

Group of Experts on Energy Efficiency

Meeting of the Bureau

Geneva (online), 12 May 2020

Report of the Meeting

Introduction

Meeting of the Bureau of the ECE Group of Experts on Energy Efficiency (the Group of Experts) (collectively referred to herein as the Bureau) was held in Geneva (online), on 12 May 2020, from 2.30 to 4.30 p.m. (CEST).

Attendance

Mr. Aleksandar Dukovski, Chair (Macedonian Center for Energy Efficiency);
Mr. Kostiantyn Gura, Vice-Chair (Ukraine);
Ms. Alisa Freyre, Vice-Chair (Services Industriel Genève);
Mr. Piyush Verma, Vice-Chair (International Energy Research Centre);
Mr. Martin K. Patel, Vice-Chair (University of Geneva);
Mr. Zlatko Pavicic, Vice-Chair (Croatian Innovators Network);
Mr. Romanas Savickas, Vice-Chair (UNEP-DTU Partnership, Copenhagen Centre on Energy Efficiency);
Mr. Stefan M. Buettner, Vice-Chair *ex officio*, Co-Chair of the Task Force on Industrial Energy Efficiency (Institute for Energy Efficiency in Production);
Mr. Hannes Mac Nulty, Vice-Chair *ex officio*, Co-Chair of the Task Force on Industrial Energy Efficiency (Mac Nulty Consulting);
Mr. Burkhard Schulze Darup, Vice-Chair *ex officio*, Co-Chair of the Joint Task Force on Energy Efficiency Standards in Buildings (Germany).

Secretariat, UNECE Sustainable Energy Division:

Mr. Oleg Dzioubinski;
Ms. Stefanie Held;
Mr. Igor Litvinyuk.

Apologies received:

Ms. Natalia Jamburia, Vice-Chair (Georgia);
Mr. Boris Melqvist, Vice-Chair (Russian Federation);
Mr. Andrei Miniankou, Vice-Chair (Belarus);
Mr. Christian Noll, Vice-Chair (Germany);
Mr. Benoit Lebot, Vice-Chair (formerly of International Partnership for Energy Efficiency Cooperation).

Adoption of the Agenda

The Provisional agenda of the meeting, as circulated to the members of the Bureau, was adopted.

Seventh session of the Group of Experts on Energy Efficiency (22-23 September 2020) (agenda item 1)

The Bureau was informed that due to the COVID-19 emergency the seventh session of the Group of Experts could reasonably likely be held online, at dates specified in para. 41 of the Report of the Group of Experts on Energy Efficiency on its sixth session. The unfolding situation would have consequences for (without limitation) the agenda of the seventh session, which may be narrowed down to administrative matters.

(a) Administrative matters

(i) Postponement of International Forum on Energy for Sustainable Development in Georgia

The Bureau was informed that the Eleventh International Forum on Energy for Sustainable Development (the Forum) was planned to be held in Tbilisi, Georgia, on 15–17 September 2020.

In its frames, it was, among other, to host the seventh session of the Group of Experts. Due to the COVID-19 emergency the Forum was postponed to 2021 (date to be decided).

(ii) Conduct of meetings during exceptional time-limited arrangements, impact on the activities of the Group of Experts, and ways to open up new possibilities (e.g., holding a series of virtual sessions / webinars)

The Bureau was informed that the current impossibility to meet physically has certain impact on the activities of the Group of Experts, especially on holding workshops and seminars which in response are now evolving into online sessions and webinars.

Acknowledging certain shortcomings of such organizational mode (including, but not limited to, time constraints), the participants noted that online events deliver good results if they are well organized and to the point. Moreover, for the Group of Experts these give opportunity to bring more participants, especially those who were unable to participate in meetings physically.

The Chair stressed that the experience with using digital platforms gained during the current period would allow for continuing using these more actively in post-COVID-19 times to mobilize / reenergize the expert community of the Group of Experts, and especially its Bureau.

It was proposed that the Bureau holds its virtual meetings quarterly, between regular sessions of the Group of Experts, to discuss topical issues. These may focus on sector-specific or narrowly specialized issues and result in recommendations that could further be assessed by the Group of Experts. For these virtual meetings to be of relevance, their preparation necessitates assignment of leadership roles to proposing substance, whereas the secretariat will render the needed support in terms of their organization and related process.

(iii) Decision-making procedures

The Bureau was informed that the Special procedures during the COVID-19 period were put in place by the ECE Executive Committee (the EXCOM). These, among other, include procedures for decision-making for business-critical issues during the exceptional and time-limited arrangements throughout the COVID-19 situation.

(iv) Bureau elections

The Bureau was informed of the need for the Group of Experts to elect an effectively new Bureau, as the two-year mandates of 17 out of 19 members, including the Chair, expire this year (the current list of the Bureau members was circulated to the participants; also available online).

The elections for a two-year term should have normally taken place at the seventh session of the Group of Experts. In the COVID-19 emergency, the issue of Bureau election was confirmed by the Bureau to be “business critical” in the parlance of the mentioned EXCOM document on Special procedures during the COVID-19 period. Therefore, election procedure may take the form of written consultations and a silence procedure (provided this does not contravene any of the procedures established by the governing bodies as of the start date of the seventh session of the Group of Experts, 22 September 2020). The Bureau will be informed of developments on that front.

The Bureau members were encouraged to advise on their intention to continue their service on the Bureau, and this being the case to concern themselves with the question of obtainment of nomination letters.

(v) Terms of reference of the Group of Experts (the need, drafting, and the process) and Terms of reference of the Committee on Sustainable Energy

The Bureau was informed that the Draft rules of procedure of the Committee on Sustainable Energy (ECE/ENERGY/2019/12), presented to the Committee on Sustainable Energy (the Committee) at its twenty-eighth session in 2019, are now being refined. It is now suggested that rules of procedure (or terms of reference, or guidelines), are also developed for all the subsidiary bodies of the Committee.

For the Group of Experts, this document may include and specify, among other, organization of the Group of Experts, its general objective, scope of work, methods of work, reporting, election

process and composition of Bureau, and, importantly, define responsibilities entrusted to the members of the Bureau.

The Bureau supported the initiative of developing such a document for the Group of Experts, stressing that it will help building an able Bureau, serve mobilization of resources, and reinforce ECE as facilitator and enabler of initiatives in the domain-specific area.

The procedure for development of the draft was agreed to be as follows. The secretariat will, in reliance on the Terms of reference and rules of procedure of the Executive Committee of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE/EX/3/Rev.1), the Guidelines for the establishment and functioning of teams of specialists within UNECE (ECE/EX/2/Rev.1), and the Draft rules of procedure of the Committee on Sustainable Energy (ECE/ENERGY/2019/12), develop the draft the document and will further circulate it to the Bureau for consultations and eventual approval by end-June 2020. The draft, as adopted, will constitute a part of the official documentation for the seventh session of the Group of Experts.

(b) Substantive matters

(i) Agenda of the session

The Bureau was reminded that online mode of the seventh session of the Group of Experts, caused by the COVID-19 emergency, may necessitate narrowing the Provisional agenda of the session down to administrative matters; the Bureau was also informed that as the draft Provisional agenda currently stands, it nevertheless includes the following substantive items pursuant to the Group of Experts' Work Plan 2020-2021, to be discussed: Task Force on Industrial Energy Efficiency; Joint Task Force on Energy Efficiency Standards in Buildings, and; Regulatory and policy dialogue addressing barriers to improve energy efficiency.

An approach to addressing these three items may include, without limitation, holding online event(-s) anticipatorily, as part of preparation to the seventh session of the Group of Experts. The Bureau had no issues or reservations about the above.

(ii) Activities and deliverables of the Group of Experts (Work Plan 2020-2021) (merged with c. Documents in the pipeline (working titles))

The secretariat informed the Bureau on activities and deliverables of the Group of Experts pursuant to its Work Plan for 2020-2021: Improving energy efficiency in industry (Activity A, led by the Task Force of Industrial Energy Efficiency (the Task Force)); Improving energy efficiency in buildings (Activity B, led by the Joint Task Force on Energy Efficiency (the Joint Task Force), and; Regulatory and policy dialogue addressing barriers to improve energy efficiency (Activity C).

Activity A comprises development of the industrial energy efficiency action plan and assessment of the roles of ECE and other stakeholder organizations in delivering on it.

Progress on delivering on this activity was reported by the Co-Chairs of the Task Force: drawing on a range of relevant work items, the industrial energy efficiency action plan is now being developed by the Co-Chairs of the Task Force, in collaboration with the Chair and the secretariat. It is anticipated that the action plan will be finalized by end-June 2020 and will form a part of the official documentation for the seventh session of the Group of Experts. The assessment will be part of the above action plan, and will be, as adopted by the Group of Experts, presented to the Committee for endorsement at its twenty-ninth session in November 2020.

Activity A was reported to be in progress and on track.

Activity B relates to, among other, maintaining the Framework Guidelines for Energy Efficiency Standards in Buildings (the Framework Guidelines) and keeping them updated.

The Group of Experts' Work Plan for 2020-2021 contains the objective to further review the Framework Guidelines, as needed, by June 2020. In view of this, the review process was organized, with comment period open for 21 days (from 14 April to 5 May 2020). Upon its conclusion and having addressed the received comments, the draft reviewed and updated Framework Guidelines will be posted to the ECE website and remain available for comments

up to end-June. The document will form part of official documentation for the seventh session of the Group of Experts.

Another deliverable under this activity is a set of workshops and train-the-trainer seminars on high performance energy efficiency standards in buildings in line with Framework Guidelines. The Bureau was informed that two events had already been held since adoption of the Work Plan for 2020-2021, namely: (1) Training Workshop on High Performance Buildings in Yerevan, Armenia, 21–22 November 2019, and (2) On-line capacity-building workshop on data solutions for evidence-based policy and stakeholder collaboration, 12 May 2020); another one On-line capacity-building workshop on data solutions for evidence-based policy and stakeholder collaboration, targeted primarily on energy efficiency practitioners in Georgia, was planned to be held on 14 May 2020.

Additionally, the Group of Experts at its seventh session will have before it the latest publication on “Promoting Energy Efficiency Standards and Technologies to Enhance Energy Efficiency in Buildings” (ECE/ENERGY/121, ECE Energy Series No. 60), which is based on the previous projects implemented by the Joint Task Force, and their respective reports. The Bureau members were encouraged to use the publication for their further reference regarding energy efficiency practices and standards in buildings in the ECE region, and to promote this publication among their respective constituencies.

Activity B was reported to be in progress and on track.

Activity C, while in preparation to the seventh session of the Group of Experts, involves development of a report on viable energy efficiency policies to reach “Pathways to Sustainable Energy” scenarios. This document is built upon the modelling results from the project “Strengthening capacity of the ECE member States to achieve the energy-related Sustainable Development Goals” (“Pathways to Sustainable Energy”), its report, the existing recommendations arising from extensive consultations held in the period of this project implementation, and other inputs. The report will form part of official documentation for the seventh session and will likely be entitled “Pathways to Sustainable Energy – policy recommendations from the Group of Experts on Energy Efficiency”.

Another document for the Group of Experts’ consideration will be a technical brief on the role of digitalization in provision of energy services. This information document will shed a light on opportunities and challenges that digitalization represents from the energy efficiency standpoint, yet with the view of the whole energy system to address the issue of systemic efficiencies. Through this document, the Group of Experts may aim to reach out to subsidiary bodies of the Committee and propose common grounds to join efforts and collaborate. The Bureau was invited to share its views on approaching the topic, and encouraged to contribute to development of the paper, which draft is expected to be finalized by end-July 2020.

Activity C was reported to be in progress and on track.

- (iii) Draft conclusions and recommendations from the seventh session of the Group of Experts are yet to be developed. An approach, with reference to the above 1(b)(i), might be using conclusions arising from online event(-s) held anticipatorily in preparation to the seventh session of the Group of Experts.

Strategy of the Group of Experts on Energy Efficiency: vision, mission, goals and objectives (agenda item 2)

The Bureau was informed by the Chair of his vision on the future of the Group of Experts. The value added of the Group of Experts, the relevance of its work, common goals within the Sustainable Energy Subprogramme, and other issues, were raised. Specifically, the need to shift ground and fill a suitable niche was voiced; the following three distinct (but connected) activities, along with their messaging, were suggested as the future main focus of the Group of Experts:

- (a) **Energy for quality of life**, which should entail the message of not only decreasing energy consumption, optimizing industrial processes and reducing energy bills, but also of perception of energy itself as enabler of socio-economic and health benefits.

- (b) **Energy conservation**, providing a more clear vision of how to achieve reductions of energy use and emissions through behavioural change, hence avoiding dramatic market and business model changes.
- (c) **Increased affordability of energy through implementation of energy efficiency measures**, whereas the latter should not be assessed only against financial performance and monetary values, but rather bring focus on economic, social and environmental pillars of sustainable development.

The above suggestions were well received and supported by the Bureau. An information document outlining the vision, mission, goals and objectives of the Group of Experts will be developed by the Chair, with support from the secretariat, and presented to the Group of Experts at its seventh session.

Other business (agenda item 3)

The Bureau was updated on the following projects in support of the activities of the Group of Experts, and projects that the Group of Experts is expected to contribute within its area of expertise, including to the to the twenty-ninth session of the Committee and other sustainable energy activities:

- (i) Extrabudgetary project “Enhancing national capacities to develop and implement energy efficiency standards for buildings in the UNECE region” (pending the EXCOM approval in July 2020; budget: 200,000 US\$; period of implementation: March 2022). Project will focus on countries of South-Eastern and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, and Central Asia. The objective is to enhance capacity to develop and implement energy efficiency standards for buildings, with a focus on residential buildings, and introduce some energy efficiency technologies.
- (ii) Potential programme under the International Climate Initiative (IKI) call for proposals under funding priority 05. Energy efficiency in the fields of industrial and production facilities, trade and commerce, entitled: “Improving the energy efficiency of the global building supply chain industry and its products to deliver high performance buildings”. Subject to selection, the project will focus on the ECE member States that are in the list of Lower Middle-Income Countries and Territories as contained in 2020 List of Official Development Assistance Recipients, specifically: Armenia, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan. The budget of 19,822 million euro will be implemented by 13 partners and ECE as the lead.
- (iii) United Nations Development Account (UNDA) project “Global Initiative towards post-Covid-19 resurgence of the MSME [micro-, small and medium enterprises] sector”. ECE is one of the partners executing this project, the goal of which is to strengthen capacity and resilience of MSMEs in developing countries and economies in transition to mitigate economic and social impact of the COVID-19 crisis. The ECE part, which is to be implemented by end-2020, is assisting MSMEs in the member States in utilizing guidelines and best practices for delivering energy efficient products and in providing renewable energy equipment. The consultant working on this project will develop a relevant study, followed by an on-line training based on it. The study may serve as a basis for the Group of Experts’ publication, which is slated to be finalized by the end of 2020.
- (iv) Extrabudgetary project “Enhancing understanding of the implications and opportunities of moving to carbon neutrality in the UNECE region across the power and energy intensive industries by 2050” (budget: 750,000 US\$; period of implementation: May 2023). Project will focus on all ECE member States, and is expected to result in improved data and assumptions for the modelling for all energy technologies and the power and energy intensive sectors; enhanced knowledge of private sector, academia, civil society and policy makers on innovative, future-proof technology options for the carbon neutrality concept of the power and energy intensive industries from a regional perspective; improved knowledge of the financial sector on financing the modernization of fossil energy-based infrastructure, and; raising awareness of policy makers to develop a clear vision of how to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050.