



Draft Meeting report n. 17

Seventeenth Meeting of the IBC on Environment and Climate Change

22 January 2025 (10:00-12:00, Geneva/Venice/CET)

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss with the IBC members the IBC 2025 workplan and to agree on the best approach to address the 6 UN country level requests received. The meeting was opened by the IBC co-chair Magdalena Landry, Director of the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe, and closed by the IBC co-chair Arnold Kreilhuber, Director of the UNEP Regional Office for Europe.

In total, 14 IBC members were represented: FAO, ILO, IOM, UNDP, UNDRR, UNECE, UNEP, UNESCO, UNFCCC, UNICEF, UNOPS, UN-Women, WHO, WMO.

The first session, moderated by Sarangoo Radnaaragchaa (UNECE), focused on the **achievements, activities and key challenges, for the IBC in 2024**. Alper Almaz (DCO) presented key takeaways from the recent RCP-ECA meeting held on 21–22 November 2024 in Copenhagen, Denmark, where Regional Directors discussed common challenges faced by most IBCs. These challenges included limited commitment from co-chairs and member agencies, insufficient human and financial resources, and concerns over prioritizing a single agency's response instead of a multi-agency approach. Additionally, questions were raised about the effectiveness and actual impact of the IBC's work. To address this, RCP may conduct an independent evaluation of all IBCs by the end of 2025.

Marika Palosaari (UNEP) outlined the IBC's key achievements in 2024. Over the year, the IBC provided tailored technical support to more than 17 UNCT requests, focusing on critical themes such as water management, biodiversity, climate change, just transitions, and gender. As a result, significant progress was made, including:

- (1) two sub-regional knowledge products on water management initiatives for Central Asia ([UN initiatives on water management in Central Asia and potential entry points](#)) and South Caucasus ([UN initiatives on water management in the South Caucasus and potential entry points](#)), which was then applied for the South Caucasus CCA Common Chapter;
- (2) peer-learning roundtable on SDG13 "[Solving the Rubik's Cube of the Planetary Crisis: Lining Up Policy Solutions for Climate Risk and Biodiversity Loss.](#)" at the Regional Forum on Sustainable Development on 13 March 2024;
- (3) side event "[From Vision to Practice for a Just Transition for All: a cross-regional South-South Policy Dialogue on energy, sustainable finance, and enterprises for inclusive policy-making processes and enhancing NDC ambition](#)" at COP29, on 20 November 2024;



(4) webinar on “[Incorporating global agendas at the national level – Biodiversity](#)” on 27 November 2024, resulting in a regional advocacy messages and biodiversity guidance to be disseminated in 2025.

Conversely, IBC challenges identified in 2024 included limited feedback from UNCTs and RCOs on the responses provided to the UNCT requests, financial and human resources constraints, and need for a broader UN expertise.

Nicholas Bonvoisin (UNECE) presented the key outcomes and messages from the 2025 IBC retreat held the previous day. He emphasized the need for the IBC to prioritize its 2025 workplan around responding to the six UNCT requests received. He also stressed the importance of ensuring a multi-agency approach and suggested engaging in direct dialogue with UNCTs—or even coaching them—when responding to these requests.

Laura Altinger (UNDP) requested the opportunity to review the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the potential RCP independent evaluation of IBCs. Mihaela Ionescu (UN Women) endorsed a cross-integrated approach between IBCs, particularly strengthening collaboration with IBC Gender.

The second session, moderated by Arnold Kreilhuber (UNEP), introduced the proposed 2025 IBC workplan and a structured approach to handling UNCT requests. Jing Fang (UNESCO) outlined the requests received from six countries—Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, North Macedonia, Serbia, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan. She highlighted that many were driven by gaps in data, technical expertise, and resources for program development and monitoring. The priority areas identified included climate risk assessment support for UNSDCF processes, joint programming, just transition, and funding for environmental initiatives.

Nicholas Bonvoisin (UNECE) then detailed the structure of the 2025 workplan and its thematic clustering of the UNCT requests. Members were invited to indicate their willingness to support specific requests.

- **Maria Osbeck (UNICEF)** expressed interest in supporting climate risk assessment, UNSDCF processes, the publication of a fact sheet on air pollution, and funding.
- **Mihaela Ionescu (UN Women)** agreed to contribute to gender integration in programming, climate risk assessment, and just transition.
- **Cristina Martinez (ILO)** committed to participating in climate risk assessment, UNSDCF processes, joint programming, multi-hazard early warning systems, transboundary water management, and land degradation. She also agreed to take the lead on just transition.
- **Sari Lappi (WMO)** indicated interest in multi-hazard early warning systems and climate risk assessment but will forward these requests to the regional team in Asia. She also suggested involving ITU and IFRC in the early-warning system activities.



- **Doville Adamonyte (WHO)** expressed willingness to support the publication of the fact sheet on air pollution and work in the Western Balkans, offering ad hoc support upon request from the leading agencies.
- **Sophie Djugeli (UNOPS)** offered to assist with the publication of the fact sheet on air pollution and joint programming.
- **Aiping Chen (UNFCCC)** acknowledged resource limitations but confirmed the agency's willingness to contribute to requests as best as possible, particularly in funding and joint programming.
- **Yigyeong Oh (UNDRR)** confirmed support for climate risk assessment and multi-hazard early warning systems.
- **Zenina Evetta (FAO)** affirmed FAO's support for the assigned requests, including additional contributions to climate risk assessment.
- **Soumyadeep Banerjee (IOM)** offered support in climate risk assessment, joint programming, and multi-hazard early warning systems.
- **Sarangoo Radnaaragchaa (UNECE)** committed to supporting just transitions, water management, and air pollution.

Members were invited to submit their comments on the IBC 2025 workplan and their contributions to the UNCT requests by **26 January 2025**.

To conclude, **Samuel Partey (UNESCO)** outlined the next steps following the membership meeting:

1. **Submission of the IBC 2025 workplan** to the RCP by **31 January 2025**.
2. **Follow-up with UNCTs** by an assigned IBC focal point for clarifications on each request received.
3. **Update of the IBC member mailing list** to reflect any changes.

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