



United Nations Inter-Agency
Issue-Based Coalition on Environment and Climate Change
in Europe and Central Asia region

Terms of Reference

I. Background

The establishment of the United Nations Inter-Agency Issue-Based Coalition (IBC) on Environment and Climate Change in Europe and Central Asia region was first proposed at the Regional UN System meeting in May 2019. That meeting recognized that the region faced numerous environmental challenges – such as the unsustainable use of natural resources, vulnerability to climate-induced natural hazards and the impacts of climate change, air pollution, biodiversity and habitat loss and the need for better transboundary cooperation – and decided to explore the opportunities to establish an IBC on Environment. Terms of reference for the IBC were presented to the Regional UN System meeting in December 2019 by the co-leads: UNEP, UNESCO and UNECE. The meeting agreed that the IBC would be active as of January 2020 and would provide a regional platform for UN agencies to: promote coordinated support to all Member States in Europe and Central Asia in their implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; and support the UN Country Teams on environmental issues. The meeting further decided that climate change be included as a main thematic pillar of the IBC, as reflected below. Following from this discussion, the IBC was established in March 2020.

In 2020, the IBC provided guidance to UN country teams and resident coordinators on measures to green the COVID-19 pandemic response and then recovery. It established 11 thematic task teams, led by members of the IBC and bringing together interested subsets of the members. For example, the task team focused on water organized two thematic webinars – on water and climate, and on transboundary water cooperation – in response to country team needs. Finally, the IBC began work on guidance for better integrating environmental and climate change issues into UN programming processes, UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks and Common Country Analyses (see pillar 2 below).

Since mid-2020, the IBC consists of 18 members from the UN family: FAO, ILO, IOM, ITU, OHCHR, UN Habitat, UN Women, UNDP, UNDRR, UNECE, UNEP, UNESCO, UNFCCC, UNICEF, UNOPS, WFP, WHO and WMO. It remains open to new members. The IBC is co-chaired by UNECE, UNEP and UNESCO.



II. Main goal and Objectives

The IBC aims to provide a regional platform for UN agencies to promote coordinated support to all Member States in Europe and Central Asia in their implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the Paris Agreement on climate change and other relevant multilateral environmental agreements, and support the UN Country Teams (UNCTs) on environmental and climate change issues.

The IBC provides a regional platform for UN agencies to:

- (i) Promote coordinated support to all Member States in Europe and Central Asia in their implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement on climate change and other relevant multilateral environmental agreements;
- (ii) Support UNCTs in the Europe and Central Asia region on environmental and climate change issues.

The IBC addresses activities dedicated to strengthening environmental and climate change governance, improving environmental management and climate change mitigation and adaptation, promoting sustainable management of natural resources and of pollution, chemicals and wastes, and so contributing to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals and the relevant commitments and undertakings under multilateral environmental agreements, including the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). The activities will advance human rights, gender equality, decent work and leaving no-one behind, using a people-centred approach that will highlight the root causes of inequalities and narrow inequality gaps.

The IBC's work is based around three pillars:

1. **Strengthening environmental and climate change governance and implementing the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda:** To build political momentum and advocate for enhanced and accelerated policy action to implement the environmental and climate change dimension of the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda and enhance the ambition of the NDCs. In addition to advocating for environmental and climate change issues at the regional level, including through relevant regional intergovernmental processes,¹ and with regional institutions such as the European Commission and the Commonwealth of

¹ Such as the Environment for Europe Process, the Regional Forum on Sustainable Development and the European Environment and Health Process.



Independent States, the IBC will focus on working with UNCTs to strengthen national institutions working on environmental and climate change policy and governance, as well as to strengthen country capacities to accede to, implement and report on multilateral environmental and climate change agreements. In particular, the IBC on Environment and Climate Change:

- Using existing environmental and climate change processes, and in collaboration with regional institutions, advocates at the regional level for strengthened and accelerated policy action and transition pathways to address regional priorities, such as enhanced ambition for climate change mitigation and adaption, nature-based solutions, circular economy, just transitions and decent work, decarbonization and net-zero strategies, sustainable consumption and production, sustainable infrastructure and both sectoral and cross-sectoral approaches.
- Identifies key institutional and governance challenges for the environment and climate change within the programme countries, such as inter-institutional cooperation, enhancement of legal and regulatory frameworks, stakeholder engagement and human rights, and exchange good practice principles and approaches with the UNCTs. Also, links with intergovernmental processes, such as the Generation Equality Action Coalitions (“Feminist action for climate justice”) and the UNFCCC Gender Action Plan, which can serve as accountability tools.
- Assists UNCTs in strengthening country capacities to accede to, implement and report on global and regional multilateral environmental and climate change agreements.
- Examines environmental and climate risks and provides guidance on preparedness, prevention and risk reduction measures.

2. **Supporting countries in the environmental and climate change dimension of UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) and Common Country Analysis (CCA) processes:** To discuss and engage in the UNSDCFs in a coordinated and coherent manner, for strengthening the environmental and climate change dimension and science-policy-practice interface for the delivery of the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda. The IBC will build on many other parallel supporting processes, such as UN custodian agencies for environment-, weather-, water-, climate change- and health and well-being related global indicator reporting to UN Statistical Division, the SG's annual report, the Global Sustainable Development Report, Sendai Framework reporting, UNEP's Global Environment Outlook, the work of the human rights treaty-bodies, the Universal Periodic Review and the special procedures mechanisms of the Human Rights Council, the Shared Environmental Information System, other issue-based



coalitions, Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support (MAPS), environmental performance reviews and state-of-the-environment reports. In particular, the IBC on Environment and Climate Change:

- Creates a roadmap and schedule of various events and critical dates in country led UNSDCF processes to enable the pro-active involvement of the IBC to support UNCTs in programme countries.
- Applies a systematic approach to engage and inform the development and content of the CCAs, using the CCA companion to the UNSDCF Guidance,² while recognizing the specific positions and roles of men and women and the importance of not perpetuating gender inequalities, and that CCAs and UNSDCFs should be based on circularity, equality and inter-generational solidarity and include systemic risk identification, assessment and reduction, when needed.
- Works with UNCTs to ensure environmental and climate change priorities are properly identified and presented in the CCAs for the programme countries in the region, with an initial focus on the countries implementing UNSDCF processes in 2020.
- Develops and maintains an IBC menu of services for UNCTs and other stakeholders, related to the environmental and climate change dimension of SDGs, across the UN system, based on the demands of RCs and UNCTs and on the capacities of the IBC members.

3. **Monitoring and reporting on the environmental and climate change dimension of SDGs:** To share and streamline scientific data and information and existing tools across the UN family, with a focus on the implementation of the environmental and climate change dimension of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs in Europe and Central Asia (while fully acknowledging the integrated nature of environment, social, health, economic and governance aspects). This work includes reporting and follow-up (of data, statistics, indicators and Voluntary National Reports), which are critical inputs to the HLPF, with the purpose of supporting the regional UN system in building national capacity in countries for delivering on the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. In particular, the IBC on Environment and Climate Change:

- Informs UNCTs preparing the CCAs about, and shares with them, relevant environmental and climate change data, statistics, existing tools and

² This companion guide is currently under development by the UN system and provides guidance on how and what to analyse in the CCAs.



assessments, at both the national level and through global, regional and thematic assessments.

- Advises on what environment- and climate change-related knowledge products should be made available on the UN Regional Knowledge Management Hub³ and ensures close cooperation with the Regional UN Coordination Group on Data and Statistics and the Issue-based Coalition on Gender Equality, among others, in the creation of new knowledge.

³ Expected to be provided by the *Manara* platform.



III. Typology of activities / Menu of Services

IBC thematic Coverage	Geo-graphic coverage	Main support modalities	Linkages and coordination with regional/country-level mechanism
<p><i>Climate change and disaster risk reduction</i></p> <p><i>Biodiversity & nature-based solutions</i></p> <p><i>Socioeconomic assessments and post pandemic recovery strategies (build back better, with a green and circular economy)</i></p> <p><i>Air pollution</i></p> <p><i>Sustainable consumption & production</i></p> <p><i>Water management</i></p> <p><i>Food security & land management</i></p> <p><i>Sustainable infrastructure</i></p> <p><i>Environment & youth</i></p> <p><i>Environment & gender</i></p> <p><i>Migration, environment & climate change</i></p> <p><u>Note:</u> Thematic coverage is provided by task teams, which may be arranged jointly with other IBCs in the region.</p>	<p>Europe and Central Asia</p>	<p><i>Providing policy advice to RCs and UNCTs on the environment and climate change:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Developing guidance and recommendations on the environment and climate change, including within the context of COVID-19 response; ○ Issuing thematic briefing notes through its 11 task teams. <p><i>Advisory services for UNCTs on the development of CCAs and UNSDCFs:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Providing guidance and checklists on strengthening the environmental and climate change dimension of UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (UNSDCFs) and Common Country Analyses (CCAs); ○ Providing expertise in the analysis of the environmental and climate change dimension of CCAs in coordination with the regional Peer Support Group through Regional Development Coordination Office (R-DCO), and key resident agencies; ○ Analysing existing CCAs and UNSDCFs to identify common environment and climate change priorities as well as gaps and preparing recommendations. <p><i>Capacity development on environmental and climate change dimensions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Training sessions for UNCTs on specific themes identified through task teams with UNCTs. <p><i>Knowledge management, scientific data and information sharing within the UN system on environment and climate change:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Knowledge products continuously uploaded in UN Regional Knowledge Management Hub. <p><i>Catalyst for international, regional and transboundary cooperation</i> within UN system on environment and climate change.</p> <p><i>Outreach and communication:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Outreach to RCs and countries, World Environment Day messages, website for IBC ○ Organization and facilitation of experience sharing including peer-learning sessions at the Regional Forum on Sustainable Development <p><i>Interagency support to RCs and UNCTs</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Acting as a contact point for requests by RCs and UNCTs for the identification of experts to provide coordinated interagency support, with the provision of such support being subject to the resources available among IBC members 	<p>Linkages with RCs, UNCTs, environment results groups, technical groups, focal points, Peer Support Group (PSG), Regional Collaborative Platform (RCP), R-DCO, sub-regional focus where appropriate (i.e., to address common challenges or transboundary issues) through relevant groupings of RCs and UNCTs</p>



The outcome will strengthen the environmental and climate change science-policy-practice interface in Europe and Central Asia and enhance national capacities to deliver on the environmental and climate change dimension of the SDGs and of the 2030 Agenda, whilst recognizing that an integrated approach is essential to achieve the SDGs building on synergies and avoiding trade-offs. The IBC draws on the various agencies' specialisms and expertise to deliver "One UN" positions, convene thematic events and deliver capacity building, as appropriate, and to strengthen the science-policy-practice interface in national development processes in countries of Europe and Central Asia. This work draws on the strong UNCT presence and the new role of the Resident Coordinators. The primary function of the IBC is to support UNCTs and, only when established, might it provide more direct support to member States. The IBC seeks synergies and complementarities with other processes and mechanisms and collaborate with them.

Task teams have been established for 11 topics under pillar 1 (see table above). Within each task team, co-leads are responsible for leading activities, designed by the task teams and reported on to the IBC. Each task team implements activities as it wishes but, normally, products would be developed involving all task team members and would be cleared by the full membership of the IBC. The IBC will create synergies with other IBCs where themes overlap between them. Products, such as policy briefs, will be issued through the IBC co-leads to Regional DCO and thus to RCs and UNCTs. The holding of webinars will be coordinated by the IBC co-leads to avoid overloading RCs and UNCTs.

Based on the request from UNCTs, and in coordination with the regional Peer Support Group (PSG) through Regional DCO, and key resident agencies, the IBC provides expertise in the analysis of the environmental and climate change dimension of CCAs. On request by UNCTs, and contingent on resources and availability, the IBC may join interagency missions to provide specific expertise on the environment and climate change such as under the Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support (MAPS) missions.

The IBC also provides the Regional Coordination Platform (RCP) for Europe and Central Asia with timely and relevant information on inter-agency cooperation and activities carried out in support of a strengthened environmental and climate change science-policy-practice interface and for building capacity of countries in the region to implement and report on the environmental and climate change dimension of the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda. Finally, the IBC maximizes the opportunities presented by the UN Reform even where some agencies are not physically present in the target countries.

The IBC maintains a [webpage](#) that acts as a knowledge hub for the UN system on environment and climate change in the region, complementing the overall Regional Knowledge



Management Hub. The webpage is continuously updated with contributions from all IBC members. This platform organizes relevant information in an easily accessible way for the UN system as a whole and particularly RCs and UNCTs. It includes information from both IBC members and other leading knowledge producing organizations and institutions working in the area of environment and climate change. A specific page is dedicated to a calendar of outreach activities especially for RCs and UNCTs to increase their engagement with IBCs and awareness of the response offer of IBCs.

The IBC does not engage in operational matters, or in mobilizing resources for programmes or projects, or in implementing them.

All types of support services provided by the IBC to UNCTs are request based.

IV. Membership

The IBC is open to all UN agencies, funds and programmes. Related entities working at the regional level on environment and/or climate change may also be invited.

The membership is reviewed and confirmed every year based on specific needs or joint activities included in the annual workplan. Observers may be invited as necessary and when relevant.

Each member designates a focal point and an alternate(s), ideally a specialist working on SDGs.

Any cost of participation is met by each participating member. (Note: gender and geographical balance need to be considered.)

The focal points represent their organization and are responsible for providing an update on their organization's environmental and climate change science-policy-practice work and activities supporting the delivery of the environmental and climate change dimension of the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda. The focal point is also responsible for keeping their colleagues in the respective agencies informed on the activities of the IBC.

The current IBC co-chairs are UNECE, UNEP and UNESCO. The IBC consists of 18 members from the UN family: FAO, ILO, IOM, ITU, OHCHR, UN Habitat, UN Women, UNDP, UNDRR, UNECE, UNEP, UNESCO, UNFCCC, UNICEF, UNOPS, WFP, WHO and WMO.



V. Management Arrangements

1. UNEP, UNESCO and UNECE to co-chair, taking full advantage of the strength of UNEP, UNESCO and UNECE mandates, portfolios and expertise, and considering opportunities for other UN funds, agencies and programmes.
2. IBC members to meet through regular calls or video conferencing, approximately every two months, as needed, to maintain momentum and coordination and foster an inclusive process in which all members can make their contributions to the IBC strategy, direction and focus.
3. Technical representatives of the co-chairs to meet more frequently to coordinate the functioning of the IBC.
4. A first face-to-face meeting of the IBC to be held as soon as conditions allow.
5. Ad-hoc calls to be made if needed to prepare for supporting UN missions, CCA preparations, reports and interventions at the national and regional level.
6. An annual review to be carried out of work, results, progress towards achieving these terms of reference, engagement and attendance of agencies, country feedback and UN Regional Coordination Platform.
7. Based on a common format prepared by Joint RCP Secretariat, the IBC co-chairs to prepare input to end of year reporting for the Regional Annual Results report.
8. The IBC reports regularly and is accountable to the RCP.

Guidance for task teams is provided in annex.

VI. Sunset Clause

The IBC will be terminated if the number of members falls below 10, or the IBC has no meaningful input to the end of year reporting for the Regional Annual Results report, or its activities are absorbed by another mechanism.

In addition, the IBC will be invited to terminate a task team that is inactive for a period of 12 months. The regional director of an IBC member that is inactive within the IBC for a period of 12 months will be asked to explicitly confirm its continued membership.



Annex: Guidance for task teams

1. The Issue-based Coalition on Environment and Climate Change (IBC) membership can establish a task team to address a topic or undertake a task.
2. Each task team supports the accomplishment of the objective of the IBC to provide joint, coordinated support to Resident Coordinators and UN Country Teams.
3. IBC members can volunteer to lead, or co-lead, a task team or to join the team as a contributor.
4. Within each task team, the co-leads are responsible for planning and leading activities, communicating with the IBC core team – the focal points of the IBC co-chairs – and engaging with the IBC membership.
5. The co-leads of a task team send to the IBC core team one summary slide of the task team's recent and planned activities prior to each periodic meeting of the IBC membership.
6. A task team's activities are designed by the task team members to support the implementation of the three pillars of the terms of reference and work plan of the IBC, within its area of expertise.
7. A task team may circulate a concept for a major product (e.g., a policy brief) among the IBC membership, through the IBC core team.
8. Task team products are normally developed involving all task team members.
9. A written task team product is reviewed and cleared by the IBC membership prior to issue in the name of the IBC.
10. A written product is issued through the IBC co-chairs to the Regional Development Coordination Office and thus to Resident Coordinators and UN Country Teams.
11. Each task team coordinates the holding of webinars and similar with the IBC core team to avoid overloading Resident Coordinators and UN Country Teams.
12. Each task team supplies resources to the IBC core team to be posted on the IBC knowledge management hub, as this becomes operational.
13. Each task team has a dedicated channel in MS Teams to communicate with members. The channels are open to all members of the IBC team.

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