

Economic Commission for Europe

Committee on Sustainable Energy

Group of Experts on Renewable Energy

Renewal of mandate and work plans for 2018–2019

Discussion Document:

Draft Work Plan of the Group of Experts on Renewable Energy for 2018–2019

Introduction

1. Annex II of the Executive Committee decision on matters relating to the Committee on Sustainable Energy (ECE/EX/7) establishes the Group of Experts on Renewable Energy which is mandated to carry out concrete result-oriented activities that, in line with the Sustainable Energy for All (SE4ALL) initiative of the Secretary-General, help significantly increase the uptake of renewable energy in the region and that help achieve the objective of access to energy for all in the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) region. A Work Plan 2016–2017 was approved at the second session of the Group of Experts on 19 November 2014.
2. According to its Terms of Reference, the Group of Experts will focus on a) regulatory and policy dialogue and b) sharing of best practices on various renewable energy sources, including biomass, with a view to increasing the share of renewables in the global energy mix.
3. At the second session of the Group of Experts on 12-13 October 2015 agreed on the Work Plan of the Group of Experts on Renewable Energy for 2016–2017 and at the third session on 20-21 October, the Group of Experts requested the secretariat to work with the Bureau of the Group of Experts to develop a draft Work Plan of the Group of Experts on Renewable Energy for 2018–2019 and submit it for review and approval by the Group of Experts by written procedure. The Group of Experts agreed that, in order to expedite submission of a draft Work Plan and other possible documentation for endorsement by the Committee on Sustainable Energy, it can work by written procedure subject to a minimum comment period of 21 days. No response or feedback is taken to be tacit approval. This Draft Work Plan is prepared in accordance with these decisions.
4. The Group of Experts will orient its activities towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular of the Sustainable Development Goal 7 on Energy, as part of a new sustainable development agenda and in support to the achievement of renewable energy targets of member States within the context of the Paris Climate agreement.

II. Background

5. The Group of Experts requested to focus the work on the following key areas and activities in the Work Plan 2016–2017:

(a) Tracking of the progress made in the uptake of renewable energy sources in the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe region. A report on the ECE Renewable Energy Status Report 2015 has been prepared in partnership with the Renewable Energy Policy Network for the 21st Century (REN21) and the International Energy Agency (IEA) to fill data gaps and thus establish a more accurate baseline for renewable energy in the region. It was presented at the Climate Change Conference in Paris in December 2015. A new edition of the Renewable Energy Status Report 2017 is under preparation and will be launched at the 8th International Forum on Energy for Sustainable Development in Astana, Kazakhstan, in June 2017;

(b) Exchange of Know-how and best practices in the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe on how to help significantly increase the uptake of renewable energy (more details to be added).

(c) Integration of Renewable Energy in Future Sustainable Energy Systems in the region (more details to be added).

III. Concrete activities

6. Building on the activities of the Work Plan 2016–2017 and the recommendations from the Group of Experts, the Bureau of the Group of Experts on Renewable Energy propose to undertake the following activities in the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe region:

A. Tracking of the progress made in the uptake of renewable energy sources

Description: The Group of Experts will continue to monitor the progress made on the state of development of renewable energy following the baseline established in 2015. This work will be continued together with the International Energy Agency (IEA), the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), REN21, the World Bank Group and other key stakeholders, already partners in this process. This work will help to improve the understanding of renewable energy globally and add to existing global monitoring systems already in place by major partners.

Work to be undertaken:

(a) Review the state of development and monitor the progress made after the baseline 2015 and consideration of emerging trends. This could include building on key findings and further investigating a selected number of target areas in relation to the progress made, and working with other partners and contributing to existing global monitoring frameworks, in particular the Global Tracking Framework of the World Bank;

(b) Identify key barriers, options and possible best practices for supplying electricity and heat from renewable energy sources, in particular taking into account regulatory framework and investment conditions in the ECE countries. This work will be based on the findings of the status report 2017;

(c) Respond to country specific needs by fostering cooperative activities in member States to promote and use the key findings from the status report (workshops, seminars, roundtables, “hard talks”, etc.);

(d) Strengthening framework conditions and instruments that help significantly increase the uptake of renewable energy in the region by identifying ways to support national plans on renewable energy on country efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals;

(e) Promote the application of a unified system of renewable energy indicators for a more comprehensive assessment - at regional, national and international level - of the status of renewable energy, including obstacles and opportunities. Such a system should allow the development of strategic actions to achieve specific goals.

Deliverables: A report submitted for consideration by the Group of Experts at the annual meeting.

Timeline: 2018–2019

B. Exchange of know-how and best practices on how to help significantly increase the uptake of renewable energy.

Description: The Group of Experts will encourage the exchange of know-how and best practices between member States, relevant international organizations and other stakeholders on how to significantly increase energy production from renewable sources as a means of sustainable development and climate change mitigation. This work will be undertaken collaboratively with other organisations, such as including IRENA, IEA, REN21 and the World Bank Group, the other United Nations Regional Commissions and other relevant organizations.

Work to be undertaken:

(a) Identify the key operational policy priorities for member States and provide platforms for collective action;

(b) Provide an effective platform for expanding already developed policies and measures across countries in the region;

(c) Identify best practices and options for technological development of renewable energy in the ECE region;

(d) Organize information sharing activities (workshops, seminars, roundtables, etc.) for exchange of experience on best practices and policies;

(e) Organize specific Hard Talks, upon country request and fund availability, to use the results of the Renewable Energy Status Report for a dialogue among stakeholders on the consideration of key obstacles and possible solutions;

(e) Considering existing gaps in policies, legislation, standards and regulations and cooperate with other relevant organizations in addressing them.

Deliverables: A report submitted for consideration by the Group of Experts.

Timeline: 2018–2019

C. Integration of Renewable Energy in Future Sustainable Energy Systems

7. The Group of Experts will continue to work at the achievement of higher renewable energy shares to attain Sustainable Development Goals and this can be done through additional integration efforts. These include improved understanding of renewable energy resource characteristics and availability, as well as the system integration of the various renewable energy technologies across the broad range of present and future energy supply systems. The Group of Experts will promote renewable energy integration and investment conditions in ECE Member States by considering the role of renewable energy within the context of future energy systems, developing the instruments for assessing the potential of renewable energy resources and supporting possible synergies between renewable energy and fossil fuels, especially gas in the energy production. This approach will strengthen the integration of renewable energy technologies in each sector, i.e. electricity generation, heating and cooling, gas and liquid fuel distribution as well as autonomous energy supply systems.

8. The Group of Experts will cooperate with the Experts Group on Resource Classification (EGRC) to allow investments in renewable energy projects through the application of the United Nations Framework Classification for Fossil Energy and Mineral Reserves and Resources 2009 to renewable energy resources;

9. The Group of Experts will cooperate with the Group of Experts on Gas for economic and environmental optimization and sustainability. Other synergies could be also explored by the Chair of the Group of Experts on Renewable Energy.

Work to be undertaken:

(a) Identify key obstacles and, based on best practices, produce concrete recommendations, tailored to local needs and conditions in order to deploy renewable energy within future energy systems requirements;

(b) Promote renewable energy investment in future energy systems and energy market optimization, through different opportunities (e.g. matchmaking, green technology centres, etc.);

(c) Identify key needs for capacity building for renewable energy development based on future energy system and market requirements;

(d) Organize capacity building and information sharing activities (workshops, seminary, roundtables, etc.) on renewable energy - investment promotion, policy and institutional framework development, technological knowledge and socio-economic awareness.

Deliverables:

Technical assistance to the national officials and experts through training workshop in renewable energy project development, finance and business planning; a case study about existing policies and policy reform for the increase of the renewable energy share; and organization of a seminar on renewable energy policy reforms, technological knowledge and socio-economic awareness. Technical assistance activities should be provided on a demand-driven basis and on the basis of funds availability, taking into account similar activities already implemented within the Sustainable Energy Sub-programme.

Timeline:

(a) Organization of a capacity building workshop in 2018 (TBD);

(b) Organization of a matchmaking event by 2019 (TBD).