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Promoting better environmental performance of SMEs in Eastern Partnership countries

Regional Conference

Chisinau, Moldova, 22-23 March 2016

Annotated Agenda (draft)

The conference will be held in the Radisson Blu Leograd Hotel (Mitropolit Varlaam str. 77, Chisinau, Republic of Moldova), Room "Begonia".

The meeting will start at 10:00 on Tuesday, 22 March and will end at 12:30 on Wednesday, 23 March.

Please contact Eugene Mazur (Eugene.mazur@oecd.org) or Maria Dubois (Maria.dubois@oecd.org) of the OECD Environment Directorate for substantive and logistical issues, respectively.

PROMOTING BETTER ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE OF SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISES IN EASTERN PARTNERSHIP COUNTRIES

REGIONAL CONFERENCE

INTRODUCTION

The main objectives of this conference are:

- To present the second edition of the “SME Greening Toolkit” prepared by the OECD secretariat in order to help European Union’s Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries to strengthen their government policies to promote better environmental performance (voluntary environmental compliance and adoption of green business practices) of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs);
- To discuss and disseminate the results of pilot projects on SME greening in four EaP countries (Armenia, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine); and
- To exchange international experience in the design and implementation of policies and instruments for SME greening.

The meeting will bring together representatives of the EaP countries’ ministries of environment and economy, business support organisations, business associations, and experts from the region and OECD/EU countries. It is organised in conjunction with the “Greening Economies in the Eastern Neighbourhood” (EaP GREEN) Programme initiated by the European Commission and implemented by the OECD in partnership with the UNEP, UNIDO and UNECE. The conference is supported financially by the German government.

While constituting a majority of businesses, SMEs generally lack the awareness of their environmental impacts as well as the understanding that higher environmental performance can be a competitive advantage. They also have limited capacity to interpret and respond to relevant policy incentives. Many EU and other OECD countries have addressed this challenge by implementing information-based tools and regulatory and financial incentives to encourage SMEs to improve their environmental performance, to comply with and go beyond regulatory requirements. EaP countries are only starting to design similar policies and engaging in a dialogue with the business community on these issues.

Summary of the Agenda

22 March, Tuesday	Item 1.	Opening remarks
	Item 2.	The SME Greening Toolkit and its relevance in EaP countries
	Item 3.	Policies and instruments to promote SME greening in the EU
	Item 4.	Lessons learned from pilot projects in EaP countries
23 March, Wednesday	Item 5.	Making a business case for green practices: SME perspective
	Item 6.	Concluding remarks

ANNOTATIONS TO THE AGENDA

Tuesday, 22 March

Item 1 Opening remarks

10:00 – 10:15 **Mr Vitalie Iurcu**, Deputy Minister of Economy of the Republic of Moldova, will open the meeting and make introductory remarks.

Mr Krzysztof Michalak, Programme Manager at the OECD Environment Directorate, will welcome the participants and give an overview of the agenda.

Item 2 The SME Greening Toolkit and its relevance in EaP countries

10:15 – 12:30 The Toolkit focuses on environmental policy instruments to promote green behaviour of SMEs. It covers three categories of instruments: regulatory simplification and incentives, information-based tools, as well as financial and economic incentives. The target audience of this document includes business associations, non-governmental and academic institutions in EaP countries.

10:15 – 11:00 Presentation of the second edition of the SME Greening Toolkit: **Mr Eugene Mazur** (OECD Environment Directorate)

11:00 – 11:20 *Coffee break*

11:20 – 12:30 Discussion. The main issues for discussion will include the relevance of the Toolkit to the emerging SME support policies in EaP countries and the best ways to use it in the region.

12:30 – 14:00 *Lunch*

Item 3 Policies and instruments to promote SME greening in the EU

14:00 – 15:30 Many EU and other OECD countries have addressed the challenge of the large aggregate environmental impact of SMEs by implementing information-based tools and regulatory and incentives to encourage SMEs to comply with regulatory requirements and adopt broader green practices that are not mandated by the law.

14:00 – 14:30 Overview of the SME greening policies in the European Union: **Mr Andrzej Januszewski** (European Commission), followed by questions and answers

14:30 – 15:00 Integration of the promotion of green business practices into SME support policies, EcoBusinessPlan Vienna : **Mr Thomas Hruschka** (City of Vienna, Environmental Department)

15:00 – 15:30 Discussion. It will focus on possible lessons learned from EU practices for the EaP region.

15:30 – 15:50 *Coffee break*

Item 4 Lessons learned from pilot projects in EaP countries

15:50 – 17:30 Pilot projects have been conducted in four EaP countries: Armenia, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. All of them included a survey of over 400 SMEs, a stakeholder dialogue process, and an in-depth study on a specific instrument of SME greening. This session aims at exchanging the experiences from these country-level activities.

15:50 – 16:10 Integrating pilot project recommendations into the SME Development Strategy in Moldova: **Ms Diana Russu** (Ministry of Economy)

- 16:10 – 16:30 Government priorities for promoting green business practices in Georgia: **Ms Tea Levidze** (Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection)
- 16:30 – 16:50 Simplification of environmental regulation of SMEs in Ukraine: **Mr Volodymyr Semenikhin** (Ministry of Economic Development and Trade)
- 16:50 – 17:10 Expanding SME greening activities of the SME Development National Centre in Armenia: **Mr Karen Gevorgyan** (SME DNC Deputy Executive Director)
- 17:10 – 18:00 Discussion. The discussion will concentrate on lessons learned from the pilot projects and the relevance of the country-specific guidance documents to all EaP countries.

19:00 *Dinner*

Wednesday, 23 March

Item 5 **Making a business case for green practices: SME perspective**

- 9:30 – 12:00 Many SMEs fear that improving their environmental performance will cost money and harm their competitiveness. The challenge is to convince SMEs that green practices actually reduce costs and make for better business. Business and trade associations should play a major role in disseminating this message.
- 9:30 – 9:50 Industry-led multi-stakeholder dialogue on greening the economy in Armenia: **Mr Gagik Makaryan** (Republican Union of Employers of Armenia)
- 9:50 – 10:10 Tools for promoting green practices among SME association members: **Mr Alexandre Czmal** (CCI France)

10:10 – 10:30 *Coffee break*

- 10:30 – 10:50 RECP in the food processing industry: selected case studies: **Mr Jaap van der Meer** (UNIDO international consultant)
- 10:50 – 11:10 A “pocket guide” on green practices for concrete production in Ukraine: **Ms Maria Tsybka** (RECP project in Ukraine, UNIDO)
- 11:10 – 12:20 Discussion. Participants will discuss how to promote government-to-business and business-to-business dialogue on economic benefits of green practices.

Item 6 **Concluding remarks**

- 12:20 – 12:30** **Mr Krzysztof Michalak** (OECD Environment Directorate) will summarise the discussion and make closing remarks

12:30 – 14:00 *Lunch*