultimately, they can support the future Voluntary National Reviews at the High Level Political Forum (HLPF). Some SDGs issues have already been partially addressed by EPRs.

At its 22<sup>nd</sup> session, the Committee on Environmental Policy approved the document “Role of environmental performance reviews in supporting the achievement and monitoring of Sustainable Development Goals in the pan-European region” (ECE/CEP/2017/L.2 <sup>2</sup>) prepared by the Expert Group on Environmental Performance Reviews <sup>3</sup>

The Programme will contribute to the following SDGs and targets:

Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages: Targets 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 3.7, 3.8, 3.9, 3.a, 3.b, 3.c and 3.d.

Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all: Targets 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 4.a, 4.b and 4.c.

Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls: Targets 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, 5.5, 5.6, 5.a, 5.b and 5.c.

Goal 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all: Targets 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 6.5, 6.6, 6.a, 6.b.

Goal 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all: Targets 7.1, 7.2, 7.3, 7.a and 7.b.

Goal 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation: Targets 9.1, 9.2, 9.3, 9.4, 9.5, 9.b and 9.c.

Goal 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns: Targets 12.1, 12.2, 12.3, 12.4, 12.5, 12.6, 12.7, 12.8, 12.a, 12.b and 12.c.

Goal 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts: Targets 13.1, 13.2, 13.3, 13.a and 13.b.

Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development: Targets 14.1, 14.2, 14.3, 14.4, 14.5, 14.6, 14.a, 14.b and 14.c.

Goal 15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss: Targets 15.1, 15.2, 15.3, 15.4, 15.5, 15.6, 15.7, 15.8, 15.9, 15.a, 15.b and 15.c.

Goal 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels: Targets 16.3, 16.6, 16.7, 16.10 and 16.b.

## **Objective**

To assist countries to improve their environmental management and performance; promotes information exchange among countries on policies and experiences; helps integrating environmental policies into economic sectors; promotes greater accountability to the public and strengthens cooperation with the international community.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/documents/2017/ece/cep/ece.cep.2017.L.2.e.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/cep/CEP-22/CEP-22decisions.edited.e.pdf>

## Expected accomplishments

**EA1:** Improved environmental performance of interested countries:

## Indicators of achievement

**IA 1.1:** Carrying out activities related to improve environmental performance in countries under review

**IA 1.2:** Participating in international forum to exchange experience on EPR related topics or to promote EPR activities

## Main activities

Organizing preparatory missions to review the structure of the review and to discuss the full EPR process  
Organizing review missions in the countries requesting to undergo an EPR to evaluate environmental governance through plenary and individual meetings

Organizing expert reviews to discuss conclusions and recommendations with a delegation of the countries under review

Organizing peer reviews to focus on some of the major policy issues that have arisen during the EPR

Organizing launches of the EPR reports in the reviewed countries to promote environmental governance at all governmental levels and civil society

Participating in international to keep up to date and inform on latest development in the environmental sustainability and green economy, to promote EPR activities, to exchange experience on EPR

## Assumptions and Risks

Risks	Mitigating Actions
<b>R1.</b> <b>Lacking or limited funds</b> Donor countries are not interested in the country under review. For example, prospective review country is not in the group of cooperating countries or there are not diplomatic or economic relationships.	<b>M1.</b> So far, the EPR Programme has been able to secure a group of donors, which contribute regularly and reliably. The EPR Programme is minimizing costs where possible, still keeping high output standards: flying in economic class even for long haul transport, buying tickets as early as possible to get the cheapest prices (however, see R2)
<b>R2.</b> <b>Cancellation or postponing of the review mission</b> Although dates of the review mission were agreed, due to, for example, a change in government or political instability, the review mission is postponed or canceled.	<b>M2.</b> Since the EPR Programme is depending on extra-budgetary funding, air tickets are bought in advance to minimize losses in case of cancellation of the Review.
<b>R3.</b> <b>Inadequate nomination of the national</b>	<b>M3.</b> Despite general positive experience, national

<p><b>coordinator</b> Experience shows that the selection of national coordinators usually works very well both in terms of the timing of the nomination and the professional quality of national coordinator, who is in almost all cases a person of adequate seniority and experience to support the mission.</p>	<p>coordinators have not always been able to deliver the expected outcomes, their work sometimes being hindered by weak communication channels and poor governance. In some cases, a request from the EPR Team to change the national coordinator was done. In cases where the national coordinator was more a political nomination, a request was done to have also a national sub-coordinator with technical expertise</p>
<p><b>R4.</b> <b>No documentation provided by the reviewed country</b> Sometimes, the country provides limited information or data on the issues that will be analysed in the report</p>	<p><b>M4.</b> The EPR secretary as well as experts also are looking for all possible information and data. To support this, the EPR Programme uses a cloud-like tool to share information and data amongst the team members.</p>
<p><b>R5.</b> <b>No meeting organized prior the review mission</b> The national coordinators and focal points are requested to organize meetings, field visits and interviews for international experts prior the review mission, but often this is not done.</p>	<p><b>M5.</b> During the review mission, international experts and logistics coordinator in cooperation with national focal points try to organize ad-hoc meetings.</p>
<p><b>R6.</b> <b>No delivery of a draft chapter or quality chapter</b> Although sufficient time is allowed for delivering a draft chapter for the review, there is some slippage. Sometimes authors of the EPR chapters do not follow deadlines or their output has been of poor quality.</p>	<p><b>M6.</b> When the expert is a consultant, it is easy to convince her/him to improve the draft chapter. When the expert is sent by a government, then it is more difficult to push but so far, the EPR Programme did not face too much this reality, except once but the CEP delegate was contacted to have some leverage to the experts.</p>

## Monitoring and evaluation

The EPR Programme will undergo an evaluation in 2019 to see how the EPR Programme takes into account the 2030 Agenda in the forthcoming EPRs.

## Results-based work plan

The template of results-based work plan is provided in the Annex 1.

## Budget

Not applicable. The budget is determined by various factors: structure of the review, country under review, and expertise provided by donors and international organisations. The estimated detailed budget is presented in the Annex 2.

**Annex 1.**

**Results-based work plan**

EA	Activity #	Timeframe by activity		Budget class and Code		Amount (USD)
		Year	Quarter <i>(Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4)</i>	<i>(Please use the budget classes listed in the table above.)</i>		
EA1	A1.1	2017 – 2019	Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4	Consultants	<b>010</b>	<b>\$ 210,000</b>
				Travel of Experts	<b>160</b>	<b>\$ 126,000</b>
				Travel of Staff	<b>160</b>	<b>\$ 228,000</b>
				Contractual Services	<b>120</b>	<b>\$ 210,000</b>
				Operating and other direct costs	<b>125</b>	<b>\$ 150,000</b>
				Travel of meeting participants	<b>160</b>	<b>\$ 100,000</b>
	A1.2	2017 – 2019	Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4	Travel of Staff	<b>160</b>	<b>\$ 24,000</b>

## Budget

### **Basis for calculation:**

Six countries to be reviewed for the period 2017-2019 - Two countries per year

Fourteen chapters per review

Per review, in average, a team comprises: 1 team leader, 1 logistics coordinator, 6 consultants, 6 UN staff members, and 2 government experts. The 2 government experts are usually covered by their respective country.

### **Calculation base:**

Preparatory mission \$2,500 cost per UN staff for the preparatory mission for the third EPR of Tajikistan

Review mission average \$3,500 - \$4,000 cost per UN staff for the preparatory mission for the third EPR of Tajikistan and \$3,000 for the third EPR of Serbia.

### **Consultants (010): \$ \_210,000\_ (Total)**

#### *International consultants*

Fees to deliver a draft chapter are \$5,831.60. The period to draft the chapter is 20 working days.

International consultants for the task(s) of assessing the environmental performance of the country with regard to specific topics, in support of activities: A1.1 (36 consultants) x (\$\_5,831.60\_\_per chapter) = \$\_209,997.60 (rounded to \_\$210,000).

### **Travel of Experts (160): \$ \_126,000\_\_ (Total)**

(6 missions) by 36 experts for the purpose of participation to the review mission in support of activities A1.1 (6 experts).

(\$\_3,500\_) x (6 missions) x (6 experts) = \$\_126,000\_.

### **Travel of Staff (A1.1) (160): \$ \_228,000\_\_ (Total)**

(6 preparatory missions) by UN staff for the purpose of participation to the preparatory missions in support of activities A1.1 (2 UN Staff).

(\$\_2,500\_) x (6 missions) x (2 UN Staff) = \$\_30,000\_.

(6 missions) by UN staff for the purpose of participation to the review mission in support of activities A1.1 (8 UN Staff).

(\$\_3,500\_) x (6 missions) x (8 UN Staff) = \$\_168,000\_.

(6 launch events) by UN staff for the purpose of participation to the launch events in support of activities A1.1 (2 UN Staff).

(\$\_2,500\_) x (6 missions) x (2 UN Staff) = \$\_30,000\_.

**Travel of Staff (A1.2) (160): \$ \_24,000\_ (Total)**

(4 missions) by UN staff for the purpose of participating in international forum to promote EPR activities or to exchange experience on EPR related topics A1.2 (3 UN Staff).

$$(\$2,000) \times (4 \text{ missions}) \times (3 \text{ UN Staff}) = \$24,000$$

**Operating and other direct costs (125): \$ \_150,000\_ (Total)**

Interpretation and translation cost required in the preparatory and review missions, and launch events where simultaneous or consecutive interpretation is required, UNDP cost recovery (average of \$25,000 per reviewed country) in support of A1.1 = \$150,000.

**Contractual services (120): \$ \_210,000\_ (Total)**

A provision of \$210,000 is required for edition or translation services in support of activities A1.1: edition of the draft EPR reports, translation to local or official language of the draft EPR reports (average of \$35,000 per reviewed country for both services).

**Travel of meeting participants (expert group meetings) (160): \$ \_100,000\_ (Total)**

EPR Expert Group meetings in Geneva per year in support of A1.1. Duration of meeting: 3 days;  
DSA in Geneva = \$377

Country delegation 4 participants (\$3,262 per participant) x (4 participants) x (6 countries) = \$78,288  
2 experts in the EPR Expert Group are financially supported.

EPR Expert (\$3,262 per participant) x (2 participants) x (3 meetings) = \$19,572 (Rounded to \$20,000)

$$\$78,288 + \$20,000 = \$98,000 \text{ (Rounded to } \$100,000)$$

Total direct cost	1,048,000
13% UN Programme Support Cost	136,240
2% for evaluation	24,685
<b>Total budget</b>	<b>1,207,925</b>