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# EU4Environment

Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Republic of Moldova, Ukraine

## *Launch of the EU4Environment in Georgia*

**24 April 2019, Tbilisi, Georgia**

*Brief summary of the meeting*

Action implemented by:



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### **Brief summary of the meeting**

#### **Background**

The “European Union for Environment” (EU4Environment) Action aims to help the six partner countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, to preserve their natural capital and increase people's environmental well-being, by supporting environment-related action, demonstrating and unlocking opportunities for greener growth, and setting mechanisms to better manage environmental risks and impacts.

The Action will run over four years as of January 2019. It is implemented by five international organisations: OECD, UN Environment, UNECE, UNIDO, and the World Bank based on a budget of around EUR 20 million provided by the European Union and co-financing from other sources.

In March and April 2019, national meetings to officially launch of the EU4Environment were held in six EaP countries with the aim to:

- present the context, objectives and the main elements of the EU4Environment,
- discuss national priorities for implementation the six EaP countries and
- identifying synergies with ongoing relevant activities.

#### **Meeting in Tbilisi**

##### ***Participants***

The official launch the EU4Environment Initiative in Georgia took place on 24 April in Tbilisi. The meeting gathered about 45 participants from a broad range of government agencies (economy, environment, forestry, transport, industry, SME development, statistics), NGOs and international partners active in Georgia. The meeting was opened by:

- Ms. E. Mikabadze, Deputy Minister of Economy and Sustainable Development,
- Ms. N. Tandilashvili, Deputy Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture,
- Mr. K. Luchava, Chairman of Environmental Protection and Natural Resources Committee of the Parliament of Georgia, and
- Mr. A. Darras, Environmental Attaché at the EU Delegation in Georgia.

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The EU4Environment project team was represented by OECD, UNIDO, UN Environment and the World Bank.

In the margins of the launch meeting, the EU4Environment team met bilaterally with the EU Delegation to discuss visibility and communication (special guidelines are available); with “Enterprise Georgia” (government agency that promotes SME development); and with international consultants in charge of the EU funded project “Support to implementation of the Environmental provisions of the EU-Georgia Association Agreement”. The team also took part in the final meeting of the EU twinning project on industrial pollution and industrial hazards.

### ***Results of the meetings***

The launch meeting in Tbilisi achieved its main objectives. All participants engaged in a discussion about the recent “greening of economy” initiatives in Georgia and discussed the priority activities that the EU4Environment should focus on. The Georgian side expressed interest in most themes included in the Description of the Action, with strong emphasis on supporting the development of the Green Economy Strategy, greening energy subsidies, SMEs and public procurement, SEA/EIA, strengthening of compliance with environmental regulations, including environmental liability. It was agreed that a detailed list of priority activities would be submitted by the Ministries to the OECD by 20 May.

During bilateral meetings with the Deputy Ministers of Economy and of Environment the EU4Environment team advanced the discussion about the institutional arrangements for the Project implementation, including the identification of the National Focal Points, inter-ministerial co-ordination, local project co-ordination and support, as well as the Project visibility and communications. For more detailed account of the discussion under each Action Result see Annex 1.

### **Follow up**

The follow up of both meetings will involve intensive exchanges with the Georgian partners about the detailed list of priority activities and the arrangements for in-country project support.

A draft work plan for Georgia, as for all other EaP countries, will be presented at the meeting of the EU EaP Panel of Environment and Climate Change (27-28 May, Vienna). The final adoption of the work plans is planned at first meeting of the EU4Environment Regional Assembly (27-28 June, Brussels).

Further contacts will be pursued with the international consultants in charge of the approximation project that is very relevant to the EU4Environment.

## *Annex: Priority issues raised during the discussions on specific Results of the EU4Environment*

### **1. Green Decision Making**

- Green economy
  - Green Economy is integral to government planning – multi-sector projects require new experiences and the growing public interest is calling for tangible action/implementation.
  - New Laws on Resource and energy efficiency, as well as a forest code, are currently being developed. Need to participate in this process as soon as possible before the documents are finalised.
  - Keen to build upon EaP-Green achievements.
  - Need for a large-scale cultural change and sharing experiences with neighbouring countries is acknowledged by Prime Minister, Parliament and all Ministries.
  - Interest to establish inter-ministerial coordination bodies and their long-term functioning (also including non-state actors). Currently there are rural agriculture coordination meetings, which could be used as a model or merged.
  - Interest in developing an investment programme for Green Economy implementation, identifying sectoral investment priorities. It will be important to consider existing efforts/take stock of draft investment plans, which we could assist in finalising. It is also important to identify investment sources/potential donors.
  - REC Caucusus would be a strong partner for regional projects spanning Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan.
- SEA/EIA
  - New law on EIA adopted, need for more support for its implementation.
- Awareness and education:
  - Definite need for public awareness campaigns. EU Delegation needs to be involved.
  - Need to highlight negative health impacts of environmental pollution as key messages.

### **2. Circular Economy and New Growth Opportunities**

- SMEs
  - Eco-labelling system is developed since 1996, but not in use, thus, requires support for implementation and institutional capacity;
  - EPR support for municipalities was provided among other initiatives, thus, new project requires coordination with existing initiatives (including SIDA work);

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- Promoting ISO 14001 and EMS is necessary as a part of RECP intervention;
  - Sectors identified for intervention: textiles and wood furniture production (VC analysis is available from Enterprise Georgia);
  - Enterprise Georgia provides complimentary services and subsidies for businesses;
  - Sustainable Public Procurement (SPP):
    - Eco-labelling is relatively new for Georgia, and there is a need for institutional strengthening (capacity, monitoring).
    - Provisions for eco-labelling included in legislation, but implementation is very limited and poorly interpreted – Ministry of Environment is mandated with issuing labels, but in reality, it is the non-government sector that is responsible (especially from a life-cycle perspective).
    - Keen to work upon the results of the Pan-European Regional Workshop on Sustainable Public Procurement (SPP) that took place in Geneva on 19-20<sup>th</sup> of March 2019.
  - Waste Management:
    - The current waste strategy (2016-2020) and action plan are to be reviewed and Green Economy principles incorporated – this should clearly be led or coordinated with our work.
    - EPR by-laws are drafted and are being approved by government (businesses were also consulted, and pre-feasibility studies done). Implementation as of December 2019. Generally lacking technical product guidelines still.
    - An Association of producers is also in place – thus stakeholders are ready to work on EPR.
    - A considerable amount of work was already done by several donors (e.g. SIDA's work on waste and EPR, EU's Association Agreement places emphasis on waste and there is an on-going EU funded project). Thus it will be important for NFPs and Ministry of Environment to coordinate with existing work (also at municipal level) and come up with a specific activities that are still required.
    - Enterprise Georgia should be a partner for implementing waste management systems in companies.
    - Major success was the ban on plastic bags and move towards bio-degradable packaging.
    - Interest to also learn from European experiences on promoting waste minimisation.
  - Eco-innovation:
    - Need to use UNIDO's existing sectoral analyses and statistics from EaP Green.
    - There is interest from companies to be trained in EMS and ISO. ISO is a prerequisite for accessing European markets. There will be ILO training on this – we may want to collaborate.

Entreprise Georgia specialises in outreach and scaling up business cases/models, helping businesses adapt to regulations and supporting export opportunities (inter alia) by attracting investors and providing co-financing/subsidising for bank loans taken by businesses. They also provide USD 2-13K micro-grants – could be used as seed money for RECP/eco-innovation solutions. They are currently working on analysis of apparel and furniture sector value chains (with help of GIZ). Draft to be available in mid-summer.

### ***3. An Environmental Level Playing Field***

- Smart regulations and compliance promotion
  - Support for further work on “smart” regulations, linked to EU IED/BAT based approaches and integrated permitting, building on the recently completed EU-funded Twinning Project.
  - Need for capacity building of inspectors and new approaches to inspections based on risk analysis.
  - Development of approaches to calculating and applying environmental liability.
- Green finance
  - An environment fund is in the pipeline, primarily with the aim of remedying historical environmental damage. Need for support analyses of the efficiency of this fund.
  - Need for institutional support to Ministry of Economy on green economy and develop civil servant trainings.

### ***4. Ecosystems and Livelihoods***

- Important work done on the Emerald Network by the World Bank and CENN.
- Need for analysis of cost-benefits of ecosystems.
- Bodies to cooperate with include the Council of Europe, the Bern Convention and the Emerald Network, Covenants of Mayors.

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