



Greening Economies in the European Union's Eastern Neighbourhood (EaP GREEN)

5th Meeting of the EaP GREEN Steering Committee

10-11 February 2016
Brussels, Belgium

DRAFT SUMMARY RECORD

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10-11 February 2016, Brussels, Belgium

1. The fifth meeting of the Steering Committee of the European Union regional project “Greening Economies in the Eastern Neighbourhood” (EaP GREEN) was held on 10 and 11 February 2016 in Brussels, Belgium. Participants included the National Focal Points (NFPs) from the Ministries of the Environment and of the Economy of six Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine), representatives of the European Commission (DG NEAR and DG Environment) and four Project Implementing Organisations (OECD, UNECE, UNEP and UNIDO). The meeting was also attended by a consultant to the European Commission who prepared the Result-Oriented Monitoring (ROM) report of the EaP GREEN (see the list of participants in Annex 2).

2. The main objectives of the meeting were to:

- Discuss the results of the ROM of the EaP GREEN carried out by an independent consultant
- Review progress since the previous Steering Committee held in June 2015 and progress towards reaching the objectives of the EaP GREEN
- Discuss and agree on specific activities to be carried out under the three Components of the EaP GREEN until the end of the project
- Identify key outputs of the project, including country and regional activities, and the means for their dissemination.

Agenda Item 1. Opening remarks, approval of the draft agenda and draft Summary Record of the Fourth Steering Committee Meeting

3. The delegates took note of welcoming remarks by Mr. Vassilis Maragos, Head of Unit, Regional Programmes Neighbourhood East, Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR) and Mr. Andrzej Januszewski, Directorate General for the Environment (DG ENV), European Commission. The speakers:

- Referred to the importance of the Review of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP)¹ completed at the end of 2015 and key messages of this document which included differentiation and greater mutual ownership as the hallmark of the new ENP and that cooperation should focus on results and benefits to the citizens; and be flexible to respond to changing needs and circumstances

¹ Joint Communication to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: Review of the European Neighbourhood Policy {SWD(2015) 500 Final}, 18.11.2015

- Underlined the importance attached by the European Union to the co-operation within Eastern Partnership in the field of green economy and the environment, as exemplified by the policy dialogue at the ministerial level (June 2015 in Minsk, Belarus and planned in October 2016 in Luxembourg) and substantial financial assistance provided by the EU through a number of regional and country-specific projects, including promoting greening the economy, better water management, strengthened environmental impact assessment procedures or environmental information
- Underlined the importance of the EaP GREEN project in supporting cross-sectoral analysis and inter-ministerial arrangements to green economy reform and reiterated the need to consolidate and scale up the results; disseminate them effectively to a wide range of stakeholders; ensure longer-term sustainability; and create demand for reform by raising public awareness.

4. The delegates adopted the draft agenda of the meeting and draft summary record of the fourth Steering Committee meeting (18 June 2015, Chisinau, Moldova) without amendments.

Agenda Item 2. Result-Oriented Monitoring of the EaP GREEN project

5. Under this agenda item the delegates:

- Took note of the presentation by Mr. Ali Dastgeer, Consultant to the European Commission, who introduced the results of the Result-Oriented Monitoring (ROM) report. The ROM is a routine monitoring exercise carried out as part of the EU-funded project with the objective of providing an external review of the project implementation in order to support project management by the EC Headquarter services. The ROM of the EaP GREEN reviewed progress in input provision, activities undertaken and results delivered (outputs, direct outcomes) in four countries: Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. The ROM assessed the status of a project through an analysis of project documentation and consultation with stakeholders against four criteria: relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability
- Recognised that the overall “monitoring scores” of the ROM were moderately positive: relevance, effectiveness and sustainability were marked as “green” while efficiency as “yellow”. Out of 32 specific monitoring points, 20 were assessed as “very good/good” and 12 as “experiencing some problems”. None was marked as having serious deficiencies
- Took note of the several positive features of the Project identified in the ROM, such as high competencies of experts, high quality of publications and meetings, engagement of high level officials and requested that the main ROM recommendations be implemented in the remaining period, focusing on: i) building further synergies between activities under the Project, ii) consolidating the results of existing activities rather than initiating the new ones; iii) strengthening communication and dissemination efforts, also working with NGOs, to raise public awareness; iv) placing greater focus on specific country needs, capacities and links with internal political processes; v) reinforcing in-country presence to improve efficiency and effectiveness; vi) ensuring sustainability of project activities beyond the project duration and vii) maintaining flexibility to change focus and budgets according to the changing dynamics in the countries.

Agenda Item 3. Progress in the project implementation since the last Steering Committee (June 2015): outputs and results achieved at the regional level

6. Under this agenda item the delegates:

- Took note of the presentation by the Implementing Partners (OECD, UNEP, UNECE and UNIDO) on regional activities listed in a draft Report “Progress in Implementing the “Greening Economies in the Eastern Neighbourhood” (EaP GREEN) Project in the Period June – December 2015 and Draft Work Plan for the Period January – December 2016”
- Welcomed progress in implementing agreed activities at the regional level. In particular, the delegates highlighted the importance of work on analysing environmentally harmful subsidies, developing green growth indicators, strengthening Environmental Impacts Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment, supporting the Resource Efficient and Cleaner Production (RECP) clubs and the promotion of organic farming
- Identified further actions that could reinforce the impacts of regional work, including: more active dissemination of the Project outputs and results to sectoral ministries, a wider use of NGO and journalists’ networks as vehicles for dissemination to other stakeholders, and better use of regional activities to exchange good practices and lessons learned.

Agenda Items 4-6 Countries' presentations on progress made, lessons learnt and plans for 2016

7. This part of the meeting was devoted to the presentation and discussion of progress in implementing EaP GREEN activities in individual EaP countries. The delegates from each EaP country highlighted overall progress in promoting green economic development and most successful activities carried out under the Project that assisted in this process. They also shared lessons learnt (successes and challenges) and commented on the activities proposed for 2016 in their countries. A summary of the country presentations is attached as Annex 1.

8. Under this agenda item the delegates:

- Took note of country presentations and country-specific activities presented in a draft report entitled “Progress in Implementing the “Greening Economies in the Eastern Neighbourhood” (EaP GREEN) Project in the Period June – December 2015 and Draft Work Plan for the Period January - December 2016”
- Acknowledged that the Project became an important platform for co-operation to promote green growth and that it shows a much more mature co-operative spirit between the EaP countries, the European Union and the Implementing Partners which is built on a growing number of concrete project results
- Called for reinforced efforts to consolidate activities and focus on producing concrete results of specific activities, including regulatory, procedural and institutional reform in areas covered by the EaP GREEN work plan
- Called for developing further synergies between related activities carried out by the implementing organisations, for example linking projects that support greening SMEs and financing and projects that promote resource efficient and cleaner production
- Agreed on the need to scale up activities and ensure their sustainability, for example by institutionalising RECP clubs but also by establishing closer links with in-country inter-ministerial co-ordination mechanisms and the EaP-wide political processes, including at the Ministerial level, which can facilitate the policy dialogue and consensus building on the necessary reform recommended by the Project activities

- Called for more pro-active co-ordination of Project activities with other EU-funded projects in EaP countries and with relevant activities implemented by the EU and EU member countries to promote exchange of experience on policy issues and technical expertise.

Item 7: Review of progress and next actions on communication and visibility

9. Under this agenda item, the OECD reported on progress and actions on communication and visibility by EaP GREEN Partners. The focus was on achievements, lessons learnt (successes and challenges) and activities planned for 2016.

10. In the subsequent discussion, the delegates requested that the Project Partners revise and update the EaP GREEN Communication Strategy with a particular emphasis on:

- Reinforcing the regular provision of detailed information on country-specific activities to National Focal Points (NFPs), to the European Commission and EU Delegations and for clear feedback from the NFPs to the Partner organisations
- Providing stronger support to communication efforts in individual countries, including supporting NFPs and their agencies' web pages, working with country networks of journalists and NGOs, disseminating material in national languages and ensuring the sustainability of efforts
- Better identifying target audiences, including sectoral ministries and the general public, and better calibration of communication material to relevant groups
- Strengthening the visibility of the Project and the unification of the communication material under the EaP GREEN brand name
- Developing communication materials, including audio-visual products and suitable materials for social media that show the concrete results and benefits of the Project's activities.

11. The delegates also agreed that the Project's results will be presented at the "Environment for Europe" Ministerial Conference, on 8-10 June 2016 in Batumi, Georgia and at the EU EaP Ministerial meeting in October in Luxembourg.

Item 8. Key final outputs of the project, including country and regional activities

12. Under this agenda item the delegates:

- Took note of activities planned for the remaining period of the Project as presented in the draft "Progress in Implementing the "Greening Economies in the Eastern Neighbourhood" (EaP GREEN) Project in the Period June – December 2015 and Draft Work Plan for the Period January – December 2016"
- Taking account of the conclusions and recommendation of the ROM, the country priorities and subsequent discussion concerning communications (all presented under agenda items 2-7), agreed to request a budget neutral extension of the Project until September 2017 to allow for the implementation of the ROM recommendations and wider dissemination of the Project's results
- Requested that the Project Partners revise the Work Plan accordingly to the new time frame and restructure the document to identify regional activities and those in individual EaP countries

Agenda Item 9. Conclusions and next steps

13. The delegates:

- Expressed continuous support for the Project and called for additional efforts to focus on the most strategic elements and tangible results, to ensure greater ownership by countries, greater visibility at the national and international levels and long-term sustainability
- Took note of closing remarks by Ms. Bella Nestorova, DG Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR), European Commission, who thanked the delegates for their frank and active participation in the discussions, and invited the NPFs to provide feedback on the revised Work Plans by 11 March 2016
- Agreed that all the presentations from the meeting would be made available on the EaP GREEN web site: <http://www.green-economies-eap.org/home/>.

Annex 1. EaP country presentations on progress made, lessons learnt and plans for the remaining period of the EaP GREEN

Moldova:

Moldova presented extensive efforts that led to the development of a solid strategic framework for green economy in 2015. These included: the adoption of several general and sectoral greening strategies and the establishment of an effective high level inter-ministerial Working Group on Green Economy. The importance of activities at the local level was highlighted, such as those carried out as part of the RECP Clubs, which provide a testing ground for practical action that can be scaled up to the national level. The engagement of NGOs was also highlighted in supporting a dialogue with the public, raising awareness and multiplying activities in different locations.

Moldova highlighted important support provided by EaP GREEN for greening SMEs, testing draft SEA laws and related capacity building and promoting organic production, which resulted in organic producers/farmers co-ordinating with public educational institutions for the procurement of organic products for school lunches.

Moldova identified the development of the Road Map on Green Economy (accompanied by a full size SEA process and development of green growth measurement that would reinforce synergies between UNEP, UNECE and OECD support), as well as greening SMEs, promoting organic agriculture and greening public procurement as priorities to be supported by the Project in 2016.

Belarus:

Belarus presented progress in implementing four major projects that focus on greening economic growth: EaP GREEN, "Technical assistance to support the development of green economy in Belarus", "Facilitating the transition of the Republic of Belarus to green economy" and "Development of the Republic of Belarus' forestry sector". It also highlighted the incorporation of green issues in the Presidential Directive on strengthening the economic security of the state. The completion of the UNECE Environmental Performance Review of Belarus provided an important reference framework.

Belarus highlighted important support provided by EaP GREEN to promote sustainable public procurement, SEA/EIA greening SMEs and demonstration RECP projects. Several results of these activities have been considered by the boards of the Ministry of Economy and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment.

In 2016, Belarus will welcome the implementation of projects that focus on the development of the National Action Plan for the promotion of green economy; completion of the draft concept of the Law on Organic Production and Trade as well as the development of green performance indicators for sectoral ministers and other leaders. These activities should be co-ordinated with other projects, such as support for green initiatives by NGOs based on the results of the competition carried out in 2015.

Azerbaijan:

Azerbaijan presented an extensive strategic policy framework developed to support its economic development and the incorporation of environmental concerns. The initiatives included general programmes and legal instruments that aim to improve the ecological situation and the rational use of natural resources and programmes that target specific sectors, such as the energy, transport, waste, water and forestry sectors. Several examples of technology, investment and planning initiatives support the policy and regulatory framework.

The EaP GREEN activities in Azerbaijan that were highlighted included: the SEA for the State Strategy on Alternative and Renewable Energy Resource Use for 2015-20, work on economic instruments for managing environmentally harmful products, promotion of better environmental performance among SMEs and capacity building in RECP.

Key priorities for the remaining period of the Project include: the development of legal and regulatory frameworks related to industrial environmental protection and SEA, awareness raising in companies on environmental protection and the efficient use of natural resources and mobilisation of financial resources and access to appropriate financing for RECP investments in SMEs. Efforts should also focus on the institutionalisation of RECP support. Azerbaijan also expressed interest in working on green growth indicators.

Ukraine:

Ukraine signalled the adoption of a number of strategic government documents and legal acts in 2015 that promote green economy and environmental improvement. It also presented a number of inter-ministerial initiatives and those launched by the private sector and the public organisations, with several of them being supported by EaP GREEN.

Specific activities that were highlighted included work on green growth indicators (two workshops with the involvement of the State Statistical Office, Ministries of Environment and of the Economy and independent experts), greening SMEs (three seminars for representatives of business associations, government bodies, NGOs to discuss the results of a survey of SMEs in the regions of Ukraine and recommendations for "green" business practices), SEA (including seminars for representatives of the authorities, environmental agencies and deputies); and the promotion of RECP (which included capacity building at the national and regional level, RECP assessment in SMEs, published business cases and benefits RECP and creation of RECP clubs in Kharkiv and Chernihiv regions).

The priorities that were signalled for 2016 included: supporting modelling of green growth, including the preparation and finalisation of the bilingual green economy simulation in three sectors, continuation of work on green growth measurement, including preparation of the national report on the indicators of green growth in Ukraine, the adoption of laws and implementation of information campaigns on SEA, analysis of environmentally harmful subsidies and improvements to investment policy and the expansion of access to finance.

Armenia

Armenia presented flagship initiatives undertaken in 2015 to promote green growth in the country. These included: the adoption of innovation-led economic development strategy, the introduction of Green Economy Principles and the development of innovative economic mechanisms in the environmental sector, including the System of Environmental - Economic Accounting.

Highlighted EaP GREEN-supported activities included: the identification recommendations for encouraging SMEs to adopt more eco-friendly business practices and multi-stakeholder engagement, including government agencies and business associations.

Priorities identified for 2016 are: supporting a new objective of the SME Development Strategy and State Support Programme for 2016-18 to apply resource efficiency and cleaner production principles by SMEs and development of Programme new principles, including innovations, new and cleaner production technologies having high growth and export potential and SME support tools, such as awareness raising, start-up support, green certification, business trainings and mobilising financial support.

Georgia

Georgia referred to a number of initiatives undertaken in 2015 that aim to promote greening the country's economy. These initiatives included the elaboration of a Green Growth Policy Paper as part of the overall Socio-Economic Development Strategy 2020 and those focusing on specific sectors, such as greening SMEs and SEA. The completion of the UNECE Environmental Performance Review of Georgia provided an important reference framework. Important links were established to achieve the SDGs through inter-ministerial co-ordination.

Specific EaP GREEN activities that were highlighted included support to the development of an Environmental Assessment Code, pilot SEA for national waste strategy and capacity building as well as RECP demonstration projects and capacity development on RECP.

Priorities for 2016 include: elaboration of green economy-related strategic documents, support for indicator-based policy-making, finalisation of the SEA component of the project, continuation of RECP activities as well as capacity building and awareness raising.

Annex 2

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