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EU4Environment

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

Launch of the EU4Environment in the Republic of Moldova

12 April 2019, Chisinau, Republic of Moldova

Brief summary of the meeting

Action implemented by:



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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 Chisinau

Participants

The official launch the EU4Environment Initiative in the Republic of Moldova took place on 12 April in Chisinau. It gathered about 60 participants from a broad range of government agencies, NGOs and international partners active in the Republic of Moldova. The meeting was opened by:

- Ms. L. Palii, Secretary General of the Government,
- Ms. V. Tapis, State Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture, Regional Development and Environment,
- Ms. I. Costin, Secretary General of the Ministry of Economy and Infrastructure, and
- Mr. M. Gemmer, Head of Co-operation from the EU Delegation to Moldova.

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

In the margins of the launch meeting, the EU4Environment team met bilaterally with Ms. Tapis, State Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture, Regional Development and Environment and her colleagues from the Ministry as well as with Ms. Costin, Secretary General of the Ministry of Economy and Infrastructure and her colleagues. Bilateral meetings were also held with the EU Delegation in the Republic of Moldova, a representative of the Swedish Embassy and the World Bank local office.

Results of the meetings

The discussion at the meeting was very lively and interactive and the meeting achieved its main objectives stated above. They helped to relate the EU4Environment plans with the main policy documents and legislation recently adopted in the Republic of Moldova. The Moldovan side expressed interest in many themes included in the Description of the Action, in particular, those that can help implement the recently adopted Action Plan for Green Economy and Sustainable Development. It was agreed that a detailed list of priority activities would be submitted by the Ministries to the OECD by end of April.

We also advanced the discussion about the institutional arrangements for the Project implementation, including the identification of the National Focal Points from both Ministries, inter-ministerial co-ordination, local project co-ordination and support, as well as the Project visibility and communications.

The meeting was well covered by TV and radio in the Republic of Moldova and was broadcasted live on the web.

In the margins of the launch meeting, the EU4Environment met bilaterally the Embassy of Sweden which implements projects that support institutional strengthening of the environmental administration and environmental awareness raising through working with network of journalists. Those are very relevant for the work under the EU4Environment. The team also had bilateral meetings with the EU Delegation and the World Bank office to discuss the co-ordination of the EU4Environment work with their relevant activities. For more detailed account of the discussion under each Action Result see Annex 1.

Follow up

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

A draft work plan for the Republic of Moldova, 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).

Both Ministries expressed familiarity with the Registration process and confirmed their support with the process.

Further contacts will be pursued with the Embassy of Sweden as the projects they implement are very relevant to the EU4Environment plans.

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

1. Green Decision Making

- Green economy
 - Development of a new environmental strategy (current one is 'till 2023), which will be integrated into the new national development strategy till 2030 (focussing on human development, decent living standards and improved welfare). The environmental strategy will also be linked to the Green Economy programme. Need to review current implementation progress and revise accordingly. Sectoral programmes will also follow.
 - Recently adopted a new Law on chemicals, now looking to become REACH compliant.
 - A Green Economy inter-ministerial working group is in place, and keen to continue its work. One issue is the small number of staff (only 22 people) at the Ministry of Agriculture, Regional Development and Environment, as well as absence of evaluations of human/institutional capacities.
 - The national 2020 programme (English translation exists) focusses on greening SMEs, reducing air pollution through sustainable transport, green construction, cleaner production and raising population awareness.
 - Establishment of an environmental agency (in cooperation with SIDA, see below) is another priority.
 - Cross sectoral investment study focusing on public investment mainly on 'green' construction, energy efficiency, transport sectors may be good idea. Best timing to prepare an investment study will be between the end of 2019/early 2020 - in line with the preparation of new GE action plan.
- SEA/EIA
 - Developing a new Law on EIA – expert support in drafting the regulatory framework, aligning with the 2020 strategy, as well as building capacity to conduct EIA will be required.
 - Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) is an important element of the government legislative process and SEA should be linked to it
- Awareness and education:
 - The new national development strategy 'till 2030 warrants raising the awareness of the population, of businesses and of public authorities on green/bio energy. Moldova is thus ready to run the public education campaign.
 - Chamber of commerce has experience with developing trainings tools/curricula for business (so far over 130 business trained on energy efficiency) and is keen to be involved in the training component of the programme.

- The national environment center also works on awareness activities for citizens and environmentally conscious business.
- The State Chancellery is heavily involved with policy coordination and training of the public sector. Would be happy to collaborate on the training component and to bring in additional Ministries (e.g. health sector).
- Need to work with the Academy of public administration (a training institute for civil servants) to discuss possible collaboration (adopting our GE training introductory course and run it periodically, introductory session for GE inter-ministerial working group members, invite one or two key government officials to join the GE course and then run fitness test for GE policies).
- GIZ and SDC focus on training youths, including on GE and business.

2. Circular Economy and New Growth Opportunities

- SMEs
 - Green Economy principles can be found in the SME strategy ‘till 2020, with a strong component on raising awareness and improving access to green finance.
 - National RECP centre is in place, has assisted over 200 enterprises and is happy to collaborate with us (also on SPP).
 - The Ministry of Economy informed that they are in the process of developing the “SME GREEN3” program. The program design has been done with support from the EU and it is currently identifying sources of financing. The project lays out priorities for supporting the greening of SMEs and could be an important area of cooperation.
 - SMEs as suppliers of green products/services to larger companies is well in line with national programme on remittances: 1 Leu invested in local businesses = 1 Leu given as a government grant, up to 22K Lei. This is to encourage local business and avoid brain-drain.
 - There is a further programme on women in business, especially export oriented with an accent on rural areas.
 - A new youth-oriented programme has so far received 900 young business applications to develop a business plan. This is another opportunity to promote green principles. The programme is looking for co-finance.
 - The importance of identifying opportunities for synergies with the UNIDO Country Framework Program, being launched in May.
 - The SME Development Organization (ODIMM) was noted as an important partner for collaboration.
- Sustainable Public Procurement (SPP):
 - Development of eco-labels, in line with EU directives (Association Agreement) is a priority – particularly for industrial products (energy and organic labels already exist).
 - Scaling up pilot tenders building on the achievements under EaP GREEN. It would be ideal to have a high-level political support (e.g. prime minister’s

office level) so that during the EU4Environment a big volume of Public Procurement could include the sustainability criteria.

- Waste Management:
 - Ministry of Environment sees waste as a priority, looking to harmonise management with EU Directives, develop a national waste action plan, and will need support to transpose this on the ground through EPR.
 - Extended Producer responsibility (EPR) should focus on electronic appliance waste and packaging waste.
 - Waste management/disposal could be an interesting area for SME creation/involvement (e.g. wastewater treatment in agricultural enterprises).
 - Landfill regulation also needed.
 - Monitoring of the impact of waste also desirable.
- Eco-innovation:
 - Previous evaluations/audits showed that SMEs are keen to learn and implement eco-innovation. Businesses are best positioned to understand GE and its advantages at the inception stage.
 - A programme on SME development is in draft stage (Ministry of Economy with EU Assistance), and currently planning for a dedicated national budget for 2 years of pilots. The programme focusses on creating a regulatory framework, waste management, new green products/services, raising awareness and accessing finance. SMEs will be supported through grants to implement technologies and obtain EMAS, ISO and other eco-labels/certification.
 - Keen to launch a new project on greening SMEs (EMAS, ISO etc.), for which it will be important to train national experts first.

3. An Environmental Level Playing Field

- Smart regulations and compliance promotion
 - The Association Agreement with the EU mandates development of directives on industrial/ large sources of emissions.
 - Full support to work on “smart” regulations, linked to EU IED, BAT based approaches and integrated permitting.
 - Environmental regulations as tools to facilitate green investments.
 - 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
 - Expert support to the management and operations of environmental funds.
 - Assistance to the green bankable projects preparation for financing, esp. for SMEs.

- Need to build on programmes already in place for capacity building of environmental institutions (esp. newly created Environmental Agency) provided by the World Bank and Sweden.

4. *Ecosystems and Livelihoods*

- Need to work on cost-benefits of ecosystems.
- Bodies to cooperate with include the Council of Europe, the Bern Convention and the Emerald Network, Covenants of Mayors.

5. *Knowledge Sharing and Co-ordination*

- Very keen to understand regional priorities and work with other EaP countries to create regional performance indicators, raise awareness and added value.
- Need to explain the benefits of the Project (jobs, impacts of health and wealth).
- Need to involve NGOs and the public at large but also high level policy makers.
- Sharing experience between the countries.
- Need to establish coordination with EU4Climate work, especially as it will likely have components on education for schoolchildren, technical assistance for policy/reforms, waste and EPR.
- There are ample parallel projects of the EU and other donors to consider when developing workplans to avoid overlap and maximise effectiveness/relevance:
 - SIDA's priorities involve market development and environmental protection.
 - SIDA is carrying out an assessment of the Dniester Hydropower complex (as requested by Moldovan government) – this could certainly be linked to UNECE's work on SEA/EIA and the Espoo Convention.
 - SIDA is also helping to establish an Environmental Agency, thereby contributing to components of the EU Association Agreement. To date, the functional roles and organigramme are defined and now moving onto operationalisation (activity manual, budget, audits of existing relevant bodies etc.). This will enable to maintain institutional memory on environmental issues despite frequent government changes.
 - IFC has a project on Business Climate Reform.
 - GIZ is developing an industrial emissions directive.
 - EBRD is offering preferential loans for SMEs to implement energy efficiency measures.
 - Women in business, women empowerment, and resilient communities projects may also include environmental and climate aspects.
 - Austrian Development Agency (largest bi-lateral donor for Moldova) and SDC are working on institutional capacity development in the water sector, climate change adaptation and support for NGOs.
 - Czech Republic is supporting waste management.
 - Liechtenstein has education projects.

- US is working with civil society and agricultural technology.
- Slovak Aid, Poland and Romania are also working on the environmental sector.

List of participants

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