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# **REVIEW**

**of the UNECE activities under the Espoo Convention  
on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context  
and its Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment**

## **FINAL REPORT**

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JUNE 2016

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## Acronyms

CA - Central Asia

CENN – Caucasus Environmental NGO Network

EIB – European Investment Bank

IC – Implementation Committee

IEA – Environmental Impact Assessment

IFI – International Financial Institution

NGO – non-governmental organization

MoP - Meetings of the Parties to the Convention

MOP/MOP - Meeting of the Parties to the Convention serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol

SDG – Sustainable Development Goal, adopted under the United Nations

SEA - Strategic Environmental Assessment

ToT - Training of Trainers

UNECE – United Nations Economic Commission of Europe

WG - Working Group

## 1. Executive summary

The report presents the findings of independent review of the UNECE activities under the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo Convention) and its Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).

The review was implemented in March-June 2016. The purpose of this review is to assess relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the UNECE activities in implementing the Convention and the Protocol.

The findings are based on a desk review of the relevant documentation, a survey with the questionnaire covering the most important aspects of the UNECE work for servicing the Convention and the Protocol, and interviews with the representatives of selected Parties to the Convention/Protocol from the various sub-regions of UNECE).

The review found that most of the activities have been implemented in accordance with the workplans adopted by the Parties, the activities were mostly relevant to the goal and tasks of the Convention and the Protocol. The respondents, representing 20 stakeholders (19 countries and 1 NGO), were mostly satisfied and very satisfied with the work of the Secretariat, that most of them considered as very effective and efficient.

The review also provides assessment of the gender aspects of the UNECE activities under the Convention and the Protocol. There is a major conclusion that no gender discrimination has been observed by the stakeholders, the gender equality principle is well maintained in the UNECE activities on implementation of the Convention and the Protocol.

The evaluation report includes a wide range of recommendations on improving the work of the governing and subsidiary bodies of the Convention and the Protocol regarding factors contributing or creating obstacles to achievement of the goals of the Convention and the Protocol, and to implementation of the workplans, improving the procedures and working methods of the treaty bodies, the funding and in-kind contribution issues, raising awareness on the Convention and the Protocol within and beyond the UNECE region, improving the relevancy of the Convention and the Protocol for your country/organization/for the region/globally and the process of planning of new activities and reporting, enhancing the communication and interactions between the Secretariat and the Parties. Overall, the main recommendation for the Secretariat by the survey participants was to maintain the high level of performance that is achieved by now.

The detailed primary data and information are enclosed in the annexes to the report, as well as the terms of references and evaluation matrix, developed by the evaluator.

## 2. Introduction

The Review's main objective is to evaluate the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of UNECE activities under the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo Convention) and its Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).

It should help in assessing the role of the Secretariat of the treaties in servicing and supporting the work of the governing and subsidiary bodies under the Convention and the Protocol, including Meetings of the Parties to the Convention (MoP); Meeting of the Parties to the Convention serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol (MOP/MOP); Working Group on Environmental Impact Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment; Implementation Committee; and the Bureau. The evaluation also reviews the work from 2011 to 2015, carried out under joint workplans for 2011–2014 and 2014–2017 adopted by the Parties.

The Review aims to provide the Secretariat and other stakeholders with the information required for ensuring the continued relevance, increased effectiveness and impact of the activities on implementation of the Convention and the Protocol. The evaluation results can be used to ensure the relevance of policy and workplan activities for 2017–2020, and enable more effective procedures for the delivery of future activities, where necessary.

The specific tasks of the review include:

- Review of the documentation on the Convention and the Protocol;
- Carrying out a survey to evaluate the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the overall work of the governing and subsidiary bodies in reviewing and promoting the implementation of Convention and the Protocol, management of the workplan in monitoring the expenditures of associated funds, with a focus on the role of the Secretariat in supporting and promoting this work;
- Conducting interviews with selected national government representatives (by phone or skype)
- Analysis of the survey findings;
- Preparation of the evaluation report, development of the relevant, practical and realistic recommendations based on the evaluation findings.

This Review was conducted by the independent consultant Dr. G.Safonov under the contract with the UNECE.

### 3. Methodology of the review

The scope and methodology of the review were determined by the Terms of References, approved under the review contract (Annex 1).

The main aspects of methodological approach for the Review are presented in the evaluation matrix (Annex 2), developed by the consultant and approved by the Secretariat of the Convention. The matrix describes the key questions of the review, indicators and basic data, sources of information, and proposed methodologies.

The main activities of the review included:

- desk review of the documents related to the Convention and the Protocol (Annex 3);
- survey of the opinions of the stakeholders regarding activities of the UNECE and the Parties on implementation of the Convention and the Protocol;
- interviews with the selected stakeholders for clarification of specific questions and general overview of the performance of the UNECE under the Convention and the Protocol.

The questionnaire for survey and interviewing is provided to the respondents in English and Russian. It includes both closed and open questions, and offer a possibility for the respondents to provide as much feedback as needed for clarifying any substantial issues and challenges relevant to improving effectiveness and efficiency of implementation of the Convention and the Protocol.

With the assistance of the Secretariat, the questionnaire was delivered to the respondents that include national focal points nominated by the Governments; participants in the 2011 and 2014 sessions of the Meetings of the Parties to the two treaties and the 2015 meeting of the Working Group; members of the Bureau and Implementation Committee (noting that there is an overlap between the categories).

. The deadline for submission of the completed questionnaires was initially set to April 4, 2016, but it was extended until the end of April, 2016 due to the overlap with the mandatory reporting by Parties on the implementation of the Convention and the Protocol (end of March 2016); and to two other surveys on the application of the Convention to nuclear energy related activities and on the land-use planning and siting of hazardous activities.

During the survey, 20 filled-in questionnaire forms were received from the respondents, representing the environment ministries of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Denmark, Finland, Georgia, Germany, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Norway, Poland, Russia, Slovakia, Spain, Switzerland, Ukraine, as well as the European Commission - DG Environment, and Caucasus Environmental NGO Network (CENN).

The rate of response is well below 50%<sup>1</sup>, which does not provide full representativeness of the opinions of the Parties to the Convention and the Protocol. The respondents expressed relatively diverse opinions (in some cases the estimates were on the “extreme” opposite sides), that reflects, probably, the different experience and engagement into the work under the Convention and the Protocol. The results of the survey, hence, should be considered rather as indicative.

The survey was complemented with the interviews by phone/email, that were organized directly by the consultant in May 2016. The requests for interviews were submitted to 12 representatives, only 7 of them were available. To ensure the representativeness of various sub-regions of the

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<sup>1</sup> The Espoo Convention has 45 Parties, many of them have more than one focal point. Aside from the Parties, the stakeholders include some 25 NGOs and IGOs, consultants and non-UNECE Parties.

UNECE, the following respondents were interviewed: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, European Commission, Kyrgyzstan, Switzerland (Annex 4). In addition, the reviewer took into consideration the evaluations made by the delegates of the 5th meeting of the Working Group on EIA and SEA (11-14 April 2016) provided by the Secretariat.

The gender and human rights aspects will be also covered by the evaluation, taking into account guidance provided by the United Nations Evaluation Group on that matter<sup>2</sup>.

The method of quantitative analysis is based on the estimates (scores) of the different indicators by the respondents under the survey, with the following indicative values:

- 1 - highly ineffective/irrelevant
- 2 - somewhat ineffective/irrelevant
- 3 - somewhat effective/relevant
- 4 - mostly effective/relevant
- 5 - very effective/relevant

These values were attributed to the quantitative “measurement” of effectiveness, efficiency, relevancy of various activities. Interpretation of the findings is based on such scaling of values of the estimates.

All sections of the questionnaire included also open questions and possibility to provide comments on the scores for each indicator. This information is used for clarification of the score values assigned by the respondents, for qualitative analysis of the findings, and for summary of recommendations for improvement of work of the UNECE under the Espoo Convention and its Protocol on SEA.

The interviews were focused on the overall assessment of the UNECE activities, identification of strengths and shortcomings of the work on implementing the Convention and the Protocol (including the role of the Secretariat), and specific recommendations for improvement of the work process.

The methodological limitations are dealt, first of all, with the issue of representativeness of the participants of the survey and interviews, which might affect the reliability of the findings. In some cases the responses in the questionnaire were made with a wrong meaning (e.g. the score assigned was low “1”, but the comment said the question was not relevant to the respondent, in such cases the answer was not included in the quantitative overall assessment). The validity of provided information was checked to the extent possible via the phone interviews with the persons, who provided the completed questionnaires, but that was limited in scope (only 7 respondents were available for the interviews).

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/980>; <http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/1452>

## 4. Findings

### 4.1. Overall assessment of the UNECE activities under the Espoo Convention and its Protocol on SEA

The evaluation of the UNECE activities was focused on three major issues:

1. The relevance of adopted workplan activities (in terms of reflecting the aims of the Convention and the Protocol and needs of the countries)
2. The effectiveness of support of the Secretariat in the work of governing and subsidiary bodies (in terms of bringing results, achieving goals, meeting the objectives)
3. The efficiency of the work of the governing and subsidiary bodies (in terms of being carried out in an optimal way of spending the available resources)

These issues were considered in details through the desk review of documentation, survey and interviews. The Consultant developed and the Secretariat approved the evaluation matrix for undertaking the review, identifying the key issues for analysis in each of the three major issues, specific questions related to the activities undertaken or planned, the sources of information for each question, and the means of getting relevant information (Annex 2).

The specific topics for assessment were included the following categories:

#### 1. Relevance:

- Compliance and implementation
- Subregional cooperation and capacity-building
- Exchange of good practice
- Promoting ratification and application of the Convention and the Protocol on SEA (including outreach, strategic planning, etc.)
- Financial and in-kind contributions

#### 3. Efficiency:

- Procedure of the review of compliance
- Reporting and review of the implementation of the Convention and the Protocol
- Communication between the Secretariat and the Parties
- The capacity building activities

#### 2. Effectiveness:

- Organization of the meetings
- Preparation of the meeting documentation
- Implementation of the workplan activities
- Review of compliance
- Reporting and the review of implementation of the Convention and the Protocol
- Monitoring of expenditures based on the reports on use of funds by the Secretariat
- Communication between the Secretariat and Parties
- The capacity building activities
- Maintaining the gender equality in the work

The desk review of documentation on the UNECE activities in implementation of the Convention and the Protocol included the biennial financial reports, produced by the Secretariat and approved by the Bureau, and the Report on the budget and financial arrangements in the period since the fifth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention with the corresponding decisions, the financial strategy, the first review of implementation of the Protocol on SEA, the fourth review of implementation of the Convention, reports on the activities of the Implementation Committee, the workplans for the implementation of the Convention and the Protocol and other documents.

*4.1.1. The overall effectiveness/ efficiency/ relevance of the UNECE activities is assessed very positively, with the majority of “mostly and very satisfactory” estimates*

There is no evidence of failures, poor performance, inefficient use of resources, misleading in implementation of the treaties. Overall, neither the desk review of documentation, nor the survey and interview provided any significant unsatisfactory activities of the UNECE. The average level total score of 4.19 confirms that conclusion (Fig. 1).

The majority of estimates (83%) correspond to “mostly effective/relevant” (rating 4) and “very effective/relevant” (maximum rating 5).

The “effective/relevant – very effective/relevant” estimates are provided in 95% of estimates of the respondents.

Just 5% of estimates are considered as “ineffective/irrelevant” of different degree.

So the respondents mostly agree that the UNECE activities under the Espoo Convention and its Protocol on SEA are mostly effective and relevant to the goals of the Convention and the Protocol.

**Country/stakeholder distribution of estimates**

The representatives of different countries and organizations provided very diverse estimates for the proposed indicators.

Figure 2 illustrates the variety of estimates provided by respondents on behalf of their countries/organizations.

Georgia, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Russia, Mongolia, Spain demonstrated the highest level of satisfaction with the UNECE activities and provided the highest estimates (over 4.5 on average).

The lowest average estimates (below 3.5) were provided by Bosnia and Herzegovina, Finland, while the other respondents’ average was close to 4 and above.

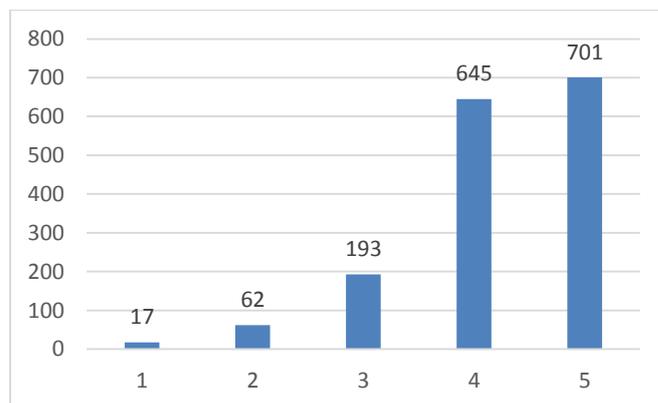


Figure 1. Distribution of overall estimates of UNECE activities by all respondents

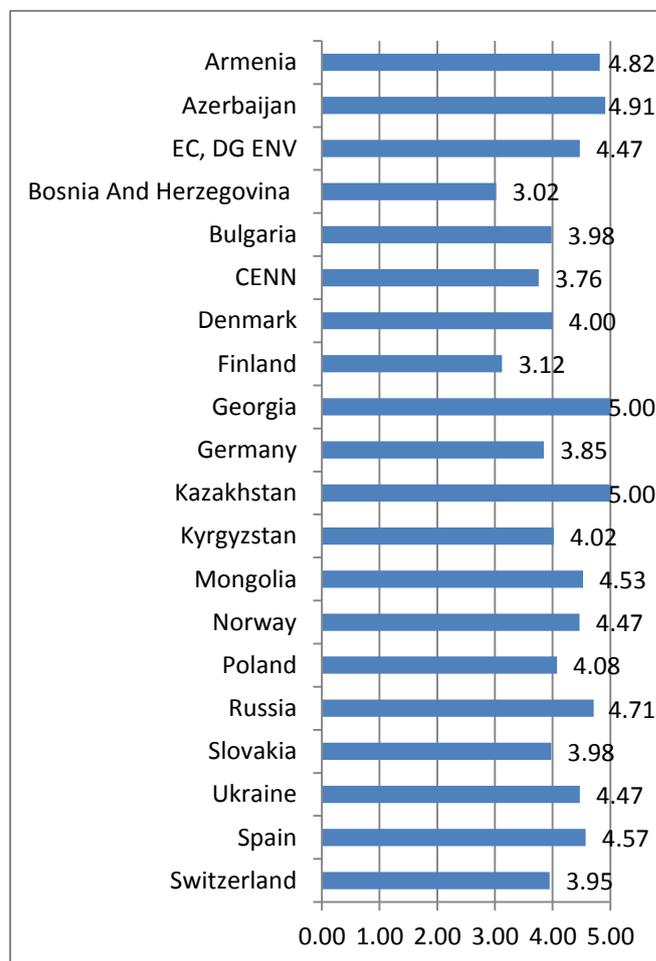


Figure 2. Overall average estimates by the country/organization.

#### 4.1.2. The UNECE activities are highly effective in terms of reaching the objectives of the treaties

The total average estimate of effectiveness is 4.32. The majority of estimates (88%) correspond to “mostly effective” and “very effective” (Fig. 3).

In 99% of estimates, the respondents considered UNECE activities as effective of different degree.

Just 1% of estimates is considered as ineffective of different degree.

The respondents mostly agree that the UNECE activities are effective in achieving the goals of the Convention and the Protocol.

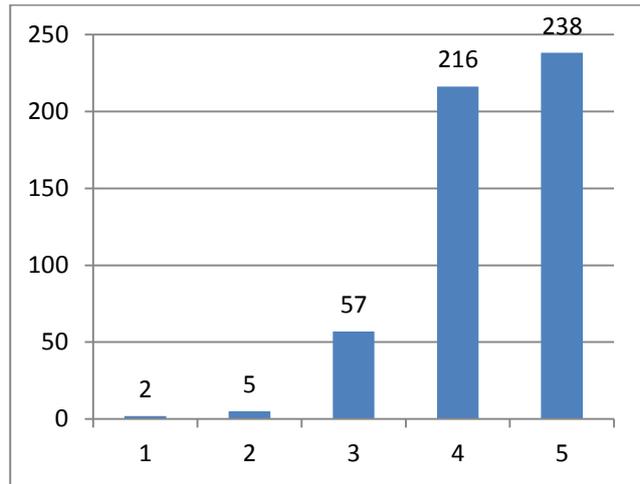


Figure 3. Overall effectiveness assessment

#### 4.1.3. The UNECE activities are highly efficient in terms of the resource use for reaching the objectives of the treaties and implementation of the workplans

The total average estimate is 4.73. The majority of estimates (88%) correspond to “mostly efficient” and “very efficient” (Fig. 4).

In 100% of estimates, the respondents considered UNECE activities as efficient of different degree. No “inefficient” estimates were provided. The respondents have a full consensus that the UNECE activities under the Espoo Convention and its Protocol on SEA are efficient in implementing the workplans and reaching the goals of the Convention and the Protocol.

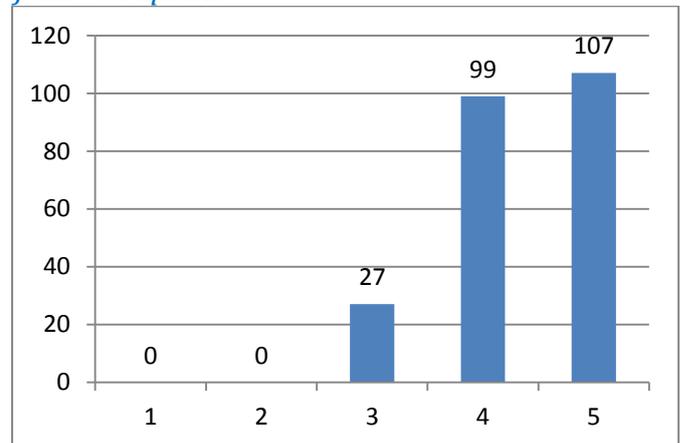


Figure 4. Overall efficiency assessment

#### 4.1.4. The UNECE activities are highly relevant to the objectives of the treaties

The total average estimate is 3.92. The majority of estimates (79%) correspond to “mostly relevant” and “very relevant” (Fig. 5).

In 92% of estimates, the respondents considered UNECE activities as “relevant” of different degree.

The “irrelevant” estimates were provided in 8% of responses.

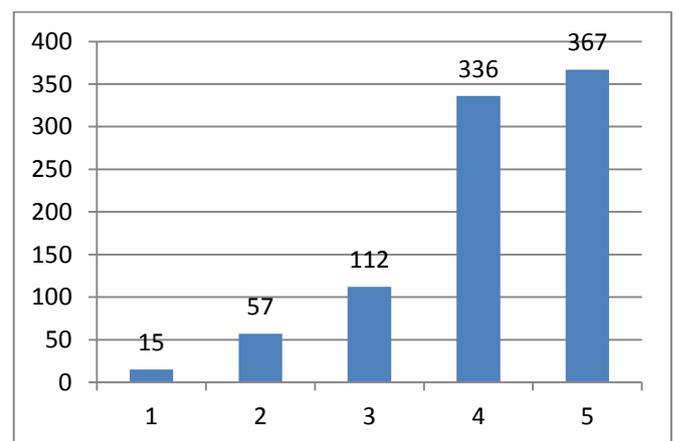


Figure 5. Overall relevance assessment

The respondents assessed the UNECE activities under the Convention and the Protocol as relevant to implementing the workplans and reaching the goals of the Convention and the Protocol by most of the indicators proposed in this evaluation.

*4.1.5. The overall gender equality in the UNECE activities under the Convention and the Protocol is very high*

The total average value is 4.61. In 100% of estimates, the respondents considered the UNECE activities as "effective" (of different degree) for maintaining the gender equality and prevention of any domination by gender (Fig. 6).

The majority of comments by the respondents showed that no discrimination by gender has been observed. In just one comment, "more or less domination of male representatives in technical issues" was identified.

Overall, the respondents have a consensus that the UNECE activities under the Convention and the Protocol have no discrimination by gender.

The interviews with selected stakeholders also confirmed that no cases of gender inequality have been faced in the UNECE activities so far. No objections regarding the gender discrimination have been discovered at the surveys on current activities under the treaties undertaken in April 2016 neither.

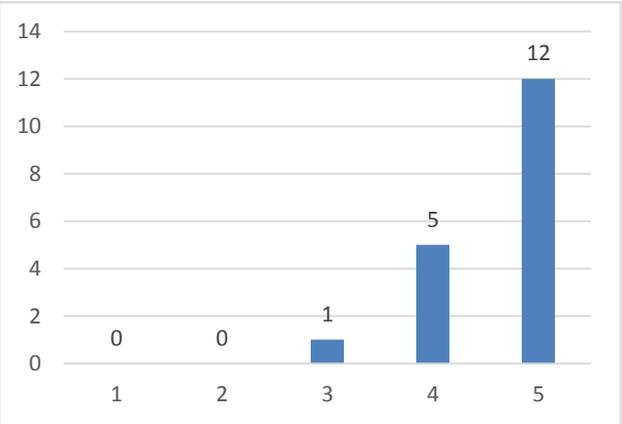


Figure 6. Overall gender equality assessment.

## 4.2. Effectiveness of the Secretariat in support of the governing and subsidiary bodies

### 4.2.1. The quality of meetings organized by the Secretariat is very high

The assessment of effectiveness of overall support of the Secretariat to the work of the governing and subsidiary bodies (i.e. bringing results/achieving goals/meeting objectives) was considered with regard to organization of the meetings of the Meetings of the Parties; the Working Group on EIA and SEA; the Implementation Committee and the Bureau.

On average at 4.54 by all proposed indicators (Figure 7). The role of Secretariat was highly evaluated in preparation of and servicing the meetings, follow-up activities, conducting the events (all above 4.50). The level of participation, interaction, representativeness was estimated as 4.25, the quality of interpretation were estimated as 4.32, which demonstrates high level of effectiveness of the Secretariat in organizing the meetings.

Most of the estimates showed high level of satisfaction of the participants with the organization of meetings (Figures 8). The usefulness of meetings was estimated very high: all respondents considered the meetings as effective, with the majority (84%) estimating it as effective – mostly effective - highly effective (Figure 9).

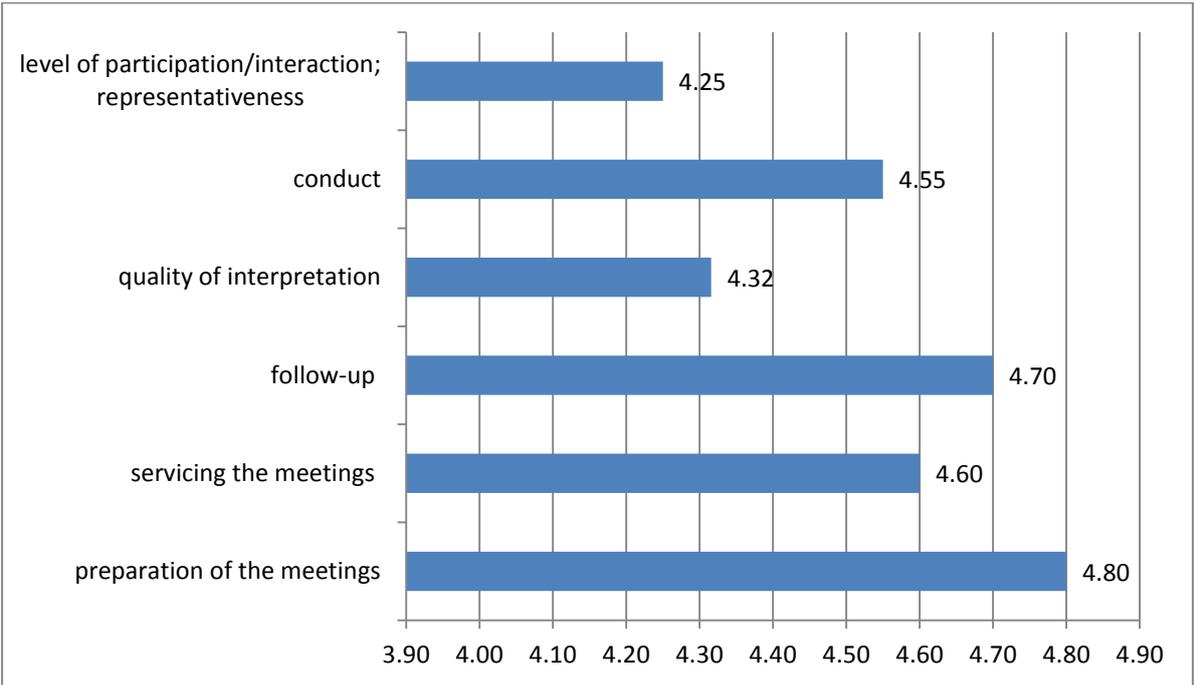


Figure 7. Quality of the meetings, by indicator.

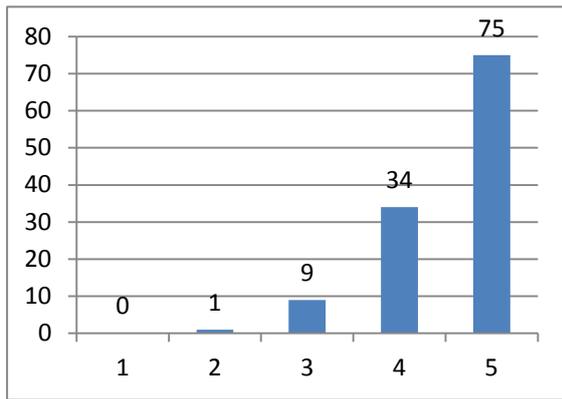


Figure 8. Quality of meetings

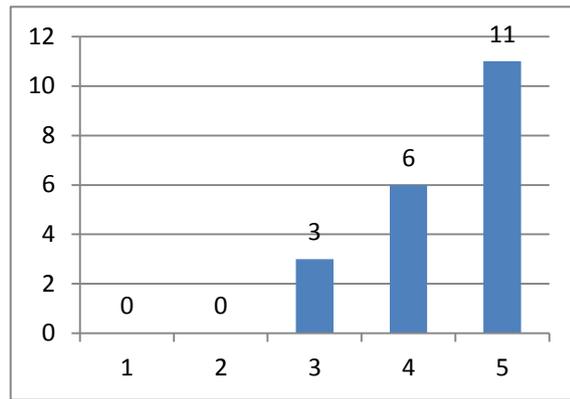


Figure 9. Usefulness of meetings

### **Summary of the feedback**

- Practical preparation/ organizing of the meetings by the Secretariat (financial and visa support, registration, practical information, responding to queries)

*The visa and financial support is usually very well organized, all support is provided in a timely manner and at a good/high level.*

- Substantive preparations by the Secretariat (drafting of agendas and pre-session documents, in consultation with the Parties or members of the Treaty bodies; sending reminders on the inputs to the documentation; making the documentation available on time, etc.)

*The respondents are very satisfied that the Secretariat provides, when needed, the clarification comments and information for preparation to the meetings. The draft documentation relevant for the meetings is delivered in time by the Secretariat. The reminders are provided in time. The communication of substantive preparation of the meetings is usually very good.*

- Substantive servicing by the Secretariat : reporting on information items during the meeting; providing support to the Chair by preparing detailed speaking points, preparing folders for the Chair with copies of all the meeting documentation; preparing meeting conclusions that are read out and agreed by the treaty bodies at the end of the meeting

*The substantive work of the Secretariat is highly assessed. The specific positive attitude was highlighted regarding the reporting during the meetings, drafting conclusions of the meetings which are usually presented at the end of each meeting, providing the paper version of documents or display it on the screen and revise the document in the track changes mode, specifically when a particular provision or conclusion is being drafted at that time and thus need to be coordinated and agreed with all the Parties*

- Follow-up by the Secretariat : circulating the agreed conclusions by e-mail and uploading them on the website; reminding delegates about the decisions taken and following-up their delivery

*The follow-up activities of the Secretariat are highly satisfactory, the respondents are commonly mentioning the professional coordination and prompt communication after the meetings, circulating the documentation adopted at the meetings, easy access to that on the website.*

- Interpretation during the meeting

*Most of the time, the interpretation provided during the meeting is estimated to be of high quality by the majority of respondents, although some parts may not get translated if the*

*speaker is too fast*

- Representativeness of the Parties and stakeholders

*All subregions, stakeholders and NGOs within the UNECE region are as a rule well represented during the meetings thanks to the UNECE financial support of eligible NGOs, representatives of eligible countries and relevant speakers that is provided by the Secretariat and funded through voluntary contributions to the trust fund. Such sufficient funding is desirable in the future to maintain the high level of representativeness.*

- Interaction, active participation by the meeting participants during the meeting

*It has been noticed that not all Parties are actively working during the meetings, but the generally the interaction is rather active and good. Some Parties are mentioning lack of interaction between them, so it could be recommended to enhance such interactive process (it may be the specific case for the 28 EU Member States, but not only)*

- Interaction, active participation by the Secretariat during the meeting

*The level of participation and interaction of the Secretariat in various activities within the framework of the Convention and the Protocol is satisfactory.*

- Conduct of the meeting

*Meetings are well conducted, chaired by professional and impartial chairs who manage to reach consensus on difficult issues. The Secretariat provides excellent support for the chair and well formulated conclusions, as well as timely follow-up*

- Translation of the meetings' documentation

*The official documents are always made available at the latest 10 weeks before the meeting in English and in Russian and French when they become available. The informal documents and translations to Russian and French of the official documents sometimes are delayed.*

- Possibilities to improve usefulness of the meetings

*For facilitation of the workload of the meetings, the online forum of focal points or members of subsequent bodies could be created (with identification the working conditions of the forum – access rules, availability dates before the meeting and etc.) to comment and share the opinions on the necessary documents directly or discuss them prior to the meeting date. The seminars on requested and necessary topics during the meetings of Working Group can increase their quality and efficiency. The on-line meetings (Webex meetings) in between the meetings that has been done by the Implementation Committee can be considered in the future (as appropriate, depending on the size of the meetings of the Working Group/MOP and the language implications)*

#### **4.2.2. The effectiveness of preparation of the meeting documentation is very high**

The respondents assessed the quality and content of the meeting documentation, its usefulness/relevance, and format/length.

The average estimate is 4.40 (Figure 10). Quality and content of documentation was highly appreciated - 4.50, usefulness/relevance – 4.45, and format/length – 4.25. (Fig. 10). All respondents considered preparation of the meeting documentation are effective – mostly effective - highly effective (Fig. 11).

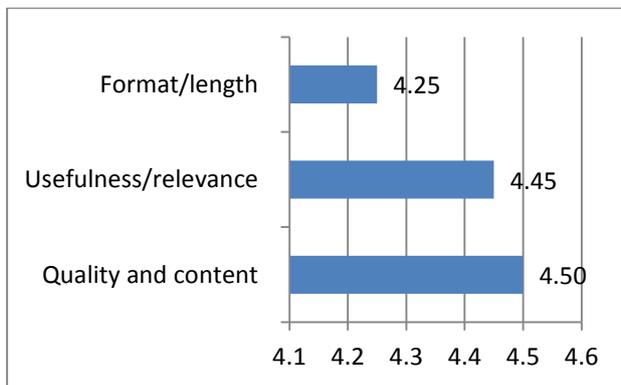


Figure 10. Effectiveness in preparation of the meeting documentation

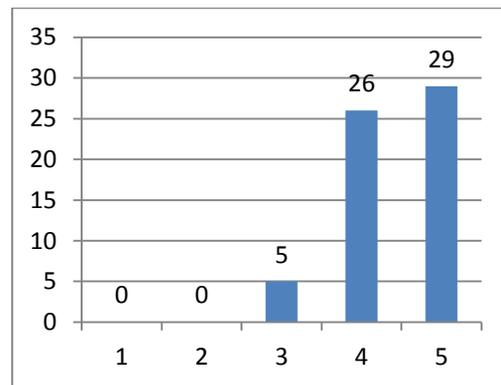


Figure 11. Effectiveness in preparation of the meeting documentation

### **Summary of the feedback**

#### **- Quality of meeting documentation**

*The quality of documentation is usually of very high/satisfactory quality. In most cases the meeting documentation is relevant and covers all issues on the agenda, contains full and easy to understand information. Some respondents recommended to continue preparation of the documentation based on the MOP decisions/ workplans, but reduce their number and length to the extent possible.*

#### **- Translation of the documentation**

*The Russian language translation was recommended to be provided faster.*

#### **- Delivery of the documentation**

*For most of the respondents, posting of the documentation on the website was sufficient and satisfactory. But some of them recommended to email the documentation in addition to posting it on the web. This should take into consideration the size of documentation (not to overload the mail) and specific circumstances of the participants (on-line access and other limitations they may have).*

#### **- Documentation requirements**

*Some respondents expressed the views that fewer documents on financial contributions and amendments of the Treaties should be provided. At the same time, there is a request from the Parties and stakeholders to continue receiving the financial reports every sixth months.*

### **Implementation of the workplan activities**

The respondents estimated the degree of implementation of the workplan activities and performance of the Secretariat in support of implementation of the activities.

Implementation of the workplan activities was estimated as “mostly effective”: 4.05 on average. The degree of implementation of the workplan activities was estimated at 3.89 (Fig. 12). Performance of the Secretariat in support of implementation of the activities was estimated at 4.21 (Fig. 13). Most of the respondents estimated the review of compliance as effective – mostly effective - highly effective, and one provided negative estimates.

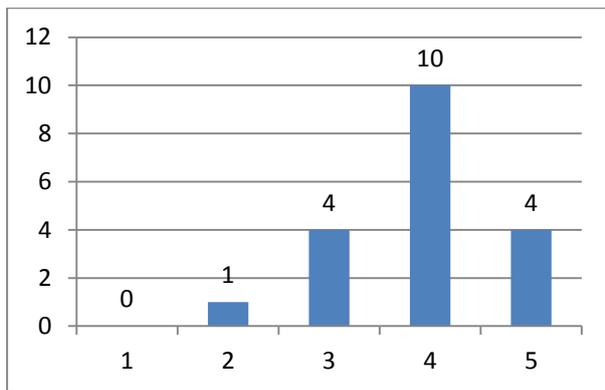


Figure 12. Degree of implementation of the workplan activities

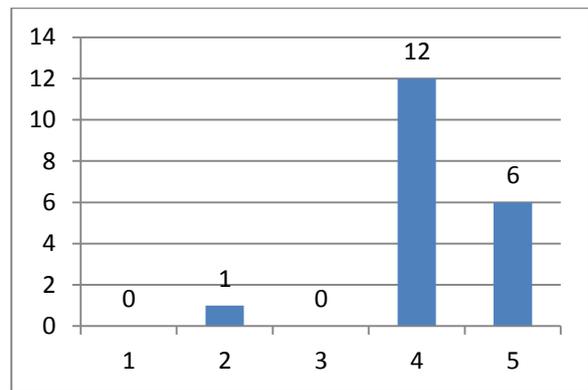


Figure 13. Performance of the Secretariat in support of implementation of the activities

### **Summary of the feedback**

- Overall implementation of workplan activities

*The level of implementation of the workplan is considered as good by most of the respondents, regarding the existing financial limits*

- The role of Secretariat in implementation of workplan activities

*The performance of Secretariat is commonly highly assessed as it is very timely reacting and providing information support and assistance in implementation of measures.*

### **4.2.3. The review of compliance is mostly effective**

The effectiveness in the review of compliance was measured regarding the following main indicators:

- Effectiveness of the established procedure for the review of compliance:
  - a) Procedure within/ functioning of the Implementation Committee
  - b) Deliberations by the Meetings of the Parties
  - c) Follow-up on the decisions on compliance by the Meetings of the Parties
- Performance of the Secretariat in supporting the review of compliance

The average estimate is 4.12. The performance of the Secretariat in supporting the review of compliance was highly evaluated by the respondents: 4.35 (Fig. 14). Deliberations by the MoPs was estimated at 4.15, the follow-up on the decisions on compliance by the MoPs and procedures within functioning of the Implementation Committee were estimated at 3.95.

All respondents estimated the review of compliance as effective – mostly effective - highly effective (Fig. 15), no negative estimates.

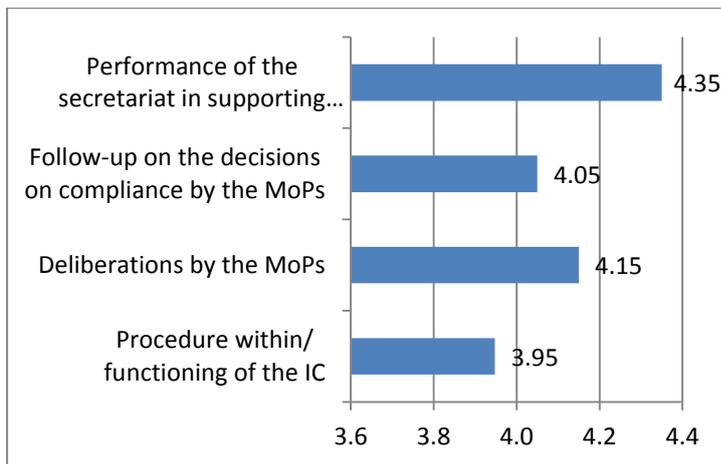


Figure 14. Effectiveness of the review of compliance, by indicator

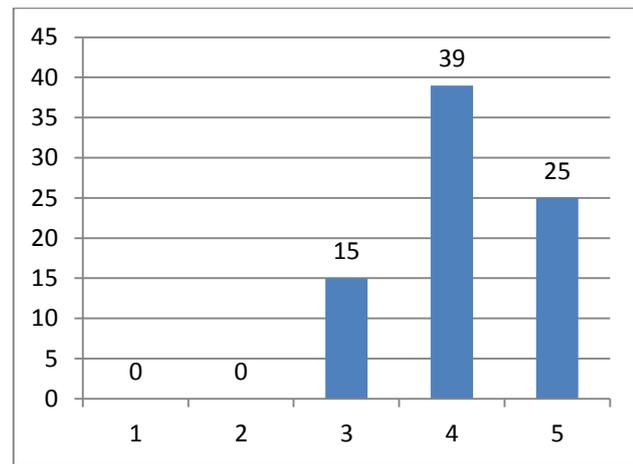


Figure 15. Effectiveness of the review of compliance, total

### **Summary of the feedback**

- Effectiveness of the established procedure for the review of compliance

*The procedure of the compliance review is mostly considered as effective and appropriate. Some respondents conclude that the Committee on implementation is not always effective in review of the compliance.*

- Performance of the Secretariat in supporting the review of compliance

*The level of implementation of the workplan is considered as good by most of the respondents, gathering and delivering of relevant information is mentioned to be always very effective and professional.*

#### **4.2.4. Reporting and review of implementation of the Convention and Protocol is mostly effective**

The effectiveness in reporting and review of implementation was assessed for the following key indicators:

- Overall quality of Parties' reporting on their implementation of the Convention and the Protocol
- Quality of the questionnaires for reporting: content - format/methodology
- Performance of the Secretariat in supporting Parties reporting, including launching of the reporting round; invitations and instructions to report, reminders, publishing the national reports on the website
- Reviews of implementation summarizing Parties' reports prepared by the Secretariat : Usefulness and Quality
- Quality of the review of implementation of the Convention and Protocol, including examination of the outcomes of reporting by the Implementation Committee and related decisions by the Meeting of the Parties.

Overall the reporting and review of implementation of the Convention and Protocol was estimated as “mostly effective”: 4.23 on average.

The performance of the Secretariat in supporting Parties was highly evaluated by the respondents: 4.53 (Fig. 16). The quality of Parties’ reporting was estimated as relatively effective: 3.88 on average.

Most of the respondents estimated the review of compliance as effective – mostly effective - highly effective (Fig. 17), while one respondent provided negative estimate.

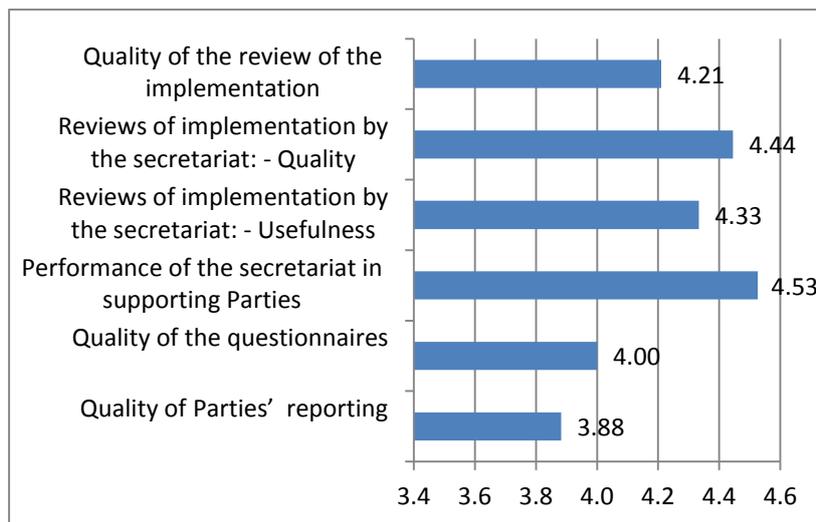


Figure 16. Effectiveness of reporting and review of implementation, by indicator

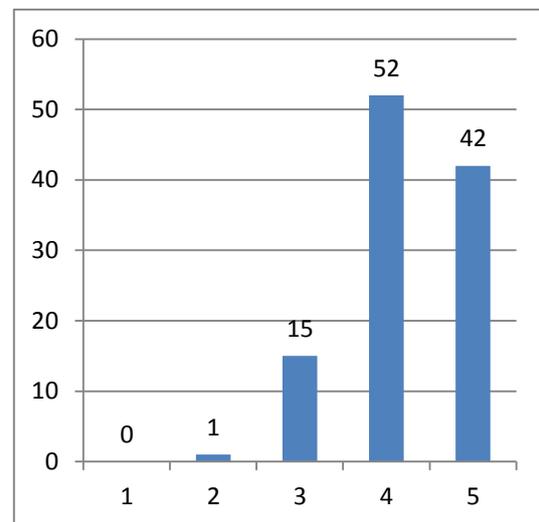


Figure 17. Effectiveness of reporting and review of implementation, total

### Summary of the feedback

- The timeliness/quality/effectiveness of reporting by Parties

*The quality of reporting and assessment of implementation of Convention and Protocol is satisfactory, covers all important issues. Many respondents consider the current revised format of the questionnaire as adequate, but the others found some room for improvement. The reporting is supported by reminders from the Secretariat and is provided by many Parties usually in a timely manner. The recommendations for improving the reporting include inviting the subsidiary bodies to discuss failures by Parties to report; addressing official letters to focal points; more clearly emphasizing the rationale for reporting and the consequences for a failure to report; avoiding other overlapping questionnaire surveys during the reporting round.*

- Performance of the Secretariat in supporting of reporting by Parties

*The role of the Secretariat is considered as very effective and useful by most of the respondents. The Secretariat provides reviews of implementation that summarize reports by the Parties. The findings of the reviews of implementation could be better made use of and more clearly followed up as the implementation problems tend to persist. They could be reflected in the next workplan with activities that address the implementation issues. The reviews should also be made more visible and widely disseminated.*

#### 4.2.5. Monitoring of the expenditures is highly effective

The monitoring of expenditures is based on the bi-annual reports on use of funds by the Secretariat .

The respondents assessed the quality of monitoring and were asked to provide their comments on what could be done to improve it, and whether the annual or biannual reporting is preferable. The overall estimate of effectiveness of the monitoring is rather high: the average estimate is 4.20. Majority of the respondents considered it as effective and very effective (Fig. 18). There were no proposals of whether the changes to improve the monitoring system are needed. Most of the comments also supported the existing approach to bi-annual reporting.

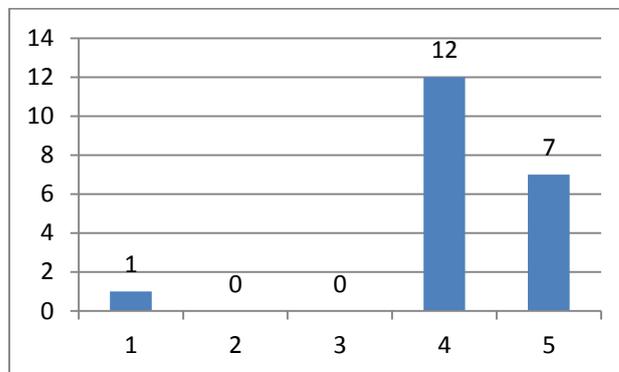


Figure 18. Quality of monitoring of the expenditures by the Secretariat

#### Summary of the feedback

- Quality of monitoring of the expenditures by the Secretariat

*The quality of monitoring is considered as very useful, satisfactorily and transparently organized. The bi-annual reports are considered as appropriate by most of the respondents.*

#### 4.2.6. Communication between the Secretariat and the Parties is highly effective

#### 4.2.7. Direct communication between the Parties is moderately effective

The respondents assessed the quality of communication between the Secretariat and national focal points and the quality of communication between the Parties directly.

The effectiveness of communication between the Secretariat and Parties was estimated as very high, the average estimate is 4.68. However the quality of communication between the Parties was considered as relatively less effective: the average estimate is 4.11.

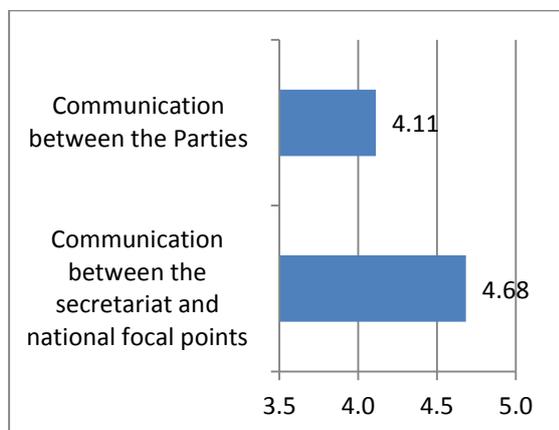


Figure 19. Effectiveness of communication between the Secretariat and Parties

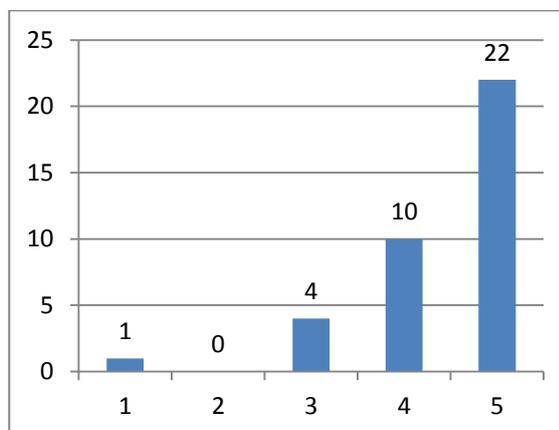


Figure 20. Effectiveness of communication between the Secretariat and Parties, total

### Summary of the feedback

- The communication between the Secretariat and Parties

*The Secretariat has a good practice to communicate with the national focal points and other stakeholders via regular e-mails and other mean, when appropriate. The communication is considered as being usually very good and effective.*

- The communication directly between the Parties

*The communication between some Parties in one sub-region is considered as problematic. But for many other sub-regions is usually at the appropriate and satisfactory level. It is recommended to establish both official and unofficial means of communication between Parties on the implementation of the Convention such as formal letters, e-mails, formal or informal meetings as well as phone calls, workshops, teleconferences etc. The concerned Parties should establish such communication on their own basis. The bilateral agreements could be a very useful tool to establish rules of communication between the concerned Parties during EIA/SEA procedures. Some Parties consider the use of modern communication technology applications as desirable.*

#### 4.2.8. Effectiveness of the capacity building activities is highly effective

Effectiveness of the capacity building activities was considered regarding promotion of implementation and ratification of the Convention and the Protocol. The respondents assessed the effectiveness of capacity building activities as fairly high: the average estimate is 4.12.

Majority of the respondents considered it as effective-mostly and effective-very effective (Fig. 21).

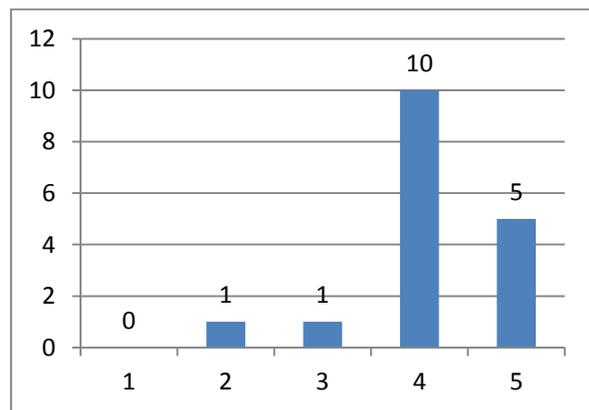


Figure 21. Effectiveness of the capacity building activities

One respondent estimated the effectiveness as “somewhat ineffective”.

### Summary of the feedback

*The capacity building activity is considered as satisfactory by most of the respondents. The Secretariat performs very well to the extent possible, though the decisions are up to the Parties.*

*The capacity building activities are admitted to be the key for assisting countries in implementing and ratifying the Convention and the Protocol (although ultimately the political decision about the adoption of legislation or ratifying an instrument is to the Government to make).*

*For some Parties, the capacity building process is proceeding quite slowly both on central and local levels. The practical experience along with national guidelines have to be developed. There is low awareness of the benefits of EIA, SEA and public participation in decision-making process. Organizing of training sessions is essential for the authorities and other relevant stakeholders in terms of conducting EIA and SEA processes, including public participation procedures. While some officials have been trained, they still need to organize seminars for other groups of people within the country. The reasons for delay in integration of the convention and the protocol into*

*national legislation often include the national political reasons, low levels of awareness, weak technical and human resources, a lack of ecological experts, and a capacity-building process.*

**4.2.9. Maintaining the gender equality in the work is highly effective**

The respondents assessed the gender equality level in performing the workplan activities as reflected through participation of experts in meetings and workshops, consultants contracted, officials elected to treaty bodies.

The overall estimate of effectiveness of gender equality is very high: 4.61. All respondents considered it as effective and very effective (Fig. 22).

They also provided comments on the role of different genders in implementation of the Convention and the Protocol, specifically regarding any discrimination by gender, domination of female/male representatives in implementation process. Majority of the comments accepted that there is no gender discrimination or domination.

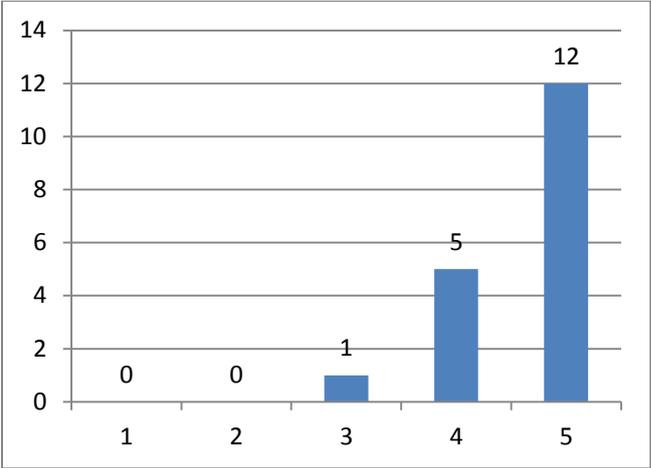


Figure 22. Effectiveness in maintaining the gender equality

**Summary of the feedback**

*The gender equality in the work is well balanced. The principle of gender equality is fully maintained. Only one respondent reported that there is still more or less domination of male representatives in technical issues.*

**4.3. Efficiency of work of the governing and subsidiary bodies**

**4.3.1. Preparation of documentation for the meetings of Parties is highly efficient**

The efficiency was assessed by the following key indicators:

- Timeliness (timely availability) of the official meeting agendas and documents in English
- Timeliness of the French and Russian translations of the agendas and other documents
- Timeliness of delivery of informal documentation
- Quality of work of the Secretariat in delivering or supporting the delivery of the meeting documentation

The overall estimate of efficiency of preparation of the documentation is high: 4.39. The timeliness of delivery of documentation and translation into French and Russian has been efficient, as well as the wuality of work of the Secretariat (Fig. 23). All respondents considered preparation of documentation as efficient and very efficient (Fig. 24).

**Summary of the feedback**

The official documentation on the meetings is always provided on time. The timeliness of their translations into Russian and French as well as that of some of the informal documentation could be further improved.

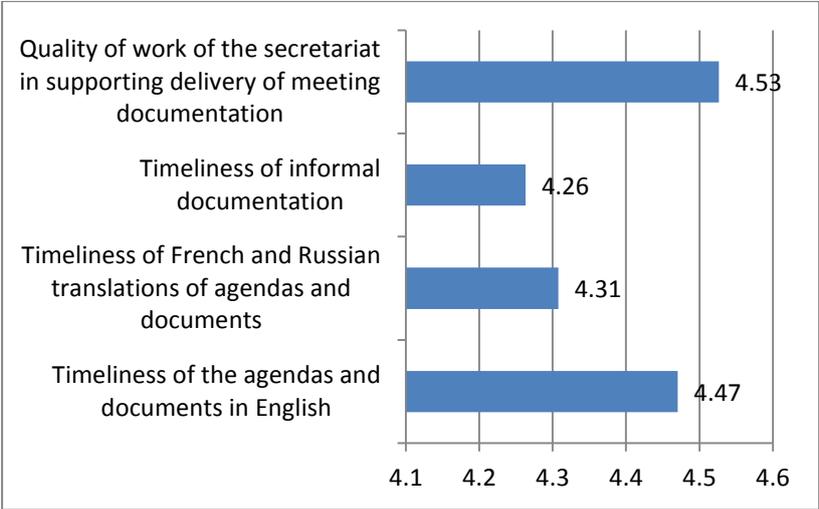


Figure 23. Efficiency in preparation of documentation, by indicator

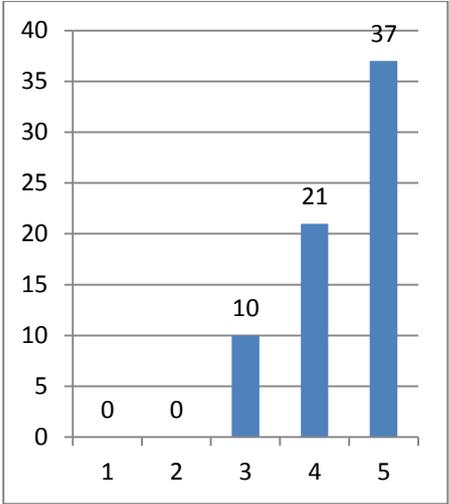


Figure 24. Efficiency in preparation of documentation, total

**4.3.2. The compliance review is highly efficient**

The efficiency was assessed regarding the timeliness of the compliance review and role of the Secretariat in promoting timely review of compliance.

The overall estimate of efficiency of the compliance review is high: 4.33. The timeliness of compliance review has been efficient, as well as the efficiency of work of the Secretariat (Fig. 25). All respondents considered preparation of documentation as efficient and very efficient (Fig. 26).

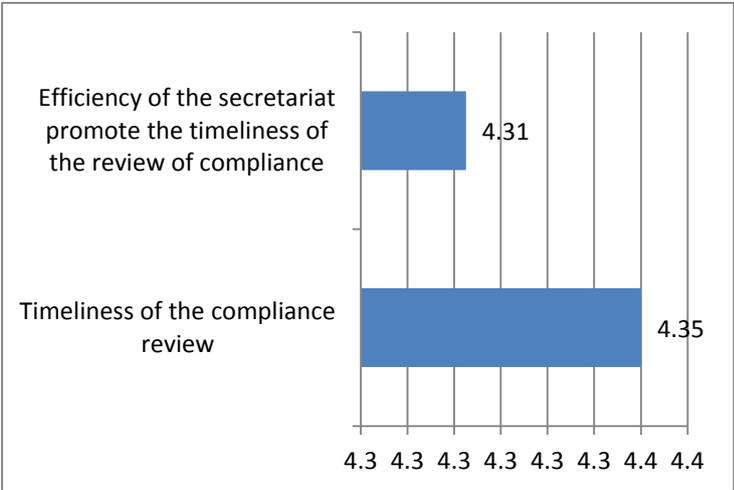


Figure 25. Efficiency of the compliance review, by

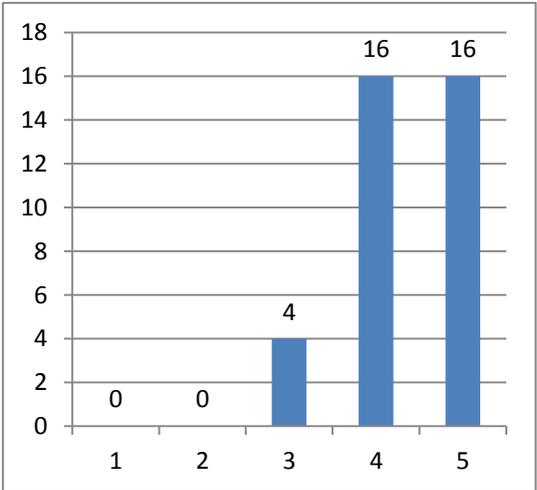


Figure 26. Efficiency of the compliance

**Summary of the feedback**

The compliance review is provided usually in a timely manner, well coordinated by the Secretariat and IC. Though some Parties consider it takes a long time.

The prompt information sharing and using of electronic information tools could speed up the review of compliance. Depending on the quantity of cases, the frequency of meetings of the Implementation Committee can be increased (in each term the interest to Espoo Convention is growing as well). It might be relevant to include the additional expenditures for meeting budget.

On the other hand, some respondents recommended to decrease the frequency of the meetings of the Parties, so a balanced approach to consider the views of the Parties can be recommended here.

**4.3.3. The reporting and review of implementation of the Convention and Protocol is highly efficient**

The efficiency was assessed by the timeliness of reporting on implementation of the Convention and Protocol, performance of the Secretariat in supporting the timely reporting and review of implementation and corresponding communication with the Parties.

The overall estimate of efficiency in the reporting and review of implementation is high: 4.37. The timeliness of reporting and performance of the secretariat in supporting the Parties has been efficient (Fig. 27). All respondents considered reporting and review of implementation as efficient and very efficient (Fig. 28).

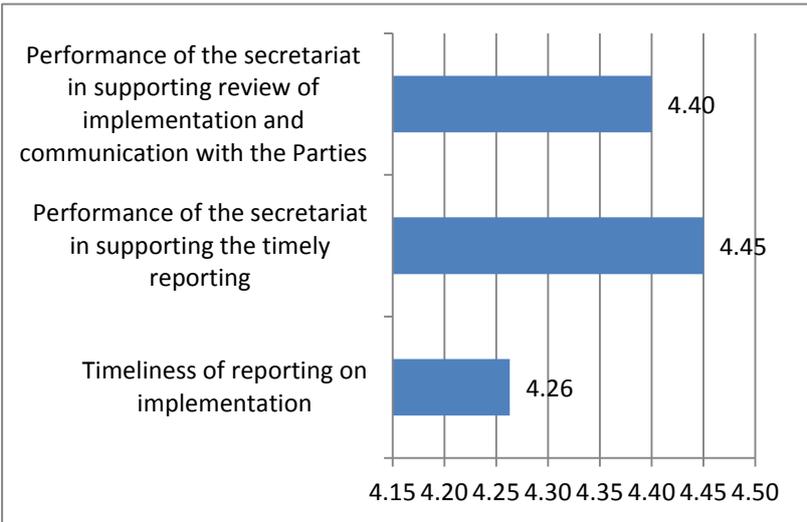


Figure 27. Efficiency in the reporting and review of implementation, by indicator

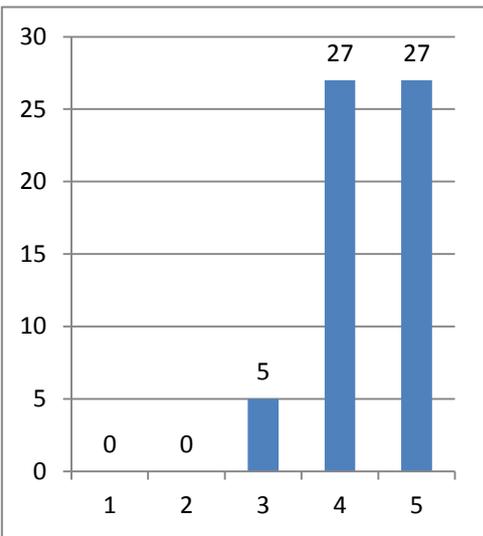


Figure 28. Efficiency in the reporting and review of implementation, total

**Summary of the feedback**

The performance in timely reporting is very satisfactory, it could be enhanced by simplifying and tightening the questionnaire on the Convention. The Secretariat is very efficient in communication, sending all relevant information, documents, reminders.

*4.3.4. Communication between the Secretariat and the Parties is highly efficient*

*4.3.5. Direct communication between the Parties is moderately efficient*

The respondents assessed efficiency of communication between the Secretariat and national focal points (how easy and convenient is the communication, any language/ translation issues, connection / feedback delays, etc.) and communication directly between the Parties.

The overall estimate of efficiency of communication between the Secretariat and Parties is high: 4.29. However, the efficiency of direct communication between the Parties was estimated as moderately efficient: 3.94 (Fig. 29). The Parties sometimes complained about the political and other obstacles in regional cooperation and communication.

At the same time communication between the Parties and Secretariat is very efficient: 4.63. It could be concluded that the Secretariat plays a crucial role in communication between some Parties. Overall, the respondents considered reporting and review of implementation as “efficient – mostly efficient - very efficient” (Fig. 30).

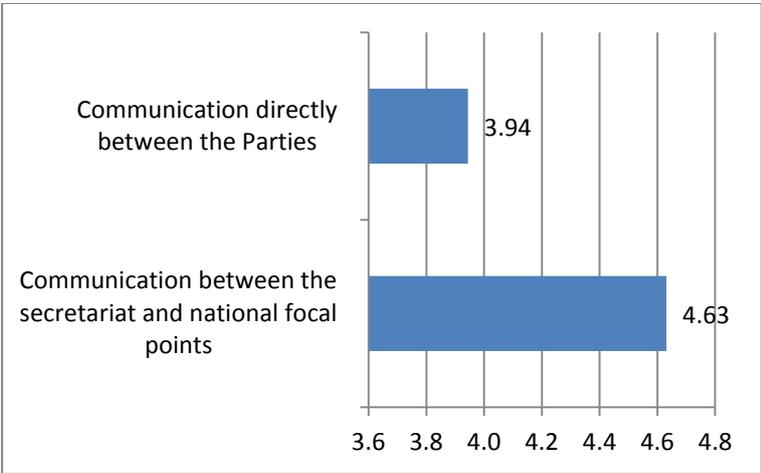


Figure 29. Efficiency in communication between the Secretariat and Parties, by indicator

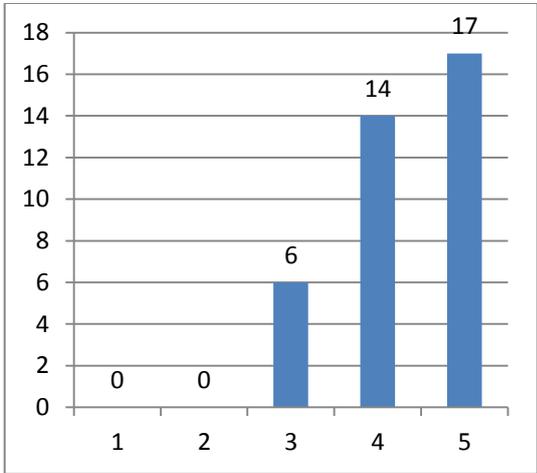


Figure 30. Efficiency in communication between the Secretariat and Parties, total

**Summary of the feedback**

The communication between some Parties is very easy and efficient while for the others it is more complicated (delays in responses, language problems). The Secretariat communicates regularly with the Parties in a very efficient manner.

*4.3.6. The capacity building activities is highly efficient*

The respondents assessed efficiency of the capacity building activities regarding whether these activities are cost efficient in promoting the implementation of the Convention and the Protocol obligations, and the workplan, and the performance of the Secretariat in supporting such activities. They could also provide their comments and suggestion on what could be done to improve the cost-efficiency of capacity building activities.

The overall estimate of efficiency of the capacity building activities is rather high: 4.24 (Fig. 31). All respondents considered the capacity building activities as efficient and very efficient (Fig. 32), no negative estimates provided.

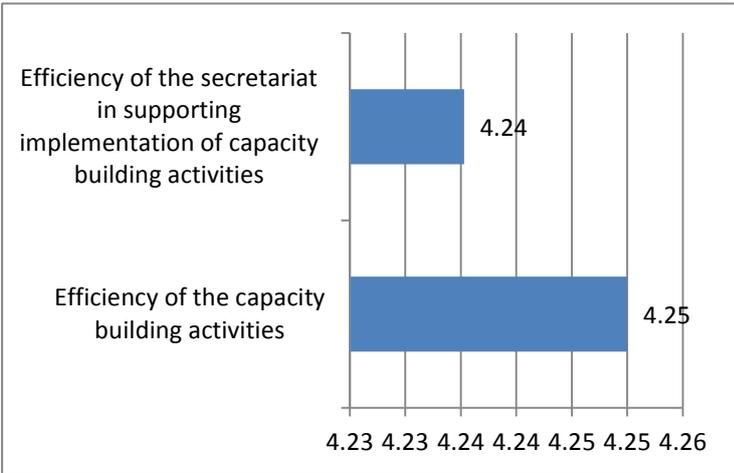


Figure 31. Efficiency of the capacity building activities, by indicator

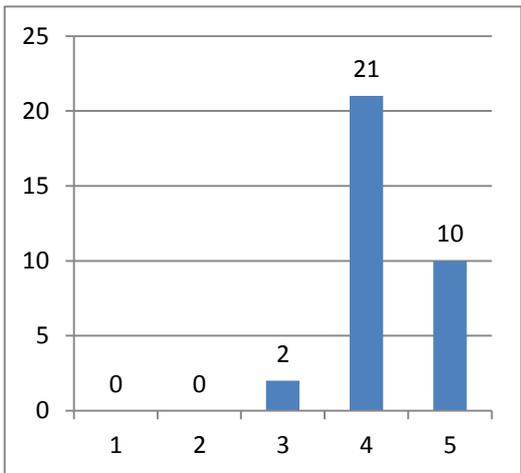


Figure 32. Efficiency of the capacity building activities, total

**Summary of the feedback**

*The capacity building activities and the performance of the Secretariat in supporting their delivery have been estimated to be efficient by the responding beneficiary countries without exception*

## 4.4. Relevance of the workplan activities

### 4.4.1. The subcategories and activities in the current workplan are highly relevant to the objectives of the treaties and country needs

The relevance is considered with regard to reflecting the aims of the Treaties and the needs of the countries. The following subcategories and activities were evaluated by the respondents:

#### I. Compliance and implementation:

- (a) Country specific legislative reviews (review of legislation and recommendations for its improvement) (to Parties)
- (b) Technical advice in legal drafting (to Parties)
- (c) Pre-accession legislative assistance (to non-Parties)
- (d) Subregional overview of legislation and practice (on SEA but also EIA)
- (e) Collection of findings and opinions from the Implementation Committee
- (f) Guidance on the Implementation of the Convention (drawing on IC opinions)
- (g) Alignment of the language versions of the treaty texts
- (h) Update of Guidance on EIA in a transboundary context for Central Asia
- (i) Video to promote benefits of the Protocol on SEA

#### II. Subregional cooperation and capacity-building (in: South-Eastern Europe; Mediterranean; Baltic Sea; Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia)

- (a) Workshops/seminars/conference
- (b) Exchange visit (study tour)

#### III. Exchange of good practice

##### 1. Workshops or half day seminars within Working Group meetings on:

- (a) Post-project analysis
- (b) Global application of the Convention and the Protocol
- (c) Additional activity: Joint workshop on land-use planning with Industrial Accidents Convention

##### 2. Development of good practice guidance on application of the Convention to nuclear energy – related activities

#### IV. Promoting ratification and application of the Protocol on SEA

- (a) fact sheets on SEA application
- (b) IAIA informal pamphlets
- (c) Training of trainers workshops at national level
- (d) Other national SEA training
- (e) Local training events
- (f) National guidance documents
- (g) Pilot projects

The overall relevance of activities in the current plan is estimated rather high: 4.16 on average. Figure 33 illustrates variation of the relevance estimates by each subcategory/ activity. The lowest estimates were provided for the local training events and Joint workshop on land-use planning with Industrial Accidents Convention (3.73).

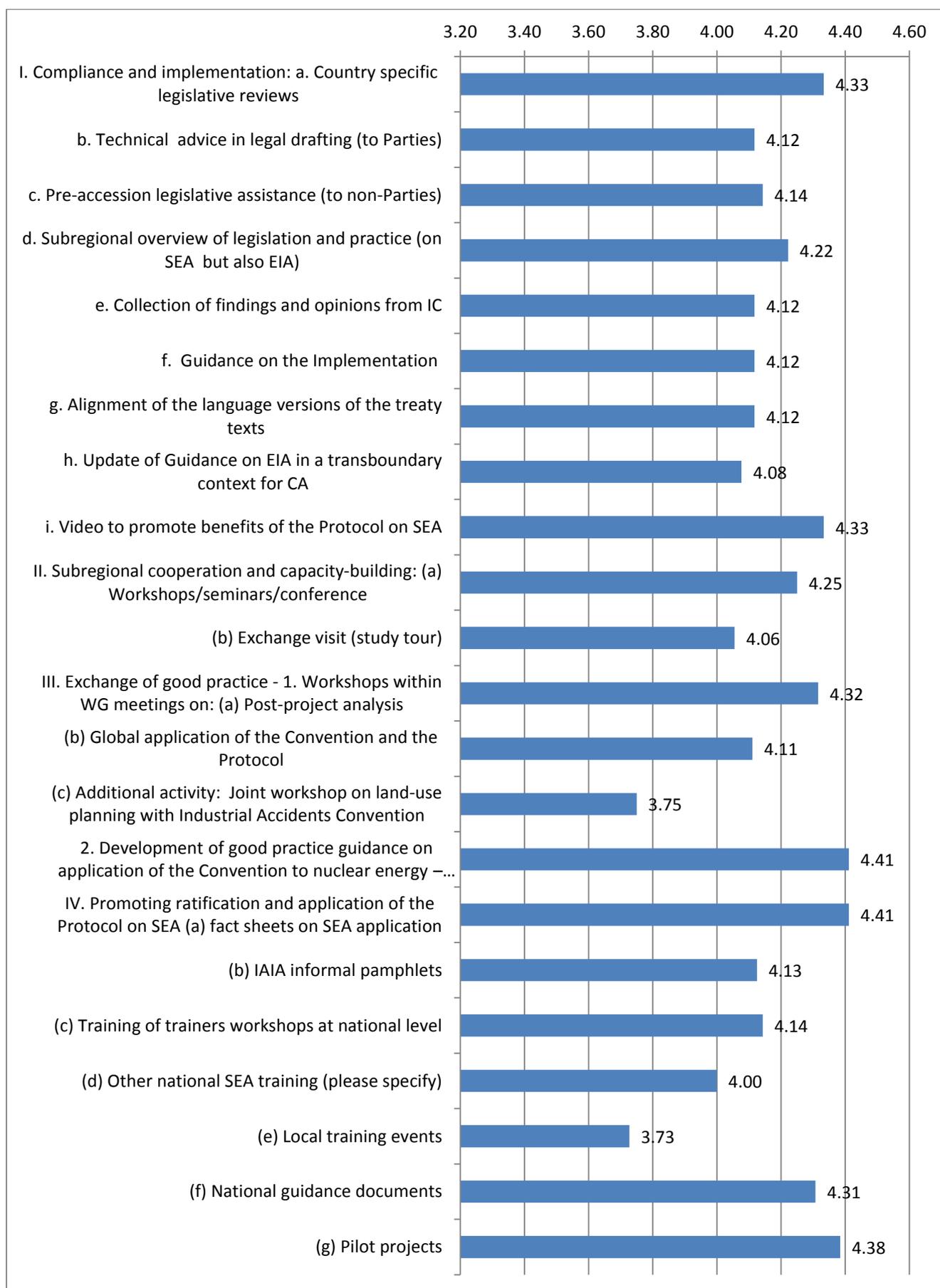


Figure 33. Relevance of the subcategories and activities in the current workplan, by indicator

Most of the respondents (92%) considered the current workplan activities as somewhat “relevant – mostly relevant – very relevant” (Fig. 34).

Some estimates of relevancy (8%) were provided as “highly irrelevant - somewhat irrelevant”.

The respondents provided many comments, suggestions, recommendations on most of the issues of relevance in the current workplan.

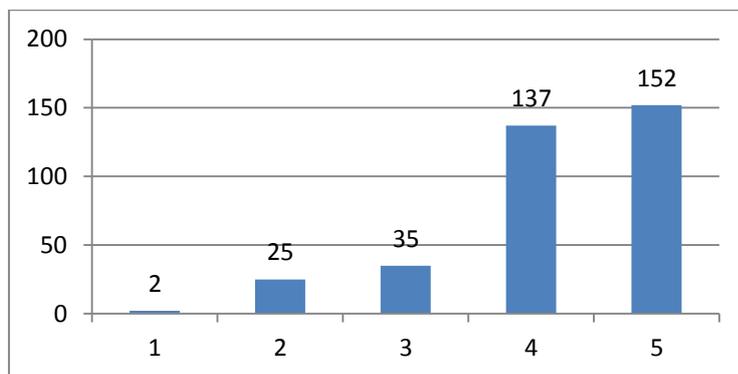


Figure 34. Relevance of the subcategories and activities in the current workplan, by estimates.

### **Summary of the feedback**

#### **- The compliance and implementation**

*The compliance and implementation is considered as relevant and corresponding to the goals of the Treaties and needs of Parties. The beneficiary countries without exception welcomed the country specific activities based on their needs, while one respondent noted that country specific advise should be mandated by IC.*

*The complaint was mentioned regarding the need for international experts to be more realistic in assessing the legal basis of the countries. Collection of findings and opinions from the Implementation Committee is considered to be very useful because the compilation of IC opinions can be used very quickly.*

*It is important for the Committee to develop recommendations and conclusions on the application of the obligations that apply to different Parties on a consistent manner (as some respondents referred to).*

*The guidance on the Implementation of the Convention provides useful explanations and interpretations how to use the convention, but it is recommended to include more detailed information, remarks and practical experience in it.*

*The video on promoting the benefits of the Protocol on SEA is accepted as a great job by many. It is considered as a necessary tool to show the benefits of SEA, disseminate the information and enrich the background documents for trainers, promote PR for SEA.*

#### **- The subregional cooperation and capacity-building**

*The cooperation meetings and other activities in some subregions are regular, that helps to maintain and strengthen the cooperation between the countries involved. Many respondents confirmed that the subregional cooperation is an excellent instrument to promote and enforce good practice in transboundary EIA and SEA procedures.*

*The study tours on SEA (e.g. the one in Czech Republic) provide experience and practical information on SEA, help in communication between subregions and support their efforts on developing SEA system in their countries.*

#### **- Exchange of good practice**

*As of the widely supported view of the respondents, the interest in Espoo Convention is increasing year by year in the ECE and non-ECE regions, as this is only international tool that address cross border environmental concerns rise from various economic activities and helps for*

*better trans-boundary communication between the countries. So the global application of the Convention can bring a lot of benefits to those regions in order to help the exchange of information and cooperation on environmental problems.*

*It is recommended to develop the good practice guidance on application of the Convention to nuclear energy –related activities, which is considered as up-to-date and needed, as the transboundary procedures on nuclear energy-related activities are one of the most important topics in practice.*

- Promoting ratification and application of the Protocol on SEA

*For all countries with little or no experience in SEA, there is a high value and need in training on SEA, while those with the advanced experience in this field do not consider it as a high priority.*

*The national guidance documents are deemed important and could be recommended for the further workplans.*

*The pilot projects are highly recommended as they can help to implement SEA in practice and identify imperfections in the national legislation. The recent experience shows that SEA teams with national and international experts interact and carry out the project in compliance with Espoo Convention Protocol on SEA and national legal and administrative procedures, attracting high public interest. The benefits of the pilot in the national level include awareness raising, information sharing, training and practical experience.*

#### *4.4.2. The subcategories and activities of the previous workplan for 2011-2014 were highly relevant to the objectives of the treaties and country needs*

The relevance is considered with regard to reflecting the aims of the Treaties and the needs of the countries for the past period. The following subcategories and activities were evaluated by the respondents:

- I. Outreach activities: Promoting the Convention and its Protocol at a Conference on transboundary EIA in Eastern Asia (Seoul)
- II. Compliance and implementation - General guidance on enhancing consistency between Convention and environmental assessment within state ecological expertise
- III. Exchange of good practice - Workshops/seminars on:
  - Biodiversity
  - Renewable energy
  - Nuclear energy
  - Sharing good practice and tools for communication, cooperation and conflict resolution
- IV. Promoting ratification and application of the Protocol on SEA - Publishing of the completed resource manual in Russian
  - Translation of the resource manual and simplified manual into national languages
  - Preparation of format for SEA notification
  - Joint workshop with Aarhus Convention on public participation in SEA
  - Guidance on public participation in SEA

The overall relevance of activities in the previous plan is estimated rather high: 4.17 on average.

Figure 35 illustrates variation of the relevance estimates by each subcategory/ activity of the previous workplan. The lowest estimates were provided for promoting the Convention and the

Protocol at a Conference on transboundary EIA in Eastern Asia (3.75). The highest estimates were provided for development of good practice guidance on application of the Convention to nuclear energy –related activities and promoting of ratification and application of the Protocol on SEA via fact sheets on SEA application (4.54).

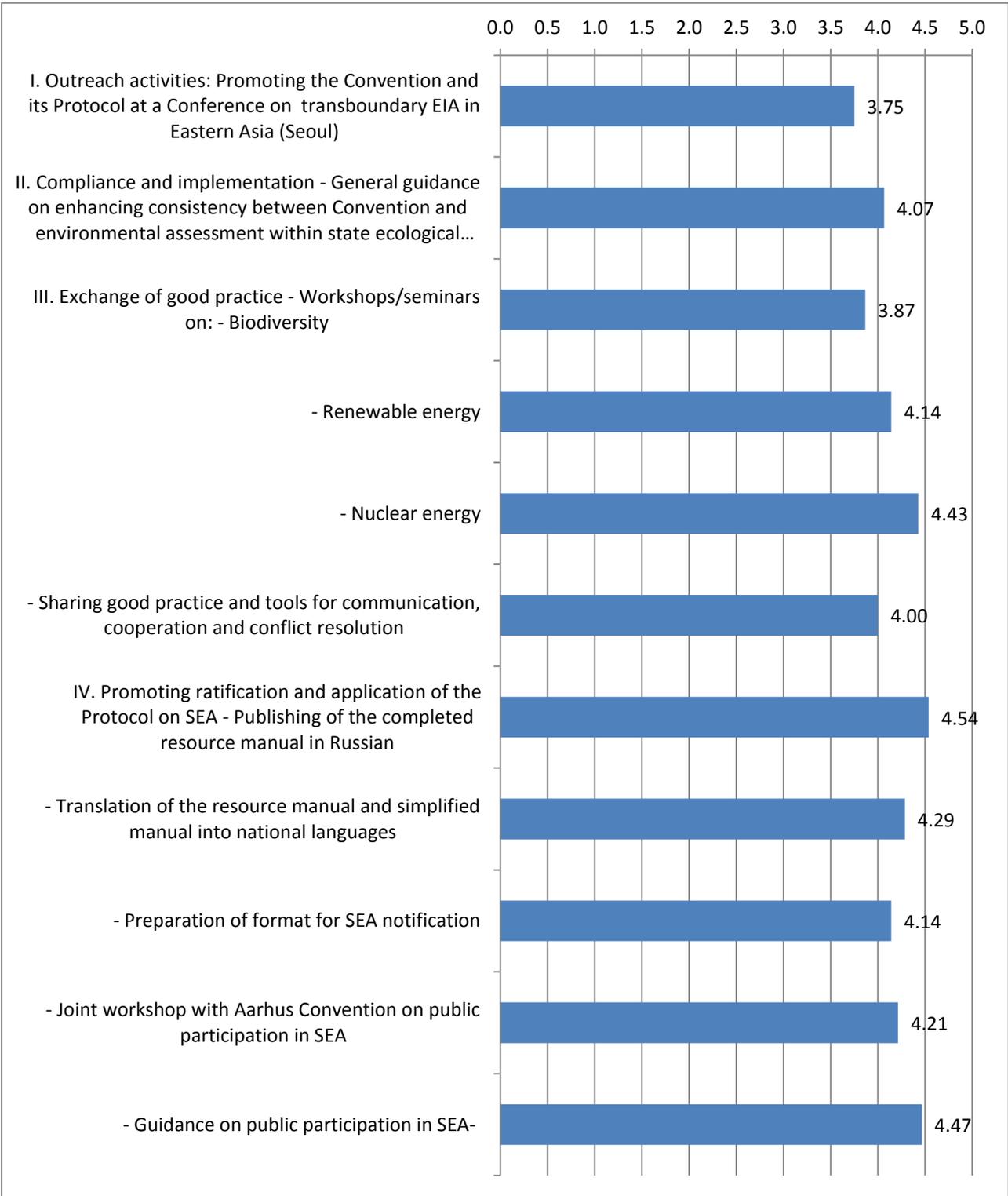


Figure 35. Relevance of the subcategories and activities of the previous workplan for 2011-2014, by indicator.

Most of the respondents (89%) considered the current workplan activities as somewhat “relevant – mostly relevant – very relevant” (Fig. 36).

11% of estimates were provided as “somewhat irrelevant”.

The respondents provided lots of comments, suggestions, recommendations on most of the issues of relevance in the previous workplan.

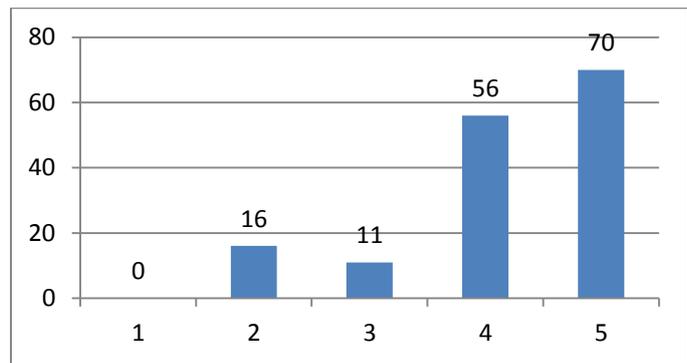


Figure 36. Relevance of the subcategories and activities in the previous workplan, by estimates.

### **Summary of the feedback**

#### - The outreach activities

*The conference on promoting the Convention and its Protocol at a Conference on transboundary EIA in Eastern Asia (Seoul) was a big success: a very useful and eye opening event for eastern Asia Countries*

#### - The compliance and implementation

*The general guidance on enhancing consistency between Convention and environmental assessment within the state ecological expertise is of high relevance especially for the countries which neighbors have different style of EIA system.*

#### - The exchange of good practice

*The workshop on biodiversity was well organized and very useful.*

*The renewable energy is an important issue for many countries, and the opportunity to get more knowledge about practical examples of the Convention application regarding the renewable energy projects was highly appreciated.*

*The workshop on nuclear energy was well organized, with great brainstorming and fruitful conclusions. The issue is of one of the most important in practice for many countries.*

*The workshop on sharing good practice and tools for communication, cooperation and conflict resolution was an informative, well organized event. The issue is of high political and practical importance. However some Parties warned that it should be avoided to politicize the Convention.*

#### - Promoting the ratification and application of the Protocol on SEA

*It is recommended to make translation of the resource manual and simplified manual into national languages to promote and enforce broad application of the Protocol and to foster good practice.*

*The joint workshop with Aarhus Convention on public participation in SEA was highly evaluated as an opportunity to meet the representatives of two conventions, exchange experience and share knowledge, which resulted in two useful guidances (under the Espoo convention and the Aarhus convention) on the public participation in environmental decision making process. Though, this document could be elaborated in more detailed and practical manner instead of keeping it at a more general level.*

*4.4.3. The proposals of the Bureau on new subcategories and activities for the draft workplan 2017-2020 are highly relevant to the objectives of the treaties and country needs*

The following subcategories and activities were evaluated by the respondents:

- I. Compliance with and implementation of the Convention and the Protocol: Update and revision of the 1990 guidance on post-project analysis in EIA
- II. Subregional cooperation and capacity-building to strengthen contacts between the Parties and others, including States outside the ECE region
  - (a) Subregional conference/training of trainers workshop on the application of SEA to climate change mitigation
  - (b) Subregional training workshop on quality control of SEA documentation
  - (c) Subregional capacity-building activities to promote public participation in decision-making on EIA and SEA
  - (d) Organization or contribution to a subregional awareness-raising/capacity -building workshop on transboundary EIA and SEA outside UNECE in South-East Asia
  - (e) Workshop/dedicated session on implementation of the Convention [and the Protocol] focusing on “Arctic subregion”
- III. Exchange of good practices - Workshops or half-day seminars within meetings of the Working Group on:
  - (a) Application to the Protocol on SEA to urban planning
  - (b) Application of the Protocol on SEA to climate change adaptation and mitigation
  - (c) Improving intersectoral cooperation and institutional arrangements for the application of the Protocol on SEA and the Convention
  - (d) Linkages with transboundary EIA and SEA with biodiversity assessment
- IV. Promoting ratification and application of the Protocol on SEA:
  - (a) Development of country and sector specific guidance for the assessment of potential health impacts of plans and programmes and for the involvement of health authorities, building on the chapter on health in the SEA Resource Manual
  - (b) Development of good practice recommendations on the application of SEA to climate change mitigation
  - (c) Development of guidance on the application of the Protocol on SEA to urban planning
  - (d) Translation into national languages of the video promoting the benefits of SEA and the Protocol

- (e) Workshops for national and local sectoral authorities as well as environmental and health authorities, including training, on the application of the Protocol for countries in the ECE region and beyond; including on the application of SEA to climate change adaptation and mitigation
- (f) Pilot SEAs in selected countries, in selected sectors
- (g) National guidance documents on the implementation of SEA
- (h) Preparation of fact sheets on application of the Protocol on SEA
- (i) Preparation of two-page informal pamphlets or “fasTips” on key issues in SEA practice

V. Opening of the Convention and the Protocol: promoting global outreach and partnerships:

- (a) Development of a strategy for the implementation of the Convention and the Protocol at the global level listing activities and identifying partnerships and funding mechanisms for their implementation
- (b) Development of a strategy for the contribution of the Convention and the Protocol to the achievement of relevant SDGs and targets

Effectiveness of process of developing draft new workplans (including identification of subcategories and activities and the related methods of work; organizational arrangements; expected outcomes; time schedule, budget)

Relevance of work of the Secretariat in promoting the implementation of the workplan

Availability of funding or in-kind contributions for the implementation of the workplan activities

The overall relevance of activities in the proposals of the Bureau on new subcategories and activities for the draft workplan 2017-2020 is estimated rather high: 4.01 on average. Figure 37 illustrates variation of the relevance estimates by each subcategory/ activity of the proposed workplan.

The highest estimates were provided regarding the performance of the Secretariat in promoting implementation of the workplan (4.50) , national guidance documents on the implementation of SEA (4.40), preparation of two-page informal pamphlets or “fasTips” on key issues in SEA practice (4.33).

The lowest estimates were provided for the availability of funding or in-kind contributions for the implementation of the workplan activities (3.60), linkages with transboundary EIA and SEA with biodiversity assessment (3.62), development of a strategy for the contribution to the achievement of relevant SDGs and targets (3.67).



Figure 37. Relevance of the proposals of the Bureau on new subcategories and activities for the draft workplan 2017-2020.

Most of the respondents (91%) considered the current workplan activities as somewhat “relevant – mostly relevant – very relevant” (Fig. 38).

Some estimates (9%) were provided as “highly irrelevant - somewhat irrelevant” regarding a wide range of indicators.

The respondents provided many comments, suggestions, recommendations on most of the issues of relevance in the proposals of the Bureau for the draft 2017-2020 workplan.

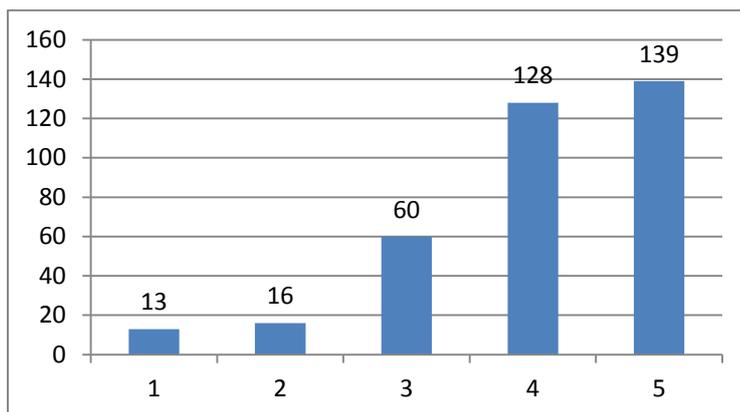


Figure 38. Relevance of the proposals of the Bureau on new subcategories and activities for the draft workplan, by estimates.

### **Summary of the feedback**

- The Compliance with and implementation of the Convention and the Protocol

*The update and revision of the 1990 guidance on post-project analysis in EIA is recommended as the document is of 25 years old. Though some countries (advanced in EIA) do not consider it as a high priority in practice.*

- Subregional cooperation and capacity-building to strengthen contacts between the Parties and others, including States outside the UNECE region

*The subregional conference/training of trainers’ workshop on the application of SEA to climate change mitigation is considered as very important. The integration of climate change mitigation measures into the prepared strategies, plan and programs via application of SEA is considered as one of the priority issues. Such events are very useful to help the coordination and understanding cross border environmental assessment process. Taking into account the global openness intention of Espoo Convention in upcoming years the increased number of such events in NON-ECE regions would be reasonable. Some respondents expressed their interest in inclusion of Arctic region in the UNECE activities in this regard,*

- Exchange of good practices

*The workshops or half-day seminars within meetings of the Working Group are considered as a good option for enhancing exchange of good practices.*

*The specific interest was expressed in application to the Protocol on SEA to urban planning, climate change adaptation and mitigation measures, biodiversity assessment.*

- Promoting ratification and application of the Protocol on SEA

*The recommendations were include development of country and sector specific guidance for the assessment of potential health impacts of plans and programmes and for the involvement of health authorities, building on the chapter on health in the SEA Resource Manual; the urban development planning; translation into national languages of the video promoting the benefits of SEA and the Protocol; application of SEA to climate change adaptation and mitigation; the pilot SEAs in selected countries, in selected sectors; the national guidance documents on the*

*implementation of SEA reflecting the national practice and application opportunities; preparation of fact sheets on application of the Protocol on SEA - Practical application of legal acts; preparation of two-page informal pamphlets or “fasTips” on key issues in SEA practice is very helpful but need to have linkage with IAIA fasTips on SEA.*

- Opening of the Convention and the Protocol: promoting global outreach and partnerships

*The recommendations include development of a strategy for the implementation of the Convention and the Protocol at the global level listing activities and identifying partnerships and funding mechanisms for their implementation; strengthening contacts between the Parties and States outside the ECE region; development of a strategy for the contribution of the Convention and the Protocol to the achievement of relevant SDGs and targets.*

- How could the workplans be made more relevant? How could the Secretariat facilitate this?

*There is a need to focus on priorities including because of the limited funding (voluntary contributions by Parties) available which however vary depending on the Parties (e.g. some value the promotion of the opening of the treaties in accordance with the decisions of the Parties, others refer to it as “inventing new tasks and challenges”).*

- What are the most effective organizational arrangements for the workplan activities to reach their expected outcome

*The respondents mentioned the workshops/meetings, exchange of views, practical experience, awareness raising, coordination between the focal points and national authorities.*

- How relevant is the work of the Secretariat in promoting the implementation of the workplan?

*The Secretariat does a relevant work in promoting the implementation but ultimately the success of the implementation of the activities depends on the countries.*

- Availability of funding or in-kind contributions for the implementation of the workplan activities

*There is a general consensus of respondents that there is not enough funding and increase of funding is desirable. The activities proposed without confirmed funding are recommended to be included into a waiting list.*

How could more funding and in-kind contributions be attracted? How could the Secretariat facilitate this?

*The recommendations include extension of the Convention beyond the ECE region; the Secretariat can help or coordinate PPP-s on some actions; the joint activities with international financial institutions, regional financial organization that are eager to act on the field of SEA and EIA or on various sectors or regions; advocating the importance of the Convention and the Protocol.*

#### *4.4.4. The availability and prioritization of financial and in-kind contributions is relatively high*

The respondents assessed the availability and prioritization of financial and in-kind contributions as the determinants of relevance of the work with regard to two indicators:

- The extent to which the relevance of the work is determined by the availability and prioritization of financial and in-kind contributions

- The extent to which the financial strategy adopted in 2014 has been successfully implemented

The overall assessment of relevance of the availability and prioritization of financial and in-kind contributions is relatively high: 3.97 (Fig. 39). All respondents considered the capacity building activities as “relevant – mostly relevant – highly relevant” (Fig. 40), no negative estimates were provided.

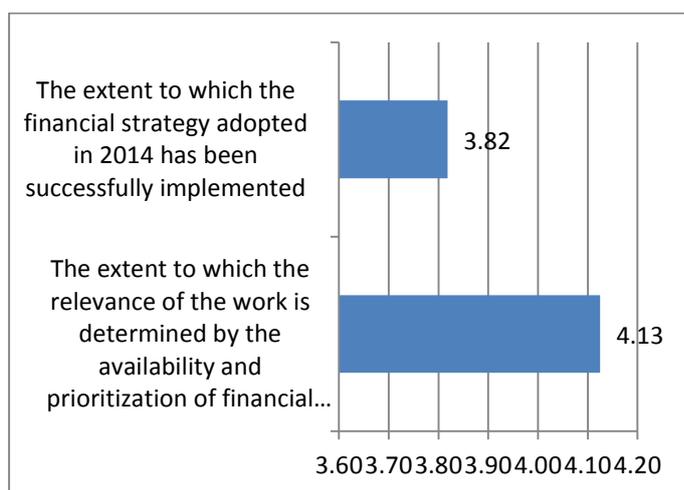


Figure 39. Relevance of financial and in-kind contributions, by indicator.

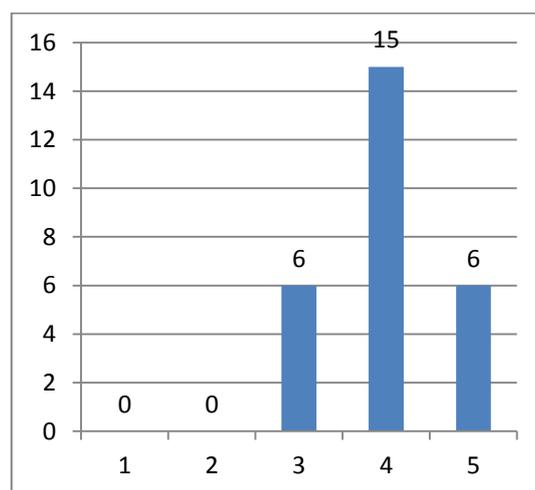


Figure 40. Relevance of financial and in-kind contributions, by estimate.

### **Summary of the feedback**

- The relevance of financial and in-kind contributions

*It is a common view that the funding is key and needs to be prioritized. The project funding by obtained by the Secretariat for 2013-2016 allowed implementation of a large amount of activities. However the predictability of funding and its overall amount needs to be increased. The voluntary contributions by Parties are considered as not sufficient. Most of the funding is unequally distributed on three main donors.*

- Options for maximising resources and attracting financial and in-kind support for future activities

*The prioritization of activities is necessary. The extension of the Convention beyond the ECE region, involvement of new donors based on the workplan activities attractive for them is widely supported by the respondents. The joint activities with the international financial institutions, regional financial organizations acting on SEA and EIA or regional development issues are desirable to enhance synergies and cooperation with the relevant stakeholders.*

## 5. Conclusions

Overall, the Review showed that the UNECE activities on implementation of the Convention and the Protocol are highly appreciated by the Parties and stakeholders, especially regarding the Secretariat performance. The Secretariat plays a crucial role in coordination of the relevant activities among the Parties, communication, preparation of the reports, development of workplans, reviewing the performance of the Parties, etc.

The overall performance of the UNECE on implementation of the Convention and the Protocol is considered as satisfactory. Table 1 provides the overview of rating of the effectiveness of the Secretariat in support of the governing and subsidiary bodies, efficiency of work of the governing and subsidiary bodies, relevance of the workplan activities to the aims of the Convention and the Protocol and the needs of the countries.

The general strengths and shortcoming of the UNECE activities under the Convention and the Protocol can be summarized as follows:

### *5.1. The general strengths of the UNECE activities*

- Performance of the Secretariat in preparation, servicing the meetings, follow-up communicating and delivery on the decisions taken, maintaining high quality of interpretation and translation, meeting documentation, process of conducting the working meetings
- Performance of the Secretariat in supporting Parties reporting (launching of the reporting round; invitations and instructions to report, reminders, publishing the national reports on the website)
- High quality of reviews of implementation summarizing the Parties' reports prepared by the Secretariat
- High quality of the communication between the Secretariat and the national focal points
- Maintaining the gender equality level in performing the workplan activities
- Timeliness of the official meeting agendas and documents in English
- Performance of the Secretariat in supporting the timely reporting
- Performance of the Secretariat in promoting implementation of the workplan, as well as the ratification and application of the Protocol on SEA

### *5.2. The general shortcomings of the UNECE activities*

- The financial constraints (a lack of financing) have implications for performance of the Secretariat and implementation of the workplans.
- The Secretariat is understaffed, 2-3 persons are not enough, especially regarding increasing role of the Convention and the Protocol, higher political importance, engagement of other countries and stakeholders.
- The Secretariat may gain from being more open to the other UN events, that may help in overall process of work on the treaties. It would be beneficial to have synergies with other activities relevant to SEA issues (recognizing that the Convention is not global).
- The process of translation of the working materials into Russian language needs to be improved, sometimes it is delayed.

**Table 1. Rating the UNECE performance under the Convention and the Protocol**

<b>Relevance of the workplan activities to the aims of the Convention and the Protocol and the needs of the countries</b>	
Relevance of the subcategories and activities in the current workplan	Satisfactory
Relevance of the subcategories and activities of the previous workplan for 2011-2014	Satisfactory
Relevance of the proposals of the Bureau on new subcategories and activities for the draft workplan 2017-2020	Satisfactory
The financial and in-kind contributions	Partly satisfactory
<b>Effectiveness of the Secretariat in support of the governing and subsidiary bodies</b>	
Organization of the meetings	Highly satisfactory
Preparation of the meeting documentation	Highly satisfactory
Implementation of the workplan activities	Satisfactory
The review of compliance	Satisfactory
Reporting and review of implementation of the Convention and Protocol	Satisfactory
Monitoring of expenditures	Satisfactory
Communication between the Secretariat and the Parties	Highly satisfactory
Effectiveness of the capacity building activities	Satisfactory
Maintaining the gender equality in the work	Highly satisfactory
<b>Efficiency of work of the governing and subsidiary bodies</b>	
Preparation of documentation for the meetings of Parties	Satisfactory
The compliance review	Satisfactory
The reporting and review of implementation of the Convention and Protocol	Satisfactory
Communication between the Secretariat and Parties	Satisfactory
The capacity building activities	Satisfactory
<b>OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF THE UNECE ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>SATISFACTORY</b>

## 6. Recommendations

### *Recommendation 1. Improving the funding and in-kind contributions*

Improving the funding and in-kind contributions via negotiating the stronger financial commitment of the Parties, attracting new partnerships and funding opportunities via extending the Convention beyond the UNECE region, encouraging the Parties to contribute to Trust Fund, establishing joint activities with international financial institutions, and regional financial organizations supporting the regional development that are willing to act on the field of SEA and EIA.

### *Recommendation 2. Continuing and enhancing awareness raising activities*

Continuing and enhancing awareness raising activities regarding the Convention and the Protocol and improving implementation within and beyond the UNECE region, specifically through such easy-to-understand information materials, as the video films, brief overviews (fact sheets, pamphlets) about the Convention and the Protocol, arrangement and facilitation of the thematic round tables, study tours for relevant stakeholders to acquire and share the best practices about in EIA and SEA on a national level. Implementation of the pilot projects is also recommended as a cost effective tool for capacity building, awareness raising, information sharing, training and practical experience.

### *Recommendation 3. Improving the relevancy of the Convention and the Protocol*

Improving the relevancy of the Convention and the Protocol via enhanced cooperation with other Conventions, not only the UNECE ones (e.g. CBD, UNCLOS), awareness raising events, legislative support, preparation of national guidelines taking into account national legal and institutional circumstances, national trainings, training of trainers, exchange of information and joint public events.

### *Recommendation 4. Improving the communication and interactions between the Secretariat and the Parties*

Improving the communication and interactions between the Secretariat and the Parties via the online forum of focal points that can help to facilitate the workload of the meetings, (the Secretariat can specify the working conditions of the forum – access rules, discussion dates before the meeting and etc.) to comment and share the opinions on the necessary documents directly or discuss it prior to the meeting date.

### *Recommendation 5. Improving the communication and interactions between the Parties*

Improving the communication and interactions between the Parties via continuing organization of the regional workshops, trainings, experience and information sharing events. The focal points should enhance, to the extent possible, their role in introduction and promotion of the Convention and its image at the national level. They act as a face of the Convention in their countries so a closer contact with them, coordination and ensuring their active participation in each event of Espoo Convention is very important.

### *Recommendation 6. Improvement of gender equality*

The maintenance and further improvement of gender equality in the work on implementation of the Convention and the Protocol could be done via regular monitoring and inclusion of gender issues in the surveys undertaken by the Secretariat. Currently the gender equality is well performed, but a more systematic approach to maintaining gender equality and prevention of any discrimination according to the UN rules would be desirable.

## Annex 1. Terms of references

### Review of UNECE activities under the Espoo Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context and its Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

#### Objectives and Targets (Specific Functions of Consultant/Individual Contractor)

The 1991 Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo Convention) offers a legal framework for international cooperation in assessing and managing environmental impacts of planned economic activities that are likely to have significant adverse impact on the environment across borders. The Convention is in force since 1997. In 2003, the Convention was supplemented by the Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), to ensure that at Parties integrate environmental, including health, considerations and public concerns into their plans and programmes, and to the extent possible also into policies and legislation, at the earliest stages and highest levels of decision-making.

Regular review and evaluation of programmes is mandatory for all UN departments (as per ST/SGB/2000/8, Reg7.2). Evaluation aims to provide Departments with the information needed to ensure the continued relevance, increased effectiveness and impact of subprogrammes.

The objective of the contract is to hire a consultant to review the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of UNECE activities under the Espoo Convention and its Protocol SEA. The results of the evaluation will be used to ensure the relevance of policy and workplan activities for 2017–2020, and enable more effective procedures for the delivery of future activities, where necessary.

The evaluation will assess the role of the Secretariat in servicing and supporting the work of the governing and subsidiary bodies under the Convention and the Protocol: Meeting of the Parties to the Convention (MoP); Meeting of the Parties to the Convention serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol (MOP/MOP); Working Group on Environmental Impact Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment; Implementation Committee; and the Bureau). The evaluation will review the work from 2011 to 2015 (joint workplans for 2011–2014 and 2014–2017) adopted by the Parties to the two treaties.

Gender and human rights aspects will be also covered by the evaluation, taking into account guidance provided by the United Nations Evaluation Group on the matter (available at <http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/980> and <http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/1452>).

**Specifically, the consultant is required to undertake the following tasks in consultation with the Secretariat :**

#### Task 1. Undertake a desk review of existing documents

- Text of Espoo Convention ([http://www.UNECE.org/env/eia/about/eia\\_text.html](http://www.UNECE.org/env/eia/about/eia_text.html))
- Text of SEA Protocol ([http://www.UNECE.org/env/eia/about/sea\\_text.html](http://www.UNECE.org/env/eia/about/sea_text.html))
- Joint workplans for 2011–2014 and 2014–2017 adopted by the Parties to the two treaties, namely, the Workplan for the implementation of the Convention and its Protocol for the period up to the sixth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention and the second session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol, [Annex to decision I/9–](#)

[V/9, ECE/MP.EIA/SEA/2](#); Workplan for the implementation of the Convention and its Protocol for the period up to the seventh session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention and the third session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol, [Annex I to decision VI/3–II/3 in ECE/MP.EIA/20/Add.3-ECE/MP.EIA/SEA/4/Add.3](#)

- Reviews of implementation of the Convention and the Protocol (biennial). Fourth review of implementation of the Convention ECE.MP.EIA.2014.3 adopted by decision VI/1, [ECE/MP.EIA/20/Add.1-ECE/MP.EIA/SEA/4/Add.1](#), and [First review of implementation of the Protocol on SEA](#) adopted by decision II/1 in [ECE/MP.EIA/20/Add.1-ECE/MP.EIA/SEA/4/Add.1](#)
- Reports on the activities of the Implementation Committee [ECE/MP.EIA/2011/4](#) and [ECE/MP.EIA/2014/4-ECE/MP.EIA/SEA/2014/4](#)
- Detailed [biennial financial reports](#) (produced by the Secretariat and approved by the Bureau, and the Report on the budget and financial arrangements in the period since the fifth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention ECE/MP.EIA/2014/1- ECE/MP.EIA/SEA/2014/1
- Decision VI/4-II/4 on budget, financial arrangements and financial assistance; in [ECE/MP.EIA/20/Add.3 - ECE/MP.EIA/SEA/4/Add.3](#)
- Financial strategy in annex II to decision [VI/4-II/4 in ECE/MP.EIA/20/Add.3-ECE/MP.EIA/SEA/4/Add.3](#)
- Status of ratification of the Convention and the Protocol at the time of the evaluation (link to the database maintained [UN Treaty Section](#)) and informal status reports provided by the Secretariat to the meetings of the Bureau, the Working Group, and the Meetings of the Parties. For the latest see [http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/eia/documents/WG2.4\\_may2015/ece.mp.eia.wg.2.2015.II.NF.2\\_status\\_of\\_ratification.pdf](http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/eia/documents/WG2.4_may2015/ece.mp.eia.wg.2.2015.II.NF.2_status_of_ratification.pdf)
- [Rules of procedure of the Meetings of the Parties; Structure and functions; and operating rules of the Implementation Committee](#)
- Other documents that the evaluator deems necessary for this exercise.

**Task 2. Develop a self-evaluation methodology and submit an inception report outlining the methodology**, including a draft time table for the review to be agreed with the UNECE Secretariat . The inception paper's purpose is to reflect the consultant's understanding of the task based on the Terms of reference and consultation of the UNECE Secretariat , and outline how the review is to be conducted. The paper should be agreed within 2 weeks from the start day of the contract.

**Task 3. Carry out a survey to evaluate the following key issues defined:**

- A. The *effectiveness* of the overall work of the governing and subsidiary bodies in reviewing and promoting the implementation of Convention and the Protocol, the management of the workplan in monitoring the expenditure of associated funds, with a focus on the role of the Secretariat in supporting and promoting this work. The issues include the:
  - a. quality and usefulness of the meetings (preparation, format, conduct, servicing, level of participation, follow-up);
  - b. quality, usefulness, format/length of the meeting documentation;
  - c. degree of implementation of the workplan activities;
  - d. effectiveness of the procedure for the review of compliance;
  - e. effectiveness of the reporting and the review of the implementation of the Convention and the Protocol;

- f. effectiveness of the monitoring of the expenditure on the basis of reports on the use of funds by the Secretariat ;
  - g. effectiveness of communication between the Secretariat , and the national the focal points and points of contact for notification; and the interactions between the Parties; and
  - h. effectiveness of the capacity building activities.
- B. The *efficiency* of the overall work of the governing and subsidiary bodies in reviewing and promoting the implementation of Convention and the Protocol, the management of the workplan in monitoring the expenditure of associated funds, with a focus on the role of the Secretariat in supporting and promoting this work. The issues include the:
- a. timeliness of the preparation of meeting documentation;
  - b. efficiency of the procedure for the review of compliance;
  - c. efficiency of the reporting and the review of the implementation of the Convention and the Protocol;
  - d. efficiency of communication between the Secretariat , and the national the focal points and points of contact for notification; and the interactions between the Parties; and
  - e. efficiency of the capacity building activities.
- C. The *relevance* of activities in the workplan (assessment of priorities and needs). The issues include:
- a. The process of prioritisation of subcategories/activities in the current workplan and decisions of the Meeting of the Parties (including also the promotion of further ratifications and global outreach);
  - b. Identifying proposals for new subcategories and related activities (including method of work; organizational arrangements; expected outcome; time schedule and budget);
  - c. Assess the extent to which the relevance of the work is determined by the availability and prioritization of financial and in-kind contributions; and
  - d. Identifying options maximising resources and for attracting financial and in-kind support for future activities and assess the extent to which the financial strategy adopted in 2014 has been successfully implemented.
- 3.1. Prepare a questionnaire building on a desk review of existing documents. The questionnaire will use a combination of closed and open questions.
- 3.2. Translate the questionnaire into Russian.
- 3.3. With the assistance of the Secretariat , distribute in English and in Russian to stakeholders, including
- National focal points nominated by the Governments; Participants in the 2011 and 2014 sessions of the Meetings of the Parties and 2015 meetings of the Working Group, Bureau and the Implementation Committee; (noting that there is an overlap between the categories).
  - The meeting participants comprise delegates from member States and representatives of international and non-governmental organizations.
- 3.4. Follow up with the stakeholders (send reminders and call as needed)
- 3.5. Collect the responses

**Task 4. Conduct a series of interviews** with the involved stakeholders identified in consultation with the Secretariat to further substantiate and clarify responses from the questionnaires. The interviews will take place by phone or Skype.

**Task 5. Analyse the outcomes of the survey**, using both quantitative and qualitative methods.

**Task 6. Prepare a draft evaluation report** on the basis of the information gathered through the survey, its analysis and the desk review, for submission to Secretariat for review of factual errors (Secretariat ). The report should be prepared in accordance with the following template:

I. Cover page (1 page): The organization, the subprogramme, the year, the title, the period of self-evaluation, the evaluator/s

II. Table of contents (1 page)

III. Executive summary (max. 1 page): Brief summary containing the objective, the methodology, key findings, conclusions and recommendations

IV. Introduction ( max. 1 page)

A. Purpose

1. The purpose the evaluation should be described as precisely as possible in ONE sentence. It should clearly explain why it is carried out and what it expects to achieve. Though the primary purpose of self-evaluation is to improve programme performance, it must also contribute to the organizational learning and the documenting of good practices..

B. Scope

2. Scope determines the boundaries of the evaluation. The scope of evaluation can include a theme, a programme/a project or an activity. It can cover a certain period, a part of a programme/a project cycle, involve various stakeholders and have a certain point of reference, i.e. a logical framework of the programme/the project. Any limitations (political, organizational, financial, attribution, etc.) of the evaluation should be acknowledged within the scope.

C. Methodology

3. The evaluation methodology describes how the findings were made. It describes data sources, data collection and data analysis methods used in the evaluation, The evaluation methodology should be sufficiently rigorous to assess the subject of evaluation and ensure a complete, fair and unbiased assessment.

4. Possible methods of data collection, inter alia, can include a review of data or official records/documents (a desk study); a country or a site visit; a survey by an interviewer (by phone or in person) or self-administered by the respondent ( mail, e-mail or web); a group or an individual interview.

V. Findings ( max. 12 pages)

5. A finding is a factual statement based on evidence obtained through data collection. The findings of the self-evaluation must be free of subjective judgments and supported by sufficient evidence They must be clearly formulated and directly relate to the subject and objectives of evaluations.. They must also explain internal (Secretariat ) and external (social, political, economic, environmental) factors contributing or creating obstacles to their achievement. Lucid and clear presentation of findings is critical for producing compelling and useful evaluation. Findings should be easy to read and

understand even by those who are unfamiliar with the subject. They could be supported by data presented in the form of a chart, a graph or a table.

6. The following criteria are recommended for evaluating performance:

- *Relevance*: the extent to which a programme is pertinent or significant for achieving the related objective and the extent to which the objective is significant to the problem addressed
- *Effectiveness*: the extent to which a programme has attained its desired outcomes. This includes the extent to which a programme has achieved its ultimate highest level outcome, that is, its impact..
- *Efficiency*: a measure of how well inputs (funds, staff, time, etc.) are converted into outputs.

#### VI. Conclusions and recommendations ( max. 2 pages)

7. A conclusion is a synthesis of findings corresponding to a specific circumstance. All conclusions of the self-evaluation must be drawn from and add to the findings. They must be consistent with provided data and the methodology, and represent insights into identification and solution of problems or issues.
8. A recommendation prescribes what should be done in a specific circumstance. All recommendations of the self-evaluation must be highlighted in the text in bold. They must be firmly based on evidence and analysis, be relevant, practical and realistic. They must clearly establish priorities, the time framework and the responsibilities for follow-up actions.

#### VII. Annexes

9. Terms of Reference
10. Lists of reviewed documents
11. Questionnaires for surveys/reports of interviews
12. List of interviewees
13. Follow-up action plan

### **Task 7. Address comments and prepare a final report for submission to the Secretariat**

#### **1. Tangible and measurable outputs of the work assignment, and the schedule of the work delivery**

The following outputs are expected to be delivered:

- a) Inception report outlining the evaluation methodology submitted by early/mid January 2016 (the exact date is to be confirmed depending the starting date of the contract)
- b) Questionnaire survey prepared on the basis of the desk review and translated into Russian, distributed to stakeholders by mid/end of January 2016 for them to respond three weeks later (the exact date is to be confirmed depending the starting date of the contract)
- c) Draft evaluation report based on the analysis of the outcomes of the questionnaire survey and interviews to be submitted by ...;

d) Final report submitted by end of March/early April 2016.

- **Report required:**

YES No. of pages: The report max 18 pages, and annexes (nro of pages not limited). Language: English, Format: Word

## **2. Schedule of the work delivery and payments**

*(please specify dates, expected outputs and related payments, where applicable)*

The total fee of USD 10,000 will be paid to the consultant to deliver the tasks 1-7 described above. The payment will be made in one instalment upon the satisfactory delivery of the final report, no later than by early June 2016.

## **3. Performance Indicators**

1. Satisfaction with the general efficiency, and communication during the process of conducting the survey and preparing the evaluation report expressed by the UNECE Secretariat and the national stakeholders.
2. Observance of delivery deadlines.
3. Overall good quality of the specific outputs delivered.

## Annex 2. Evaluation Matrix

Key question	Indicators/basic data	Sources of information	Methodology
<b>1. Is the overall support of the Secretariat to the work of the governing and subsidiary bodies effective (bringing results/achieving goals/meeting objectives) in ...</b>			
... organization of the meetings of the Parties; the Working Group on EIA and SEA; the Implementation Committee and the Bureau?	Quality of the meeting: performance of the Secretariat in - the practical preparation of the meetings: support provided before the meeting for financial assistance, visa facilitation, registration process, other information - servicing the meetings (support provided to the chair, information and reporting on work items during the meetings; preparation of conclusions) - follow-up (communicating and delivery on the decisions taken) - Quality of interpretation - Conduct (chairing, conclusions drawn) - Level of participation/interaction; representativeness (of various UNECE subregions; stakeholders)	National government representatives	Survey and individual interviews
	Usefulness of the meetings - Relevance to the mandate of the treaty bodies, to the MOP decisions, to the workplan activities	National government representatives	Survey and individual interviews
	Proposals on what could be done change to make the meetings more useful/effective, if anything? What could the Secretariat do to facilitate this?	National government representatives	Survey and individual interviews
... preparation of the meeting documentation?	Quality and content of the meeting documentation	National government representatives	Survey and individual interviews
	Usefulness/relevance of the meeting documentation	National government representatives	Survey and individual interviews
	Format/length of the meeting documentation	National government representatives	Survey and individual interviews
	Proposals on what could the Secretariat do to further improve the quality of the documentation, if anything?	National government representatives	Survey and individual interviews
... implementation of the workplan activities?	Degree of implementation of the workplan activities	Reporting documentation, representatives of the Secretariat , national government representatives	Desk review, survey and individual interviews
	Performance of the Secretariat in support of implementation activities	National government representatives	Survey and individual interviews
... the review of compliance?	Effectiveness of the established procedure for review of compliance - Proceedings by the Implementation Committee - Deliberations by the Meetings of the Parties - Follow-up on the decisions by the Meetings of the Parties	National government representatives	Survey and individual interviews
	Performance of the Secretariat in review of compliance	National government representatives	Survey and individual interviews
... the reporting and the review of the implementation of the Convention and the Protocol?	Overall quality of Parties' reporting on their implementation of the Convention and the Protocol	National government representatives	Survey and individual interviews
	Quality of the questionnaires for reporting - content	National government representatives	Survey and individual interviews

	- format/methodology		
	What should be done to improve the timeliness/quality/effectiveness of reporting by Parties? How could the Secretariat facilitate this?	National government representatives	Survey and individual interviews
	Reviews of implementation summarizing Parties' reports: Usefulness and Quality	National government representatives	Survey and individual interviews
	Performance of the Secretariat in supporting Parties reporting (launching of the reporting round; invitations and instructions to report, reminders, publishing the national reports on the website)	National government representatives	Survey and individual interviews
	How could the quality/usefulness of the reviews of implementation be improved? How could the Secretariat facilitate this?	National government representatives	Survey and individual interviews
	Quality of the review of the implementation of the Convention and the Protocol (examination of the outcomes of reporting by the Implementation Committee and decisions by the Meeting of the Parties)	National government representatives	Survey and individual interviews
	What could the Secretariat do to improve the quality/effectiveness of the review of implementation?	National government representatives	Survey and individual interviews
... the monitoring of expenditures based on the reports on use of funds by the Secretariat ?	Quality of monitoring of the expenditures by the Secretariat	Reporting documentation, representatives of the Secretariat , national government representatives	Desk review, survey and individual interviews
	What would need to change, if anything, to improve the monitoring of expenditures?	National government representatives	Survey and individual interviews
	Are bi-annual financial reports by the Secretariat needed or would annual reports be sufficient?	National government representatives	Survey and individual interviews
... communication between the Secretariat and Parties?	Quality of the communication between the Secretariat and national focal points	National government representatives, representatives of the Secretariat	Survey and individual interviews
	Quality of the communication between the Parties (including facilitating role of the Secretariat )	National government representatives, representatives of the Secretariat	Survey and individual interviews
	What could be done to improve the quality of the communication and, as needed, how could the Secretariat support this	National government representatives, representatives of the Secretariat	Survey and individual interviews
... the capacity building activities?	Effectiveness of the capacity building activities (how significant is the role of the Convention and the Protocol?)	National government representatives	Survey and individual interviews
	Performance of the Secretariat in support of capacity building activities	National government representatives	Survey and individual interviews
... maintaining the gender equality in the work	Gender equality level in performing the workplan activities (e.g. as reflected in participation of experts in meetings and workshops, consultants contracted, officials elected to treaty bodies)	National government representatives	Survey and individual interviews
	Role of different genders in implementation of the Convention and the Protocol (Is there any discrimination by gender? Is there domination of female/male representatives in implementation process?)	National government representatives	Survey and individual interviews
<b>2. Is the overall work of the governing and subsidiary bodies <u>efficient</u> (carried out in an optimal way of spending the available resources) in ...</b>			
... preparation of documentation for the meetings of Parties?	Timeliness (timely availability) of official meeting agendas and documents in English	National government representatives	Survey and individual interviews
	Timeliness of French and Russian translations of the agendas and other official documents	National government representatives	Survey and individual interviews

	Timeliness of informal documentation	National government representatives	Survey and individual interviews
	Quality of work of the Secretariat in delivery of meeting documentation	National government representatives	Survey and individual interviews
... procedure of the review of compliance?	Timeliness of the compliance review	National government representatives	Survey and individual interviews
	Quality of work of the Secretariat in the compliance review and corresponding communication with the Parties	National government representatives	Survey and individual interviews
... the reporting and the review of the implementation of the Convention and the Protocol?	Timeliness of the reporting of the implementation of the Convention and the Protocol	National government representatives	Survey and individual interviews
	Performance of the Secretariat in supporting the timely reporting and review of implementation of the Convention and the Protocol and corresponding communication with the Parties	National government representatives	Survey and individual interviews
... communication between the Secretariat and Parties?	Efficiency of the communication between the Secretariat and national focal points (e.g. How easy and convenient is the communication? Any language/ translation issues? Are there connection / feedback delays?)	National government representatives, representatives of the Secretariat	Survey and individual interviews
	Efficiency of the communication between the Parties	National government representatives, representatives of the Secretariat	Survey and individual interviews
... the capacity building activities?	Efficiency of the capacity building activities (whether these activities are cost efficient in reaching the goals of the Convention and the Protocol, and requirements of the workplan)	National government representatives	Survey and individual interviews
	Efficiency of the Secretariat in support of capacity building activities	National government representatives	Survey and individual interviews
<b>3. Are the workplan activities <u>relevant</u> (reflecting the aims of the Convention and the Protocol and the needs of the countries)?</b>			
... How relevant (reflecting the aims of the Treaties and the needs of the countries) are the following subcategories and activities in the current workplan? And why?	I. Compliance and implementation: a. Country specific legislative reviews (review of legislation and recommendations for its improvement) (to Parties) b. Technical advice in legal drafting (to Parties) c. Pre-accession legislative assistance (to non-Parties) d. Subregional overview of legislation and practice (on SEA but also EIA) e. Collection of findings and opinions from the Implementation Committee f. Guidance on the Implementation of the Convention (drawing on IC opinions) g. Alignment of the language versions of the treaty texts h. Update of Guidance on EIA in a transboundary context for Central Asia i. Video to promote benefits of the Protocol on SEA	National government representatives	Survey and individual interviews
	II. Subregional cooperation and capacity-building (in: South-Eastern Europe; Mediterranean; Baltic Sea; Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia) (a) Workshops/seminars/conference (b) Exchange visit (study tour)	National government representatives	Survey and individual interviews
	III. Exchange of good practice 1. Workshops or half day seminars within Working Group meetings on: (a) Post-project analysis (b) Global application of the Convention and the Protocol	National government representatives	Survey and individual interviews

	(c) Additional activity: Joint workshop on land-use planning with Industrial Accidents Convention 2. Development of good practice guidance on application of the Convention to nuclear energy –related activities		
	IV. Promoting ratification and application of the Protocol on SEA (a) fact sheets on SEA application (b) IAIA informal pamphlets (c) Training of trainers workshops at national level (d) Other national SEA training (e) Local training events (f) National guidance documents (g) Pilot projects	National government representatives	Survey and individual interviews
... How relevant (reflecting the aims of the Treaties and the needs of the countries) were the following subcategories and activities in the previous workplan for 2011-2014? And why?	I. Outreach activities: Promoting the Convention and its Protocol at a Conference on transboundary EIA in Eastern Asia (Seoul)	National government representatives	Survey and individual interviews
	II. Compliance and implementation - General guidance on enhancing consistency between Convention and environmental assessment within state ecological expertise	National government representatives	Survey and individual interviews
	III. Exchange of good practice Workshops/seminars on: - Biodiversity - Renewable energy - Nuclear energy - Sharing good practice and tools for communication, cooperation and conflict resolution	National government representatives	Survey and individual interviews
	IV. Promoting ratification and application of the Protocol on SEA - Publishing of the completed resource manual in Russian - Translation of the resource manual and simplified manual into national languages - Preparation of format for SEA notification - Joint workshop with Aarhus Convention on public participation in SEA - Guidance on public participation in SEA - Other	National government representatives	Survey and individual interviews
... proposals of the Bureau on new subcategories and activities for the draft workplan 2017-2020	I. Compliance with and implementation of the Convention and the Protocol: Update and revision of the 1990 guidance on post-project analysis in EIA	National government representatives	Survey and individual interviews
	II. Subregional cooperation and capacity-building to strengthen contacts between the Parties and others, including States outside the ECE region (a) Subregional conference/training of trainers workshop on the application of SEA to climate change mitigation (b) Subregional training workshop on quality control of SEA documentation (c) Subregional capacity-building activities to promote public participation in decision-making on EIA and SEA	National government representatives	Survey and individual interviews

(d) Organization or contribution to a subregional awareness-raising/capacity - building workshop on transboundary EIA and SEA outside UNECE in South-East Asia (e) Workshop/dedicated session on implementation of the Convention [and the Protocol] focusing on “Arctic subregion”		
III. Exchange of good practices Workshops or half-day seminars within meetings of the Working Group on: (a) Application to the Protocol on SEA to urban planning (b) Application of the Protocol on SEA to climate change adaptation and mitigation (c) Improving intersectoral cooperation and institutional arrangements for the application of the Protocol on SEA and the Convention (d) Linkages with transboundary EIA and SEA with biodiversity assessment	National government representatives	Survey and individual interviews
IV. Promoting ratification and application of the Protocol on SEA; (a) Development of country and sector specific guidance for the assessment of potential health impacts of plans and programmes and for the involvement of health authorities, building on the chapter on health in the SEA Resource Manual (b) Development of good practice recommendations on the application of SEA to climate change mitigation (c) Development of guidance on the application of the Protocol on SEA to urban planning (d) Translation into national languages of the video promoting the benefits of SEA and the Protocol (e) Workshops for national and local sectoral authorities as well as environmental and health authorities, including training, on the application of the Protocol for countries in the ECE region and beyond; including on the application of SEA to climate change adaptation and mitigation (f) Pilot SEAs in selected countries, in selected sectors (g) National guidance documents on the implementation of SEA (h) Preparation of fact sheets on application of the Protocol on SEA (i) Preparation of two-page informal pamphlets or “fasTips” on key issues in SEA practice	National government representatives	Survey and individual interviews
V. Opening of the Convention and the Protocol: promoting global outreach and partnerships (a) Development of a strategy for the implementation of the Convention and the Protocol at the global level listing activities and identifying partnerships and funding mechanisms for their implementation (b) Development of a strategy for the contribution of the Convention and the Protocol to the achievement of relevant SDGs and targets	National government representatives	Survey and individual interviews
How effective is the process of developing draft new workplans (including identification of subcategories and activities and the related methods of work; organizational arrangements; expected outcomes; time schedule, budget)	National government representatives	Survey and individual interviews
How could the workplans be made more relevant? How could the Secretariat facilitate this?	National government representatives	Survey and individual interviews

	What are the most effective organizational arrangements for the workplan activities to reach their expected outcome, and why?	National government representatives	Survey and individual interviews
	How relevant is the work of the Secretariat in promoting the implementation of the workplan?	National government representatives	Survey and individual interviews
	How would you rate the availability of funding or in-kind contributions for the implementation of the workplan activities?	National government representatives	Survey and individual interviews
	How could more funding and in-kind contributions be attracted? How could the Secretariat facilitate this?	National government representatives	Survey and individual interviews
... availability and prioritization of financial and in-kind contributions as the determinants of relevance of the work?	The extent to which the relevance of the work is determined by the availability and prioritization of financial and in-kind contributions	National government representatives	Survey and individual interviews
	Please assess the extent to which the financial strategy adopted in 2014 has been successfully implemented (why/why not?)	National government representatives	Survey and individual interviews
	Options for maximising resources and attracting financial and in-kind support for future activities	National government representatives	Survey and individual interviews
<b>4. Recommendations on improving the work of governing and subsidiary bodies of the Convention and the Protocol ...</b>			
... identification of factors contributing or creating obstacles to achievement of the goals of the Convention and the Protocol, and to implementation of the workplans	Role of internal factors (Parties and stakeholders and/or the treaty obligations)	National government representatives	Survey and individual interviews
	Role of the facilitating factors (performance of the Secretariat )– positive and negative	National government representatives	Survey and individual interviews
	Role of the external (social, political, economic, environmental) factors – positive and negative	National government representatives	Survey and individual interviews
... recommendations on:	improving the performance of the Secretariat in supporting and servicing the work of the governing and subsidiary bodies	National government representatives	Survey and individual interviews
	improving the procedures and working methods of the treaty bodies	National government representatives	Survey and individual interviews
	improving the funding and in-kind contributions	National government representatives	Survey and individual interviews
	raising awareness on the Convention and the Protocol within and beyond the UNECE region	National government representatives	Survey and individual interviews
	improving the relevancy of the Convention and the Protocol for your country/organization/for the region/globally	National government representatives	Survey and individual interviews
	improving the process of planning of new activities	National government representatives	Survey and individual interviews
	improving the reporting	National government representatives	Survey and individual interviews
	improving the communication and interactions between the Secretariat and the Parties	National government representatives	Survey and individual interviews
	improving the communication and interactions between the Parties	National government representatives	Survey and individual interviews
	improving gender equality in the work on implementation of the Convention and the Protocol	National government representatives	Survey and individual interviews
	any other recommendations, proposals, comments	National government representatives	Survey and individual interviews

### **Annex 3. List of reviewed documents**

- Biennial financial reports, produced by the Secretariat and approved by the Bureau, and the Report on the budget and financial arrangements in the period since the fifth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention ECE/MP.EIA/2014/1-ECE/MP.EIA/SEA/2014/1
- Decision VI/4-II/4 on budget, financial arrangements and financial assistance; in ECE/MP.EIA/20/Add.3 - ECE/MP.EIA/SEA/4/Add.3
- Espoo Convention ([http://www.UNECE.org/env/eia/about/eia\\_text.html](http://www.UNECE.org/env/eia/about/eia_text.html))
- Financial strategy in Annex II to decision VI/4-II/4 in ECE/MP.EIA/20/Add.3-ECE/MP.EIA/SEA/4/Add.3
- First review of implementation of the Protocol on SEA adopted by decision II/1 in ECE/MP.EIA/20/Add.1-ECE/MP.EIA/SEA/4/Add.1
- Fourth review of implementation of the Convention ECE.MP.EIA.2014.3 adopted by decision VI/1, ECE/MP.EIA/20/Add.1-ECE/MP.EIA/SEA/4/Add.1
- Reports on the activities of the Implementation Committee ECE/MP.EIA/2011/4 and ECE/MP.EIA/2014/4-ECE/MP.EIA/SEA/2014/4
- Rules of procedure of the Meetings of the Parties, operating rules of the Implementation Committee
- SEA Protocol ([http://www.UNECE.org/env/eia/about/sea\\_text.html](http://www.UNECE.org/env/eia/about/sea_text.html))
- Status of ratification of the Convention and the Protocol at the time of the evaluation and informal status reports provided by the Secretariat to the meetings of the Bureau, the Working Group, and the Meetings of the Parties [http://www.UNECE.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/eia/documents/WG2.4\\_may2015/ece.mp.eia.wg.2.2015.INF.2\\_status\\_of\\_ratification.pdf](http://www.UNECE.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/eia/documents/WG2.4_may2015/ece.mp.eia.wg.2.2015.INF.2_status_of_ratification.pdf)
- Workplan for the implementation of the Convention and its Protocol for the period up to the sixth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention and the second session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol, Annex to decision I/9-V/9, ECE/MP.EIA/SEA/2
- Workplan for the implementation of the Convention and its Protocol for the period up to the seventh session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention and the third session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol, Annex I to decision VI/3-II/3 in ECE/MP.EIA/20/Add.3-ECE/MP.EIA/SEA/4/Add.3

## **Annex 4. List of interviewees**

Aysel Babayeva, State Expertise Department, Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of the Republic of Azerbaijan

Cécile Bourigault, Collaboratrice scientifique, Département fédéral de l'environnement, des transports, de l'énergie et de la communication DETEC, Office fédéral de l'environnement OFEV, Section EIE et organisation du territoire, Switzerland

Elyanora Grigoryan, Ministry of Nature Protection, Republic of Armenia

Milena Novakova, Enforcement, Cohesion Policy & European Semester, Cluster 1, Directorate-General for Environment, European Commission

Ozren Laganin, Ministry of Physical Planning, Civil Engineering and Ecology of Republic Srpska, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Rakia Kalygulova, State Ecological Expertise Department, State Agency on Environmental Protection and Forestry, Republic of Kyrgyzstan

Silviya Dimitrova, Head of EIA and EA Department, Preventive Activities Directorate, Ministry of Environment and Water, Republic of Bulgaria

## Annex 5. Follow-up action plan

### **1. To the extent possible, increase financing of the UNECE activities under the treaties.**

#### *Proposed follow up actions:*

Over the last years, the treaties have become much more attractive for participation of various stakeholders, including the international financial institutions (EBRD, EIB, etc.) and non-Parties. There are synergies in implementation of the Convention and the Protocol and other international activities, that can be used for raising additional resources for the UNECE.

Also, the financial commitments by the Parties may be enhanced, probably via introduction of a mandatory scheme of contributions, based on the UN scale of assessment; or a mixed scheme of voluntary contributions in which the core activities are financed by contributions indexed to the UN scale of assessment.

The extension of the Convention beyond the UNECE region will likely help in fund raising. The official invitation to the Parties to contribute to Trust Fund can be helpful in many cases.

Promotion of the UNECE activities through the joint activities with international financial institutions, regional financial organizations supporting the regional development that are interested in SEA and EIA or involvement funds on various sectors related to EIA and SEA is to be done.

Communication with the national funds focusing on environment or national development policies can help in raising financial engagement of the stakeholders, at least on the national level.

But this area of activity will be very limited without solution of issue of the understaffed Secretariat (see Recommendation 2).

### **2. The Secretariat staff needs to be increased, 2-3 persons are not enough for further expansion and maintenance of work under the Convention and the Protocol, regarding to the growing political importance, active engagement of other countries, IFIs and other stakeholders.**

#### *Proposed follow up actions:*

Increase of the staff in the Secretariat by 2-3 persons would have very positive impacts on overall performance of the UNECE and, very likely, on the opportunities for attracting financial support. A systematic approach to fundraising, interaction with potential donors and supporters, promotion of the UNECE activities on the international and national arenas require bigger team, maybe with the part time consultants involved in the first stage.

Otherwise, the understaffed Secretariat may get into the “lock-in” situation, when it would not be physically able to deal effectively with the growing range of recurrent issues and strategic challenges, for which it has been responsible so far.

**3. The UNECE should be more open and engaged in other international events, that are relevant to the work on the treaties.**

*Proposed follow up actions:*

The events and processes of the UN and other international organizations should be on the loop of the Secretariat , regarding the activities that may provide significant support to the UNECE work under the treaties. There could be synergies with other activities relevant to SEA and EIA issues.

The potential donors and interested parties (such as the EBRD and others) may require deeper engagement into cooperation under the Convention and the Protocol cooperation under the Convention and the Protocol. There are indications of that, observed by the respondents of the survey.

**4. The effective and efficient work of the Secretariat should be sustained, but the conditions for that will be significantly changing over time, that would require enhancement of the Secretariat ’s capacities, adjustment of the priority setting regarding availability of the resources and other constraints.**

*Proposed follow up actions:*

Currently, the Secretariat looks to be overloaded, though they successfully deal with the numerous issues, tasks, challenges. Such excessive load work can unlikely be sustained if the scope of work under the treaties will increase or evolve in the near future (the next workplan activities and on).

The UNECE activities should not only be determined by the adopted workplans and available resources, but take into consideration the longer term development of the Convention and the Protocol activities, broader context of the Convention and the Protocol implementation (e.g. some Parties have expressed concerns about unclear definitions and need for political re-consideration of the text of the treaty based on the current political and economic realities), which would unlikely be possible with enhanced engagement of professional experts and stakeholders.

Overall, by now the performance of the UNECE in implementation of the treaties is highly evaluated, satisfies most of the Parties and stakeholders, has no unresolvable obstacles and concerns.