

2019

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Environmental Performance Reviews: Progress with the third cycle

Short stories from the reviews conducted in the period 2012–2018



UNECE



Committee on Environmental Policy, 2017



EPR Expert Group, 2017



Visiting the ger



Wastewater treatment near Skopje



Meeting with inspectors, Ulaanbaatar



Visiting the Galicica National Park



Ecomuseum, Karaganda



Hustai Nuruu National Park



EPR Expert Group, 2014



Mining in Zaamar

UNECE Environmental Performance Reviews

Since 1996, the Environmental Performance Review Programme of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) has been assessing progress made by individual countries in reconciling their economic and social development with environmental protection, and in meeting international commitments on the environment and sustainable development.

The key objectives of the Programme are:

- To assist countries to improve their environmental performance by providing concrete recommendations for better policy design and implementation
- To promote the exchange of information among countries about policies and experiences
- To assist the integration of environmental considerations into sector-specific policies (e.g. agriculture, energy, transport, health)
- To promote greater accountability to the public
- To strengthen countries' cooperation with the international community
- To contribute to the achievement and monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals.

As a voluntary exercise, an Environmental Performance Review is undertaken at the request of a country. The international expert team meets with national experts in the country under review to discuss environmental policy and conducts visits to landfills, wastewater treatment plants, protected areas or schools to see practical implementation. The report is then produced, containing recommendations for further action. The UNECE Expert Group on Environmental Performance Reviews then undertakes an expert review of the report in cooperation with a delegation from the country under review. Peer review of the report and its recommendations is carried out by the UNECE Committee on Environmental Policy, which includes all UNECE member States.

Over the past two decades, Environmental Performance Reviews have resulted in:

- Improved policy and legal frameworks and better integration of environmental concerns into sectoral policies
- Stronger institutions for environmental management and protection
- Enhanced environmental monitoring and information systems
- Improved financial resources for environmental protection and greening the economy
- Strengthened public participation
- Increased international cooperation.

The third cycle of reviews

Two cycles of Environmental Performance Reviews have already taken place. First-cycle reviews established baseline conditions regarding trends, policy commitments and institutional arrangements for environmental policy and management in the reviewed countries. During the second-cycle reviews, emphasis was placed on the implementation and financing of environment policy, the integration of environmental concerns into economic sectors and the promotion of sustainable development.

The third cycle of reviews commenced in 2012 and is still ongoing. The key topics for the third cycle are:

- Environmental governance and financing in a green economy context
- Countries' cooperation with the international community
- Environmental mainstreaming in priority sectors.

Focusing on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

An additional thematic angle on the Sustainable Development Goals was added to all Environmental Performance Reviews conducted since 2017, in line with the outcomes of the Eighth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference (Batumi, Georgia, 8–10 June 2016).

Nowadays, Environmental Performance Reviews include an assessment of relevant Sustainable Development Goals and targets and recommendations linked to those targets. They address systemic issues such as the effectiveness of an institutional framework for the implementation and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the integration of the Sustainable Development Goals into the national policy framework, data availability, ownership and awareness of the Goals, and means of implementation. The recommendations in the reviews provide guidance to governments and other stakeholders in designing specific policies and measures to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

Why this calendar?

This calendar illustrates the findings of 11 third-cycle reviews and the review of Mongolia, conducted in the period 2012–2018. It includes snapshots of selected environmental topics covered by the individual reviews.

By disseminating the results of the reviews in the form of a calendar for the upcoming year, UNECE aims to draw attention to the findings of the reviews and encourage their implementation in 2019 and beyond.

Twelve different topics are featured in this calendar, one per country under review. For a comprehensive picture of the findings and recommendations of individual reviews, the full texts of the Environmental Performance Review publications should be consulted.

Printed copies of Environmental Performance Reviews may be obtained from the United Nations Department of Public Information (<https://shop.un.org/>). The reviews are also available online (www.unece.org/env/epr/).

Acknowledgements

UNECE is grateful to all countries that have hosted Environmental Performance Reviews for their trust, close cooperation and hard work with the international expert teams in the process of preparation of the reviews.

UNECE would also like to express its deep appreciation to the governments of Austria, Bulgaria, Finland, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Sweden and Switzerland and to the European Union for their support by providing funds for the reviews covered in this calendar.

Sincere thanks go to the governments and organizations that provided experts to the international expert teams that prepared the reviews featured in this calendar: Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden, the United Nations Environment Programme, the Joint United Nations Environment Programme/Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Environment Unit, the World Health Organization, the European Environment Agency and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

UNECE also takes this opportunity to express its warm appreciation to Belarus, Bulgaria, Estonia, Finland, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Montenegro, the Netherlands, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, Sweden, Switzerland and Uzbekistan for having provided their experts to the UNECE Expert Group on Environmental Performance Reviews, which undertook expert assessment of the reviews covered in this calendar.



IN FOCUS: energy and environment

Georgia has very small proven oil and natural gas reserves. More than 70 per cent of the primary energy supply is imported. Hydropower dominates the electricity generation sector. Hydropower generation increased during the last decade due to both new investments in the hydropower sector and rehabilitation of existing stations.

Georgia has considerable potential for biomass utilization (3–4 TWh). Local biofuels (primarily in the form of firewood) play an important role in the primary energy supply. Firewood is mainly consumed in rural areas for cooking and heating purposes, but the consumption of firewood is inefficient due to the widespread practice of using woodstoves of very low efficiency (35–40 per cent).

Geothermal waters are used in Georgia for district heating, fishpond heating, agricultural drying, industrial applications and greenhouse heating. The nation's geothermal resources are of the highest quality, containing minimal amounts of dissolved salts. The achievable potential of geothermal energy is 3 TWh per year. The climatic conditions are also favourable for utilizing solar energy. The achievable potential of solar energy is estimated at 60–120 GWh annually.

Nevertheless, the energy intensity of the economy is high and the amount of specific energy needed to produce goods and services in Georgia is 2–2.5 times higher than in Western countries. It is estimated that energy efficiency measures can provide energy savings in the country of up to 20 per cent. The residential sector in Georgia has a huge energy efficiency potential. Currently, Georgia uses 40–50 per cent more energy for heating per square metre of floor space than European Union countries with the same climate.

The UNECE Third Environmental Performance Review of Georgia (2016) stresses the need for an optimal strategic framework for the selection and development of hydropower plant sites. It calls for the establishment of national rules on the methodology for determining an acceptable minimal water flow ("environmental flow") that must remain in the river to sustain aquatic life and ecosystems. It highlights the need for a resettlement policy framework to provide safeguards for citizens who must be resettled because of infrastructure projects. Furthermore, the Review calls for stronger attention to be given to the promotion of the alternative sources of energy.



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JANUARY

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
31	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31	1	2	3



IN FOCUS: education for sustainable development

Belarus has achieved good progress in its efforts to integrate environmental education and education for sustainable development (ESD) in formal, non-formal and informal education. The most significant efforts have been made to integrate ESD into formal education. Research and methodological work on ESD is advanced in universities and education institutions, and educators are actively involved in discussions on improving teaching methodology.

To a certain extent, ESD has become an integral part of the curricula and teaching materials in the education system at all levels. Sustainable development issues are increasingly covered by mass media, and the activities of civil society and its involvement in raising public awareness have increased.

Key sustainable development themes addressed in formal, non-formal and informal education include environmental protection, sustainable management and use of natural resources, environmental ethics, biological and landscape diversity and environmental security. Although an environmental component largely prevails, there is a noticeable shift from environmental to sustainable development topics in the education system.

This shift needs to be further strengthened to cover a broader spectrum of sustainable development topics, says the UNECE Third Environmental Performance Review of Belarus (2016). The curricula and teaching practices on ESD could be enriched with themes that are not prominently covered at present (e.g. good governance, sustainable consumption and production, and sustainable urbanization). Furthermore, a step forward would be to develop criteria and indicators to assess progress in the implementation of environmental education and ESD, and their effectiveness.

The Review highlights the achievements of Belarus in developing a system for training and in-service training programmes for civil servants on the environment and sustainable development. It calls for expanding this system to involve private sector professionals in training and in-service training programmes on sustainable consumption and production, sustainable investment, green procurement and sustainable forestry.



02

FEBRUARY

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
28	29	30	31	1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	1	2	3



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