

Economic Commission for Europe

Committee on Environmental Policy

Twenty-ninth session

Geneva, 6-8 November 2024

Item 5 of the provisional agenda

Follow-up to the Ninth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference and preparation of the mid-term review of the Conference's main outcomes

Information paper No. 2

31 October 2024

Draft outline of the document: “Implementation of a regionwide approach to sustainable infrastructure in the pan-European region”

Note by the secretariat¹

I. Introduction

1. The ministers at the Ninth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference (Nicosia, 5–7 October 2022) (Nicosia Conference) stated the following in their Declaration:

We will explore the way forward for the pan-European region, including through innovation, nature-based solutions and engagement with the private sector. The future regionwide approach to sustainable infrastructure should provide the basis for common goals, targets and criteria for policymaking, financing, performance monitoring and replicability of practices that best suit domestic and transboundary needs.

2. To fulfil the Nicosia mandate on the regionwide approach to sustainable infrastructure, at its twenty-eighth session, the Committee asked the Bureau, with the support of the secretariat, to prepare a document on the implementation of a regionwide approach to sustainable infrastructure in the pan-European region by providing the basis for common goals, targets and criteria for policymaking, financing, performance monitoring and replicability of practices that best suited domestic and transboundary needs.

3. At its meeting in Lisbon in June 2024, the Bureau discussed the time frame for the preparation and the outline of a document on implementation of a regionwide approach to sustainable infrastructure in the pan-European region and agreed on the following:

(a) The secretariat will prepare the draft outline based on the suggestions made by the Bureau members at its Lisbon meeting, and circulate it to the Bureau for further comments/revisions;

(b) Based on the feedback from the Bureau and in cooperation with partners (United Nations Environment Programme, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) the secretariat will finalize the outline and submit it as an information paper to be discussed by the Committee at its twenty-ninth session;

(c) Based on the outcomes of the Committee's session, the secretariat will instruct a consultant to draft a paper, which will eventually be submitted as an official document to the Committee's thirtieth session (Geneva, 26–28 November 2025).

4. The Committee will be invited to consider the information provided.

¹ This document was not formally edited.

II. Implementation of a regionwide approach to sustainable infrastructure in the pan-European region

A. Outline

5. The following elements might be considered in the development of the document: “Implementation of a regionwide approach to sustainable infrastructure in the pan-European region”:

(a) Introduction

- (i) Scope, structure, basic definitions, partners
- (ii) Rational for a pan-European regional approach
- (iii) Bottlenecks in the pan-European regional cooperation and opportunities to enhance it

(b) Infrastructure in the pan-European region: current state and trends

- (i) Institutional frameworks and governance of infrastructure development
- (ii) Political economy considerations in the infrastructure development
- (iii) Economic demand for infrastructure development
- (iv) Composition of financing sources for infrastructure and their associated benefits/risks
- (v) Social costs/benefits of infrastructure
- (vi) Social considerations in the planning, evaluation, financing, construction, operation phases
- (vii) Environmental impact from the infrastructure development:
 - impacts of the infrastructure itself (i.e., the project design vs other alternatives - in terms of GHG, pollution, waste; impacts related to construction and operation)
 - impacts in terms of siting (e.g., biodiversity + ecosystem impacts, +/- for resilience, colocation with existing built infrastructure)
 - Nature based solutions as complement or alternative to grey ones.

(viii) Selective case studies and flagship initiatives

(ix) Plans and future trends

(c) Infrastructure and sustainability: challenges and opportunities

(i) Conceptual challenges and opportunities, including developing definitions, criteria and indicators

- (ii) Political and institutional challenges and opportunities
- (iii) Social challenges and opportunities
- (iv) Environmental challenges and opportunities
- (v) Financial challenges and opportunities
- (vi) Technical challenges and opportunities

(d) Available tools and frameworks to implement sustainable infrastructure, their specificities and complementarities

(e) Implementation of sustainable infrastructure in the pan-European region

- (i) Integration and implementation of the 10 “international good practice principles for sustainable infrastructure” and G20 principles for quality infrastructure investment into national policies
- (ii) Strengthening international cooperation, sharing best practices and lessons

learned with regard to sustainable infrastructure

(iii) Promoting investment in environmentally, socially and economically sustainable, climate resilient, resource efficient infrastructure

(iv) Engagement of relevant stakeholders, including local communities, vulnerable people and indigenous peoples, in all stages of the process to identify, design, build and maintain infrastructure

(f) Conclusions and the way forward

B. Process and timetable

6. Possible timetable for preparation of the document: “Implementation of a regionwide approach to sustainable infrastructure in the pan-European region” is presented in table 1.

Table 1

Possible timetable for the document on implementation of a regionwide approach to sustainable infrastructure in the pan-European region

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>	<i>Actions</i>
1-3 November 2023	28 th session of the Committee on Environmental Policy (Geneva)	Committee asked the Bureau to prepare a document
4 June 2024	CEP Bureau meeting (Lisbon)	Bureau discussed the time frame for the preparation and the elements of the outline of a document
23 October	CEP Bureau meeting (online)	Bureau finalizes the time frame for the preparation and the outline of a document
6-8 November 2024	29 th session of the Committee on Environmental Policy (Geneva)	Committee considers the time frame for the preparation and the outline of a document (information paper No. 2)
March-April 2025		Drafting the document (ECE consultant)
May 2025		Consultation on the draft document with the partners (UNEP, OECD)
3-4 June 2025	CEP Bureau meeting (Geneva)	Bureau discusses the draft document
June 2025		The draft is finalised by the consultant based on the feedback from the CEP Bureau and the partner organizations
July 2025		Editing of the draft document and its submission as an official document (ECE/CEP/2025/6) for the CEP-30
26-28 November 2025	30 th session of the Committee on Environmental Policy (Geneva)	Committee considers the document and advises on the follow-up actions, if any