EANET/IG28/10/P

AGENDA ITEM 10
Consideration of Sri Lanka's Interest in Joining EANET

The Twenty-eighth Session of the Intergovernmental Meeting (IG28)
on the Acid Deposition Monitoring Network in East Asia (EANET)
24-26 November 2026, Niigata, Japan (Hybrid)

BACKGROUND

- **28 June 2024**, the Secretariat received a letter from **Ministry of Environment of Sri Lanka** signifying their intention to explore the possibility of **becoming a member of EANET**
- The consideration of Sri Lanka's interest to join the EANET was discussed in 2024 during the **WG2024** and **IG26,** in 2025 at **SAC25** and **IG27,** and **SAC26** in 2026. Details of the discussions are available in the meeting document (EANET/IG28/10).
- At IG26, held from 27-28 November 2024, the Secretariat provided four "**Proposed option in response to an application by a country from outside East-Asia for participation in EANET** (EANET/IG26/10/1)", including the applicable legal framework and legal implications, based on guidance from the UNEP Law Division.
- In addition, following the **requests and decisions from IG26 and IG27,** additional information were provided including ***An Overview of Air Quality Monitoring in Sri Lanka*** (presented at SAC25) and ***An analysis on financial implication of inviting Sri Lanka to join as a full member of the EANET*** *(*presented at WG2026 and SAC26*)*. The details of these documents are available in the meeting document (EANET/IG28/10 Annex 3 and 4).
- In line with the Decision of the IG27, Sri Lanka joined the SAC26 online to present their interest, on 22 October 2026.

Proposed option in response to an application by a country from outside East-Asia for participation in EANET

- 4 options are proposed. Among the options enabling participation, Option 1 avoids amendments to the existing legal framework.
  - **Option 1: Participation in Selected EANET Projects/Activities**
  - **Option 2: Grant Observer Status**
  - **Option 3: Decline the Request**
  - **Option 4: Accept as a Participating Country**

- Options are based on guidance from the UNEP Law Division

Option 1: Participation in Selected EANET Projects/Activities

- This option requires a legal basis in the format of a "**cooperation agreement**" or similar instrument, to be endorsed by the IG through a specific decision.
- Sri Lanka would be permitted to **participate in one or more EANET projects/activities**.
- Sri Lanka would have to **cover its own costs** for participation in the agreed projects and activities.
- Procedurally, this option would require **an IG decision mandating the Secretariat to negotiate an agreement**, for adoption at the next IG meeting.
- Sri Lanka's participation would be in conformity with the conditions laid down in the agreement, as well as the existing legal framework, i.e:

  1. The Instrument for Strengthening the EANET (The Instrument);
  2. The Rules of Procedures for EANET (The RoPs); and
  3. The EANET Project Fund and Project Guideline.

- **No need to revise existing official EANET documents**
- IG28 can **task the SEC to explore cooperation opportunities** and **draft a cooperation agreement** with Sri Lanka
- Once the document is drafted, **needs to be approved by IG**

Option 2: Grant Observer Status

- The Instrument and RoPs **do not currently provide for the possibility of granting observer status to third countries**.
- Both texts would thus **need to be amended**, in accordance with their applicable provisions: Item 15 and Rule 9.1, respectively.
- Rule 9.1 requires the IG to take a decision on the amendment of the Rules of Procedure.
- As for the amendment of the Instrument, in accordance with Item 15, the IG would need to adopt by consensus **a written proposal** submitted by any Participating Country to revise the provisions of the text as needed. Such a revision would then require the **written consent** of all Participating Countries.
- The IG would have to mandate a Participating Country to make a formal submission with a view to prepare draft amendments of the Rules of Procedure and the Instrument to enable States from outside East-Asia to participate in EANET, for adoption during the next IG.

- Requires to **revise Instrument** and revise the **Rules of Procedure** in the EANET Guidelines on the Administrative and Financial Management for the Secretariat, the Network Center, and the EANET Project Fund

Option 3: Decline the Request

- The IG may instruct the Secretariat to formally notify Sri Lanka that Item 17 of the Instrument and Rule 1.1 of the RoPs limit membership and participation of other countries to countries in East Asia, thus precluding the country's request from being accommodated.

- **This would mean not pursuing Sri Lanka's expressed interest in joining EANET under the current framework.**
- **Sri Lanka would be informed that joining EANET is not possible.**

Option 4: Accept as a Participating Country

- Pursuant to **Item 17 of the Instrument** and Rule 1.1. of the RoPs, membership is limited to countries in East Asia.
- This option would therefore **require amendments to both the legal texts**, following the same procedure outlined under Option 2.
- Upon completion of this process, Sri Lanka could be admitted as a Participating Country to EANET and would accordingly be subject to the existing rules on financial contributions.
- The procedural implications are identical to the ones under Option 2.

- Requires to **revise Instrument** and revise the **Rules of Procedure** in the EANET Guidelines on the Administrative and Financial Management for the Secretariat, the Network Center, and the EANET Project Fund

ACTION REQUIRED

Recalling the discussions described above during WG2024, IG26, SAC25, IG27 and SAC26, and considering the Proposed option in response to an application by a country from outside East-Asia for participation in EANET, the IG28 is invited to consider the document “Consideration of Sri Lanka’s Interest in Joining EANET (EANET/IG28/10)”, and may wish to discuss, consider, and decide on the next steps, as appropriate.

Thank you



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