



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

4th Meeting of the EaP GREEN Steering Committee

Thursday, 18 June 2015
Chisinau, Moldova

DRAFT SUMMARY RECORD

The meeting of the EaP GREEN Steering Committee was held on 18 June 2015 in Chisinau, Moldova. It included a special session on organic agriculture, a component led by UNEP.

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**DRAFT SUMMARY RECORD OF THE FOURTH STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING
(18 June 2015, Chisinau, Moldova)**

1. The fourth meeting of the Steering Committee of the European Union regional project “Greening Economies in the Eastern Neighbourhood” (EaP GREEN) project was held on 18 June 2015 in Chisinau, Moldova. Participants included the National Focal Points (NFPs) from six Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine), representatives of the European Commission, and the four implementing organisations: OECD, UNECE, UNEP and UNIDO and invited experts (see the list of participants in Annex 1).
2. The main objectives of the meeting were to:
 - review progress in the implementation of activities carried out under the EaP GREEN regionally and nationally in the period October 2014 – May 2015;
 - discuss and endorse work plans for the remainder of 2015 and for 2016;
3. The Steering Committee members agreed that each meeting would feature a special session devoted to a discussion on a selected theme implemented as part of the EaP GREEN. The special session of the 2015 meeting focused on organic agriculture, a component led by UNEP, which was identified as providing significant opportunities to stimulate green economic growth.

Agenda Item 1. Opening remarks

4. The delegates took note of welcoming remarks by Mr. Sergiu Palihovici, Minister of the Environment, Moldova and Mr. Vassilis Maragos, Head of Unit, Regional Programmes Neighbourhood East, DG Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR), European Commission. The speakers underlined the importance of greening the economies in the EaP region and the opportunities that the EaP GREEN project provides to support these efforts, including identifying opportunities and challenges, carrying cross-sectoral analysis and creating inter-ministerial arrangements to promote the reform and ownership.

Agenda Item 2. Adoption of the Agenda and Draft Summary Record of the Third Steering Committee Meeting

5. The delegates adopted the draft agenda of the meeting and draft summary record of the third Steering Committee meeting (8 October 2014, Minsk, Belarus) without amendments [ENV/EPOC/EAP/M(2014)4].

Agenda Item 3. Progress in the project implementation since the last Steering Committee (October 2014 - May 2015): outputs and results achieved

6. Under this agenda item the delegates:
 - Took note of a draft Report on Progress in the Implementation of the EaP GREEN Programme: October 2014 – May 2015 [ENV/EPOC/EAP(2015)10] and the presentations of the implementing organisations (OECD, UNEP, UNECE and UNIDO) on progress made related to each of the three components of the EaP GREEN and the communication and co-ordination efforts.

- Welcomed progress in implementing agreed activities in, and by, the EaP countries in co-operation with the Partner organisations. In particular, the delegates appreciated support provided for greening Small and Medium Sized Enterprises, for developing national systems of Strategic Environmental Assessment, including legislation on Environmental Impacts Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment, and for the promotion of the organic farming. The delegates from Belarus and Moldova underlined the importance of this work for the development and implementation of national strategies for greening the economies, sustainable development as well as sectoral plans and programmes;
- Identified some of the most frequent challenges encountered during the implementation of the work plan, including: co-ordination between national and international teams that implement country specific activities, selection of consultants, setting up effective inter-ministerial arrangements, ensuring equal representation of all countries in the project activities, disseminating information on in-country project activities among the project stakeholders, and creating synergies between project components.

Agenda Item 4. Work plan for 2015 and outlook for 2016

7. This part of the meeting was devoted to the discussion of an adjusted plan of work for the period June – December 2015 and major activities planned for 2016. Under this agenda item the delegates:

- Took note of a draft Plan of Work of the EaP GREEN Project for 2015-16 [ENV/EPOC/EAP(2015)9] and the presentations of the implementing organisations (OECD, UNEP, UNECE and UNIDO) on planned activities related to each of the three components of the EaP GREEN and the communication and co-ordination.
- Called for reinforced efforts to produce concrete results of specific activities, including regulatory, procedural and institutional reform in areas covered by the EaP GREEN work plan;
- Agreed on the need to support more actively in-country inter-ministerial co-ordination mechanisms that would facilitate the policy dialogue and consensus building on the necessary reform recommended by the project activities;
- Agreed on the need to finalize the process of project registration in Belarus, for which a video conference would be held between the EU and Belorussian officials to consult on the next steps;
- Emphasised an equal engagement of all partner countries in the project activities based on the expression of clear demands from the countries and the proper assessment of the feasibility of specific activities;
- Called for developing synergies between related activities carried out by the implementing organisations, for example for closer co-operation between projects that support greening SMEs and financing (implemented by OECD) and projects that promote resource efficient and cleaner production (implemented by UNIDO); work on green growth indicators (implemented by OECD) and work on Shared Environmental Information System (implemented by the EEA and the UNECE);
- Called for a more pro-active co-ordination of the project activities with other EU funded projects in the EaP countries;

- Agreed on the need to provide regular and detailed information on country specific activities to National Focal Points (NFPs), to the European Commission and the EU Delegations and for clear feedback from the NFPs to the Partner organisations;
- Requested further efforts to reinforce the visibility of the project and to disseminate communication material and information about the results to broader audiences, including to the local level, by organising side events at national and international meetings and working with journalists and the media;
- Agreed to consider the presentation of the project results at the EU Informal Dialogue on Environment on 29 June 2015 in Minsk and at the EU EaP Working Group on the Environment on 14 October 2015 in Brussels;
- Expressed their support for further implementation of the activities proposed for 2015, with some of them volunteering for country-specific activities, and agreed to provide additional comments on the Plan of Work for 2015-16 within one week after the meeting and requested the Secretariat to revise the document accordingly¹.

Agenda Item 5. Conclusions and next steps, including dates of the next meeting

8. The delegates:

- Took note of closing remarks by Mr. Vassilis Maragos, Head of Unit, Regional Programmes Neighbourhood East, 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, invited the NFPs to provide continuous feedback on the project activities in order to focus on the most strategic elements and tangible results, and called for additional efforts to ensure greater visibility of the project and its outcomes at the international and national level;
- Agreed that all the presentations from the meeting would be made available at the EaP GREEN web site: <http://www.green-economies-eap.org/home/>.
- Noted a proposal to hold the next meeting of the Steering Committee in the week of the 25 January 2016 in Kiev;
- Expressed gratitude to the Moldovan government for hosting the meeting.

Special Session on Organic Agriculture

9. Following the decision of the Steering Committee members that each meeting would feature a special session on a selected theme implemented under the EaP GREEN project, UNEP organized a focused discussion on organic agriculture. The publicly open session facilitated a dialogue among 45 representatives of governments, international organizations, NGOs, farmers and agricultural producers on the role of the organic agriculture sector for the transition to a green economy. The session was chaired by Rie Tsutsumi, UNEP, and opened by Mr. Lazar Chirica, Deputy Minister of Environment of Moldova, Mr. Eduard Grama, Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Food Industry of Moldova and Mrs. Lilia Palii, State Secretary of the Ministry of Economy of Moldova.

¹ Subsequently, the revisions were incorporated in the document ENV/EPOC/EAP(2015)9/REV1.

10. During the subsequent discussion the delegates:

- Took note of a key note speech from UNEP on Green Economy and its relevance to the EaP region, complemented by a presentation on the growing potential and benefits of organic agriculture in the region and the sector's catalytic function for the countries' transition to a green economy;
- Took note of the discourse on policies and instruments for the promotion of organic agriculture in Moldova by the Public Procurement Agency and ProRuralInvest;
- Welcomed the presentations from country representatives from the six EaP countries on national success stories and challenges of organic agriculture in each of the countries and participated in a roundtable discussion;
- Concluded that the organic sector provides significant opportunities to stimulate a green economy transition in the EaP region due to the low levels of pesticide and fertilizer use, the significant share of small farms and fallow land, the availability of agricultural labour and the export potential to the growing EU market.
- Identified common challenges that include: an overall low awareness of the benefits of organic agriculture and the underdevelopment of the domestic organic markets, the barriers and cost for certification and labelling of organic products, the lack of financing for the development of the sector, the limitations of small-scale farms to expand organic activities, as well as the low attention and support from policy-makers to the development of the sector;
- Welcomed the support for the participation of organic producers of the EaP countries in the organic trade fair Biofach as a successful demonstration activity and recommended that future meetings would follow the session's example in offering organic products for coffee breaks and lunches.

11. During the coffee break, UNEP launched and presented the findings of the "Green Economy Scoping Study for the Republic of Moldova" and the report on 'Sustainable consumption and production policies and initiatives in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus' to the participants of the special session. The two reports were produced under the GREEN East project funds.

**ANNEX 1. LIST OF PARTICIPANTS
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