

UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT

Guidelines for developing national strategies
to use biodiversity monitoring as
an environmental policy tool
for countries of Eastern Europe,
the Caucasus and Central Asia,
as well as Interested South-Eastern
European countries



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Environmental Monitoring and Assessment

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The present publication is the result of a series of meetings organized by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment.

Mr. Tobias Garstecki consultant to the ECE secretariat prepared the first draft of the guidelines contained in this publication. National experts from Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Finland, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Montenegro, Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation, Serbia, Switzerland, Tajikistan, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates and Uzbekistan participated in the preparation of these guidelines, together with experts from the European Environment Agency, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Statistics Division, the World Health Organization (WHO) European Centre for Environment and Health (ECEH), the Interstate Statistical Commission of the Commonwealth of Independent States, Regional Environmental Centre-Moldova and Regional Environmental Center for Central Asia, as well as representatives of environmental civil society associations and the scientific community.

The ECE secretariat, served both as content editor and overall project manager.

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Foreword

Since 1991, the “Environment for Europe” process has provided the framework for the countries of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) to work together in achieving their commitment to improve environmental protection and to promote sustainable development throughout the ECE region.

Within that process ECE was invited to continue its efforts to make monitoring an effective instrument in environmental policymaking, and in particular assist the countries of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia in applying this instrument. In doing so, ECE was invited to work in close cooperation with the European Environment Agency and other relevant partners.

The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment elaborated the Guidelines for Developing National Strategies to use Biodiversity Monitoring as an Environmental Policy Tool. They were adopted by the Committee on Environmental Policy at its nineteenth session in October 2013, which invited countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, Central Asia and interested countries of South-Eastern Europe to implement them.

The guidelines are addressed to government officials and experts working for government bodies that are responsible for environmental policy, environmental monitoring and compliance monitoring. In a broader sense, the document can also be of benefit to those working in the private sector, the scientific community and civil society associations active in the environmental and health fields.

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I Introduction

The present guidelines were prepared in response to the invitation of the Sixth “Environment for Europe” Ministerial Conference (Belgrade, October 2007) to the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) “to continue its efforts, in cooperation with EEA¹ and other partners, to make monitoring an effective instrument in environmental policymaking in countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia and South-Eastern Europe” (ECE/BELGRADE.CONF/2007/8, para.7).

The format and structure of the present guidelines are the same as those of the guidelines for air and water quality monitoring, prepared by the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment and approved by the Committee on Environmental Policy and its Extended Bureau in 2010 and 2011, respectively.²

The aim of the present guidelines is to provide guidance to the countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, Central Asia and interested countries of South-Eastern Europe (hereinafter “the target countries”) to help make monitoring a practical tool for environmental policy, especially in the development of plans and strategies on biodiversity conservation and sustainable use, the mainstreaming of biodiversity conservation objectives across policy sectors and in assessing progress in achieving policy targets and the effectiveness of conservation measures. Minimization of health, environmental and socio-economic risks resulting from biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation, as well as the maximization of benefits from biodiversity and ecosystems, are the main objectives.

While the guidelines focus on target countries as a group, they also recommend to that country-specific issues be taken into account, such as bio-geographic conditions, the diversity of national economies and established practices in biodiversity and ecosystems management for defining biodiversity monitoring networks, practices and procedures.

The guidelines are based on the assessment and evaluation of the situation with regard to biodiversity monitoring in the target countries contained in their environmental performance reviews (EPRs), prepared under the ECE EPR Programme, as well as in the report, *Europe’s Environment: The fourth assessment*.³ The document reflects relevant experiences gained in countries of the European Union and in other countries where coherent systems of biodiversity surveillance and management have been developed and implemented.

The guidelines also take into account relevant international activities, requirements, guidance documents and recommendations, especially those developed under the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention), the Pan-European 2020 Strategy for Biodiversity (as the principal pan-European strategy on biodiversity succeeding the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy) and the ECE Joint Task Force on Environmental Indicators.

¹ European Environmental Agency.

² *Air and Water Quality Monitoring as Environmental Policy Tools — Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, Central Asia and South-Eastern Europe* (ECE/CEP/168). Available from <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=30339>.

³ European Environment Agency (EEA), Copenhagen, 2007. Available from http://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/state_of_environment_report_2007_1.

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