

DRAFT
TERMS OF REFERENCE
Regional Working Group on Environment in Support of the Implementation of the
South East Europe 2020 Strategy

Purpose

The purpose of the establishment of the Regional Working Group of high-level representatives of ministries responsible for environment, water resources, land, energy and climate change (hereinafter referred to as: “Regional Working Group” or “RWGE Env”) is to guide the implementation of the Dimension J - Environment of the SEE 2020 Strategy – Jobs and Prosperity in European Perspective (hereinafter referred to as: SEE 2020 or Strategy). RWG Env will operate under the auspices of Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) Secretariat with the main responsibility for programming, overseeing, and monitoring the activities within Dimension Environment.

Background Information

RCC Secretariat, working upon the request of the Southeast Europe Investment Committee and supported by the European Commission (EC), coordinated the development of a regional growth strategy – SEE 2020. The main goal of the Strategy is to assist in boosting competitiveness and job creation, and to underscore the European perspective of the region’s future. The success of the SEE 2020 depends on achieving high and sustained economic growth as well as making progress in converging with the EU. In this respect, by 2020, the region plans on achieving 11 ambitious headline targets in five growth pillars of the Strategy – integrated, smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, underpinned by good governance.

Following the endorsement of the SEE 2020 Strategy, participating governments (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo* , Montenegro and Serbia) tasked RCC with the role of coordinating and monitoring its implementation. In this sense, RCC has initiated activities on the development of regional action plans in all of the policy dimensions of SEE 2020 to convert the recommendations and measures contained therein into actionable items. The policy area dealing with environment is one of the SEE 2020 dimensions where a clear and tangible regional action plan is required.

Environment is one of the four dimensions of the Sustainable Growth Pillar of the SEE 2020 Strategy and its main priorities, as set-out in the Strategy, include: (i) increasing volume of annual forestation; (ii) identifying steps and measures necessary for advancing the water-energy-food nexus approach; (iii) expanding the level of SEE countries’ understanding of the enabling environment for private sector participation in financing water infrastructure and identifying key bottlenecks and prospects in the process; (iv) increasing adaptive capacity

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

through awareness raising and education on climate change adaptation and (v) developing and putting in place measures to increase the share of irrigated agriculture land.

Each of the policy dimensions contained in the SEE 2020 Strategy has a regional dimension coordinator (RDC), often a regional organisation, structure or a task force mandated with coordinating activities within the specific policy areas. Dimension Environment is being coordinated by the Regional Environmental Centre for Central and Eastern Europe (REC) in cooperation with Global Water Partnership– Mediterranean (GWP-Med) and Standing Working Group on Regional Rural Development (SWG). Having in mind the need for strong involvement of participating governments and line ministries in conceptualizing and implementing SEE 2020 interventions, RWG Env is being established to coordinate the work within Dimension Environment of the Strategy and provide guidance to RDC and associated organizations. RWG Env will be convened at least once a year at senior official level and, when possible and necessary, at the ministerial level.

Tasks

RWG Env will perform the following tasks:

1. Propose and/or develop additional mechanisms and tools for effective implementation of activities under the Dimension J – Environment of the SEE 2020 Strategy;
2. Set priorities for, and review and endorse Regional Action Plans (RAPs) prepared by the Regional Dimension Coordinators;
3. Facilitate cooperation among SEE economies as well as coordination with international donors and mechanisms during preparation of proposals of regional programmes;
4. Suggest measures for improving the process of programming and review undertaken measures and activities;
5. Explore possibilities for potential sources for financing of proposed regional programmes;
6. Inform the Programming Committee on implementation of its activities and their state of play in the respective policy dimension;
7. Agree on the key indicators for effective monitoring of implementation of measures under the SEE 2020 Dimension J – Environment;
8. Advise on monitoring and evaluation of actions that contribute to the implementation of the SEE 2020 in the area of environment;
9. Agree on Dimension J – Environment input to the Annual Report on Implementation of SEE 2020;
10. Discuss other environmental cooperation issues of interest and cooperation with different stakeholders for the purpose of coordination, exchange of experience, preparing recommendations and opinions on improving the work of consultative groups.

Composition and Mode of Operation

1. RWG Env is composed of representatives of the line ministries responsible for environment, water and climate change of those Western Balkan economies that have endorsed the SEE 2020 Strategy, and a representative of the RCC Secretariat;
2. RWG Env may invite other SEECP participants, regional partners, organisations and stakeholders to attend the meetings and participate in the process, as appropriate (upon specific thematic subjects related to Dimension J - Environment);
3. Members of RWG Env will do their utmost to ensure regular participation in meetings and other activities;
4. Relevant ministries (as described in point 1) will be invited to endorse the conclusions and recommendations prepared by the RWG Env;
5. RWG Env meetings will be co-chaired by the Regional Cooperation Council Secretariat as a permanent Co-chair, and one member of the RWG Env on a rotating basis;
6. The Secretariat of the RWG Env will be hosted by the RCC and served by the Regional Dimension Coordinator in co-operation with the other coordinating partners (as stipulated in the SEE 2020 Strategy) each providing assistance and support on the SEE 2020 Strategy process within its scope and mandate;
7. Co-chairs will convene, conduct and conclude RWG Env meetings and review and approve draft pertaining agendas prepared by the Secretariat;
8. The first meeting of the WGE shall adopt the detailed rules of procedure of the RWG Env.