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# EU4Environment

Green Economy in Eastern Partner Countries

## EU4ENVIRONMENT - GREEN ECONOMY

### FOURTH REGIONAL ASSEMBLY MEETING

**22 September 2022**  
**10h00 - 16h30 CEST**  
**HYBRID FORMAT**

## Draft Summary

This document is a draft Summary Record of the fourth EU4Environment - Green Economy Regional Assembly, held on 22 September 2022.

The participants are invited to provide written comments on the Summary by 15 January 2023.

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#### About “EU4Environment – Green Economy”

The “European Union for Environment” (EU4Environment, renamed in 2022 “EU4Environment – Green Economy”) programme aims to help the Eastern Partnership countries 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 programme is funded by the European Union and implemented by five Partner organisations: OECD, UNECE, UNEP, UNIDO and the World Bank. The implementation period, including Result 4 implementation, is 2019-2024.

More on [www.eu4environment.org](http://www.eu4environment.org).

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## *Summary of the key conclusions and decisions*

The fourth meeting of the EU4Environment – Green Economy Regional Assembly took place on 22-23 September 2022 in a hybrid format. The first day of the meeting discussed progress in the implementation of E4Environment: Green Economy Programme at the country and regional level, showcased the main achievements and reviewed the priorities for the remaining period. The meeting also reviewed the governance arrangements and the communication activities as well as discuss the long-term sustainability of the work and results. The second day was devoted to a discussion of the European Union (EU) and EU4Environment work on circular economy, including recently completed pilot projects on the industrial waste mapping, which are among the flagship Programme activities.

The meeting gathered over 120 participants, in person and virtually, including high-level representatives/EU4Environment – Green Economy National Focal Points from the Ministries of Environment and of Economy of the Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries, National Action Coordinators, representatives of other Ministries and governmental agencies, such as Statistical Offices and SMEs Development Agencies, representatives of municipalities, the business community and Civil Society Organisations. The meeting was also attended by the representatives of the European Commission (DG NEAR, DG Environment and EU Delegations), the “EU4...” family programmes funded by the European Union and international organisations.

The meeting was chaired by the European Commission (DG NEAR) and was organised by the EU4Environment – Green Economy Implementing Partners: UNEP, UNECE, UNIDO, OECD and the World Bank.

During the Regional Assembly meeting, the participants:

- Expressed appreciation for the overall support provided by the EU for strengthening environmental and green economic policies and their implementation in the EaP countries;
- Took note of important progress in developing and implementing environmental policies and efforts to mainstream them into economic and social development despite challenges brought by the COVID-19 pandemic, the unjustified Russia's aggression against Ukraine and a complex geopolitical and socio-economic context in the region and globally;
- Reiterated EU4Environment – Green Economy's relevance, including in the context of the implementation of the European Green Deal, Ukraine's and Moldova's recently granted candidate status to join the EU, the European perspectives for Georgia, as well as Ukraine's paths towards the OECD membership;
- Recognised that a number of tangible results were achieved in implementing country-specific and regional activities since the start of the Programme that were showcased in the [regional overview](#) and country presentations ([Armenia](#), [Azerbaijan](#), [Georgia](#), [Moldova](#) and [Ukraine](#));
- Welcomed the “no silos” spirit of the Programme and recognised bringing together the Ministries of Environment and of Economy and reinforcing cooperation with the Statistical Offices, Ministries of Finance and sectoral ministries, municipalities, private sector, International Financial Institutions (IFIs), civil society, and academia, whose participation was particularly appreciated;
- Took note of the priorities presented by Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Moldova for the acceleration of reform of environmental and green economy policies, which included circular economy, integrated waste management, green finance (including promotion of green bonds), biodiversity, forest preservation, and EIA/SEA. They agreed that these issues should provide guidance for the Programme implementation during the remaining period;
- Recognised the significant negative environmental impacts of Russia's aggression against Ukraine and expressed full support to the Ukraine's efforts to address immediate challenges and the plans for the post conflict reconstruction and recovery efforts. In this context, the Implementing Partners reconfirmed to reinforce EU4Environment: Green Economy support to Ukraine according to the priorities outlined by the Ukraine delegation;
- Expressed strong commitment to continue the implementation of the EU4Environment: Green Economy Programme and welcomed the European Commission's decision to grant a non-cost extension of the Programme until the end of 2023 for Results 1-3 and 5 (activities supported by UNECE, UNEP, UNIDO and OECD). In this context, they invited the countries and Implementing Partners to follow up bilaterally to discuss and agree on the specific activities for the Work Plans for the remaining period;

- Took note of important progress made under Result 4 and invited the countries and the World Bank to work on the timely implementation of envisaged activities;
- Acknowledged good co-operation with other “EU4...” family programmes and agreed to follow up bilaterally to identify possible joint work and maximise the synergies between the programmes,
- Acknowledged important progress made in widening the communication and dissemination of the Programme work and its results and agreed to reinforce them, especially through wider use of the national media and communication channels;
- Discussed and identified examples of the steps that would make the results of the Programme sustainable in the long term (see listed below under Item 7. “Regional activities, governance, sustainability and communications”). They agreed also to provide additional suggestions after the meeting that would be used for the development and design of the future activities;
- Took note that the final Regional Assembly will be organised in the second half of 2023 and that the precise dates and location will be communicated after the consultations with all stakeholders;
- Thanked all the members of the Regional Assembly for all the preparations of the meeting and active participation.

# Summary record of the discussions

## Day 1

### Item 1. Opening, welcome, and adoption of the agenda

**Ms. Michaela Hauf**, Team Leader for Green and Connectivity, Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR), chaired the meeting on behalf of the European Commission. She welcomed the in-person and virtual participants, recalling the challenges of the post Covid-19 pandemic period as well as the most recent geopolitical and economic context following the Russia's invasion of Ukraine. She welcomed the participation of the Ukrainian colleagues online and stressed the EU's continued support to the country and its people. Ms. Hauf reiterated the importance of jointly addressing environmental issues – which are of transboundary nature and key for a green economic recovery – even more important in these challenging times.

Ms. Hauf recalled that the main objectives of the meeting were to take stock of the Programme implementation and to showcase the main achievements, discuss the activities for the remaining implementation period (2022-23), review the governance arrangements and the communication activities and discuss the sustainability of the programme activities. She welcomed the special focus of Day 2 on circular economy, which will allow countries to showcase achievements and learn from each other (see Summary of Day 2 in a separate report).

*The participants took note of:*

- Opening remarks by **Mr. Lawrence Meredith**, Director Neighbourhood East and Institution Building, DG NEAR, European Commission [[video message](#)] during which he highlighted the challenges faced by the EaP countries associated with the unjustifiable Russian aggression against Ukraine, energy and food crisis, high inflation. He stressed the importance of solidarity as never before and highlighted the need to accelerate the implementation of the European Green Deal. Mr. Meredith pointed out that investing in a green economy shows an increasing potential to bring not only environmental benefits but also economic development and resilience. He acknowledged that the EU4Environment: Green Economy Programme's results demonstrate and make such benefits real. Director Meredith provided the example of greening Small and Medium-Sized enterprises (SMEs) across the region as one important element of green economy promotion. While stressing the need to redouble efforts to create supportive policies, legal and investment frameworks, he referred to the EaP's "Economic and Investment Plan" (EIP) as delivering first results and acknowledged the role of the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) in making investments happen in priority areas. Mr. Meredith encouraged the partner countries and the regional programmes to work closer with IFIs to ensure the investments are fully aligned with countries' policies and priorities. He thanked the Implementing Partners for their dedication and contribution of the success of the Programme and called for more achievements over the remaining period.
- Opening remarks by **Ms. Jo Tyndall**, Director, Environment Directorate, OECD (via video), in which she welcomed the participants and expressed her pleasure for having the opportunity to take part in this meeting in her new capacity of the Director of the OECD's Environment Directorate. She expressed her appreciation of progress made so far, including new strategic policies and legislation, reform of policy instruments and procedures and a number of capacity building events. She highlighted two unique features of this Programme: bringing together the Ministries of the Environment, Ministries of the Economy and the private sector; and bringing five international organisation and the EC to work together. She expressed her satisfaction with the OECD being part of this Programme and contributing the experience and knowledge of the OECD Member States and the Secretariat. She underlined that despite important progress more could be done to stimulate the economic development that does not jeopardise environment in the challenging geopolitical and economic context of the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russia's aggression against Ukraine. She concluded that a green development should be seen as an economic necessity for the future development that makes the economies more competitive, create jobs and help leapfrog to more efficient technologies.
- Opening remarks by **Ms. Stephan Sicars**, Director, Circular Economy and Environmental Protection Division, UNIDO, welcomed the participants with a quote from Robert Swan: "The greatest threat to our planet is the belief that someone else will save it..." saying that it has never sounded more relevant. He pointed out that rising levels of greenhouse gases are already changing the global climate and incur losses to biodiversity and crucial resources. He also highlighted the need to address a growing waste management challenge and that waste was the fourth largest source sector of emissions after combusting fuels, agriculture, and industrial processes. He also reminded that massive global military emissions often go unreported. He underlined that the solutions are easily available, and a circular economy is among the most promising solutions to safeguard the environment, invest in the uptake of innovative technologies and new business models, and create jobs. He welcomed a special session of the Assembly dedicated to circular economy organised by UNIDO. He pointed out that the results of the discussions would feed into the forthcoming global consultations of the Member States and the Global Alliance for Circular Economy (GACERE), a joint initiative of the EU and UNEP.

## Item 2. Launch of the EU4Environment Country Profiles

The participants took note of:

- Presentations by the EU4Environment Implementing Partners – **Mr. Krzysztof Michalak** (OECD), **Ms. Tatiana Chernyavskaya** (UNIDO) and **Ms. Oksana Kovalenko** (World Bank) – of the key messages on the Action implementation and of the newly released the 2022 edition of the Country Profiles ([Armenia](#), [Azerbaijan](#), [Georgia](#), [Moldova](#), [Ukraine](#)).
  - **Mr. Krzysztof Michalak** (OECD) introduced the third edition of the EU4Environment country profiles which present the key achievements of the Programme implementation since its start countries in the context of their progress towards green economy. He highlighted the work at the country level at which the Programme has worked closely with the Ministries of Environment and of Economy on developing and adopting new legislation on EIA/SEA, sustainable public procurement (SPP) and green finance, providing hands-on support to greening SMEs and creating regulatory framework for ensuring environmental compliance. He pointed out that at the regional level EU4Environment created a number of opportunities for exchanging the country experience, through network meetings and experts training on all topics of the Programme. The use of online tools, due to travel restrictions, allowed to extend capacity building activities and engage officials and experts from the EaP and the EU countries as well as wider target groups (private sector, banking sector, statistical offices, and enterprises). Mr. Michalak highlighted in particular the OECD support to mobilising green finance which included support to the development of public investment programmes, reforming domestic financial institutions (such as environmental funds), engaging the banking sector to make lending greener, reforming green taxes, and promoting green bonds. He also highlighted work on measuring progress towards green growth, such as the completion of reports using the green growth indicators in Moldova and Ukraine. Finally, he acknowledged important efforts by individual countries showing a growing enthusiasm for reforms and strengthened capacity.
  - **Ms. Tatiana Chernyavskaya** (UNIDO), on behalf of three UN agencies, highlighted main achievements in the Programme implementation, especially those that lay down the foundations for circular economy. This included: development and adoption of waste management strategies and programmes, sustainable public procurement, extended producer responsibility, and bringing in the private sector perspective. She also highlighted work on demonstrating how to increase productivity through RECP methodology, work on eco-labelling and eco-innovation. She pointed out that the post COVID-19 economic recovery required effective environmental assessment and in this regard the work on SEA/EIA has been particularly useful. She highlighted a range of capacity development events that have been organized, resulting in 450 experts trained on SPP and eco-labelling, over 100 enterprises engaged in monitoring RECP implementation, over 50 experts working on RECP, up to 1000 enrolled into green economy online courses. She also highlighted progress on developing eco-industrial parks and industrial waste mapping. She expressed appreciation of support provided by the National Focal Points in the Ministries, and continued cooperation to make green economy a reality in the region.
  - **Ms. Oksana Kovalenko** (World Bank): pointed out that all activities under Result 4 have now been identified and are expected to be launched at the end of 2022 and beginning of 2023. Progress achieved so far included a launch of support to biodiversity and establishing Emerald network in four countries. In Armenia, this included working on the law on flora and fauna, developing a national action plan, methodological guide for preparing management plan for the Emerald sites and capacity building, including monitoring of Emerald sites. In Azerbaijan, work was launched on advancing the Emerald network, including development of the national roadmap to analyse the current legislation and identify gaps, development of methodological guidelines, and capacity building. In Georgia, the work started on developing a guideline for sustainable management of forest areas. This activity was linked to a draft law on biodiversity which for the first time provides a definition of the Emerald sites. In Moldova, work was launched on the Emerald network, developing secondary legislation, an action plan for its expansion, methodological guidelines and capacity building. The World Bank supports also a concept document for the national reforestation programme, in close cooperation with the Ministry of Environment. She also pointed out to several synergies with other projects.
- The participants also took note of a recently produced video of the EU4Environment: Green Economy Programme (available from the [following link](#)) which provides an overview of how the Programme has been supporting a resilient economy and improvements in citizens' environmental well-being over the last years by modernising legislation, making policies more transparent, strengthening governance, mobilising green finance, and helping businesses enhance green performance.

### Item 3. Country-level activities: progress on the Action implementation, its impact and plans for 2022-23 in the Eastern Partner countries

This agenda item was supported by detailed presentations of activities in individual countries under EU4Environment's Results 1-5 that were prepared in advance of the meeting (all available on the [event's web page](#)).

During the meeting, the Chair invited the Implementing Partners to present selected activities in each country. Subsequently, the representatives of each of the EaP country from the Ministries of the Environment and of the Economy were invited to provide feedback on progress and identify key priorities for the remaining period, answering the three questions:

- 1) What are the main achievements on environment/greening economy in your country since September 2021, which you are most proud of?
- 2) What is your assessment of progress in the implementation of the EU4Environment in your country and of selected achievement(s), presented by the Implementing Partner(s)?
- 3) What should be the priority areas of activities for the remaining period of the Programme (the rest of 2022 and 2023)?

#### Armenia

*The participants took note of:*

- Presentation by the EU4Environment: Green Economy Implementing Partners (see [slide](#)) of selected achievements, i.e.:
  - monitoring implementation of RECP measures at EaP GREEN alumni enterprises (UNIDO);
  - review of environmental compliance system (OECD).
- Intervention by **Ms Gayane Gabrielyan**, Deputy Minister of Environment in Armenia, who highlighted the main achievements on greening economy in Armenia, progress in implementing the EU4Environment: Green Economy activities and priorities for 2022-23, including:
  - The adoption of the Government Programme for 2021-2026 and its main objectives.
  - Steps undertaken to improve the environmental policy in Armenia, including an update of the NDC (with a target of 40% emission reduction by 2030) as well as the National Climate Change Adaptation Plan and its Action Plan for 2021-2025; development of the Strategy and Roadmap on Sustainable Development of Biomass Use for Heating in Armenia; support to eco-friendly/electric vehicles; development of a "position paper on the EU-Armenia cooperation in the framework of the EU Green Deal"; amended law on atmospheric air protection, and a revised draft law «On the Environmental Impact Assessment and Expertise».
  - Progress in the implementation of EU4Environment: Green Economy in Armenia, including the application of an "Introductory Green Economy" training course, application of the guidelines on Environmental Impact Assessment during a pilot SEA for Gegharkunik province, implementation of resource-efficient and cleaner production (RECP) in SMEs, an assessment of investment needs for climate action up to 2030, economic analysis of the deposit-refund system of packaging waste together with elaboration of a legal framework for Extended Producer Responsibility, promotion of Sustainable Public Procurement, and development of the National Plan for promoting the establishment of Emerald Network.
  - Priority areas of activities for the remaining period of the Programme, such as the adoption of policies aimed at fostering green economy, the development of green growth indicators, promoting greening public expenditure, support to green investments (green bonds), sustainable management of natural resources, forests and protected areas and further promotion of RECP in enterprises.
  - Potential cooperation with Georgia on knowledge and experience sharing between the two countries.

#### Georgia

*The participants took note of:*

- Presentation by the EU4Environment: Green Economy Implementing Partners (see [slide](#)) of selected achievements, i.e.:
  - Waste management strategy and action plan adopted by the government (UNEP);
  - Assistance with guidelines on SEA and EIA for more effective environmental assessment (UNECE).
- Intervention by **Mr Romeo Mikautadze**, Deputy Minister of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia, who underlined challenges of the recovery from the global economic downturn, and the need for new approaches to greening the economy. He highlighted the recent achievements in Georgia in greening its economy, including: approval of the 4th



National Environmental Programme for 2022-26, elaboration of the Low emission development strategy, adoption of a Law on environmental liability in line with EU Directive, start of implementation of Extended Producer Responsibility for four waste streams, expanding network of protected areas, and the elaboration of sustainable finance taxonomy.

He also acknowledged progress in implementing the EU4Environment: Green Economy activities in the country, including: update of the National Waste Management strategy 2016-30 and approval of Waste Management Action Plan 2022-26, elaboration of guidelines for Environmental Impact Assessment and update of SEA in line with the Environmental Assessment Code, development of sustainable public procurement (SPP) legal provisions and draft bylaws and their submission to the Parliament, assessment of existing eco-labelling systems and policy assessment for eco-innovation, e-learning course on green economy, and creation of RECP clubs for knowledge sharing.

Among the priorities for 2022-23, Mr. Mikautadze highlighted the plans to improving waste management planning system at local level (including developing a legal framework and monitoring, analysis of the current situation with biodegradable waste generation), preparation of eco-tourism development plans for selected forest areas, strengthening management of the Emerald network management (developing guidelines to integrate the Bern convention, sharing best practice in Emerald network management), sustainable management of "green belts" and forests on municipal property (identifying forest areas on municipal lands to facilitate enforcement of the new forest code), new SPP and eco-labelling promotion activities, fitness testing of relevant policy documents (including developing a green growth strategy of Georgia), ensuring participation of private sector/SMEs in different activities.

He expressed also a desire of Georgia to ensure the sustainability of these actions, calling for more pilot projects, e.g. on resource efficiency, product innovation, green economy, awareness raising. Finally, he underlined Georgia's openness for cooperation with Armenia.

## Azerbaijan

*The participants took note of:*

- Presentation by the EU4Environment: Green Economy Implementing Partners (see [slide](#)) of selected achievements, i.e.:
  - Pilot SEA project for a draft Master Plan of Ganja: hands-on learning for applying SEA and finding valuable synergies (UNECE);
  - Industrial Waste Mapping exercise (UNIDO).
  
- Intervention by **Mr Faig Mutallimov**, Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources, in which he highlighted:
  - Approval of the "Social and economic development strategy of the Republic of Azerbaijan for 2022–2026" which includes achieving clean environment and promoting clean energy among five priorities for long-term economic development;
  - Increasing charges for air and water discharges and waste generation and the use of natural resources to stimulate pollution abatement;
  - New goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 40% by 2050, and to increase the share of renewable energy sources in power generation up to 30% by 2030;
  - The launch of the development of National Low Carbon Strategy, and National Adaptation Plan for sectors, vulnerable to climate change;
  - The introduction of Reduce – Reuse – Recycle principles and the use of smart waste management technologies, establishing a new governmental Commission in November 2021 to work on the National Strategy for Improving Solid Waste Management that envisages remediation of current landfills and shifting to centralized regional sanitary landfills;
  - Development of new tariffs for the collection and processing of solid household waste and an introduction of a ban of the sales of plastic bags from 1 January 2021, as well as bans of imports and production of single-use plastics from 1 July 2021 (the work started on a draft packaging waste law which includes the producers extended responsibility principle);
  - Development of the State Programme on Traffic Safety for 2019-23 which envisages creation of bicycle lanes, promotion of environmentally friendly transport and exemptions from VAT, since January 2022, of the sales of electric vehicles and imports of electric chargers and hybrid cars (not older than 3 years);
  - Adoption of the "Regulation for Conducting Strategic Environmental Assessment" and the development of the SEA on the Ganja city's development master plan;
  - Establishment of new protected areas, including the first biosphere reserve in Zagatala-Balakan region, launch of process to include the Hirkan National Park into the UNESCO Natural Heritage List, as well as a plan to create a geopark around the mud volcanoes and to integrate it into the UNESCO Global Geoparks Network;
  - Development of a new National Forest Programme and the preparation of the 3rd edition of the "Red Book";
  - Preparation of the National Water Strategy of the Republic of Azerbaijan, aiming to reduce water losses and decrease water subsidies.

## Republic of Moldova

The participants took note of:

- Presentation by the EU4Environment: Green Economy Implementing Partners (see [slide](#)) of selected achievements. i.e.:
  - Public awareness campaign on sustainable lifestyles (UNEP);
  - Support to the reform of the National Environmental Fund (OECD).
- Intervention by **Ms Iordanca-Rodica Iordanov**, State Secretary of Environment, who presented Moldova's achievements, plans for 2022-23 and exchanged experience at the regional level, including:
  - Continuous inter-ministerial dialogue on Green Economy by the Inter-ministerial Working Group on the promotion of Sustainable development and Green Economy;
  - Approval of the new country voluntary commitments for the BIG-E – Batumi Green Economy Initiative for the Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference in Nicosia;
  - Development of green growth indicators, as a tool to measure the country's performance towards green agenda, as well as launch of the GGIs web platform;
  - Amendments of the EIA and SEA laws, which were adopted by the Parliament in July 2022 and preparation of two draft Guidelines on Quality Control of SEA Documentation and on Quality Control of Transboundary EIA Documentation;
  - Finalisation of the draft Programme on waste management 2023-2027 and draft Regulation on eco-labelling (to be submitted for Governmental approval by the end of 2023);
  - Establishment of two new RECP Clubs and the work on Eco-Industrial Parks and Free Economic Zones among the measures to support greening SMEs;
  - Start of developing a new Programme on the promotion of Green Economy for 2023-2027, with synergies with National Development Strategy "Moldova 2030" and Environmental Strategy 2030;
  - Start of work to develop the National Afforestation and Reforestation Program for next 10 years;
  - Integration of Green Economy topics into professional development courses;
  - Large-scale awareness and information campaigns: EU Green Week 2022, World Environmental Day 2022, World Clean-up Day 2022, Sustainable Lifestyle.

She also highlighted the priorities for the remaining period, including: development of new Law on payments for pollution and environmental taxes, strengthening the protected areas and forest management, promotion of green bonds and of the extended producer responsibility for WEEEs, conducting the campaign on the concept and tools of the EU Single Market for Green Products, SEA and EIA training workshops, and development of instruments for application of the new amendments of the EIA and SEA laws.

- Intervention from **Mr Dumitru Pinte**a, Director of the Entrepreneurship Development Agency, Ministry of Economy, who highlighted that the Ministry of Economy, together with its subordinated institution for enterprises - Entrepreneurial Development Organization (ODA) - are implementing ambitious economic policies, which also consider the environmental aspects. He highlighted that with a reform of ODA, Moldova has accelerated implementation of dedicated SMEs greening programmes. He recalled that after a slow start in 2020, the SMEs Development Programme has now about EUR 1 mln available for entrepreneurs to support greening of their production process. In 2022, projects in the following areas were financed: water, treatment plants, air, installation of filters to reduce emissions into atmosphere, waste, management systems of industrial production waste. The tangible results have already been achieved, including about 80 beneficiaries who received MDL 15 mln to support private environmental investments; about 500 companies trained on development of SME greening plans; 100 assisted in developing investment projects for greening production process. Moreover, the energy efficiency programme for SMEs created incentives for decreasing energy consumption and switching to alternative energy sources. The ODA does not only provide funding but also tools and transfer of best practices and knowledge. The examples of these are the two projects implemented by ODA under the EU4Environment: Green Economy framework: first on capacity development and technical assistance to enhance sustainability through Eco innovation (including workshop on Eco innovation, national study on market assessment of Eco innovation, SMEs selected to receive technical advice); and second on RECP (including experts carrying out SMEs assessment, and preparing the training programme).
- He reminded, however, that Moldova lags behind in terms of private investments in environmental protection (about total spending on environmental protection of 0.5% GDP, while the EU country average is about 2%). The situation is progressively changing with a launch of new programmes that aim to ensure a transition to a green economy. These include: Programme for digital transformation of SMEs, Programme re-technologisation and energy efficiency or the Innovations Programme which will be launched in a few weeks.



#### Item 4. Special session on Ukraine

The participants took note of:

- Opening remarks by **Ms Chloé Allio**, Head of Section "Economic Cooperation, Energy, Infrastructure and Environment", EU Delegation in Ukraine, in which she condemned the Russian unjustified aggression against, and underlined the EU full support to, Ukraine. She reminded that the EU has responded in a unified way with strong sanctions against Russia and an unprecedented support package to Ukraine to address the most immediate needs. Ms. Allio referred to a recently released assessment<sup>1</sup> which estimated the current cost of reconstruction and recovery at about EUR 350 bln. She referred also to a significant harm to the environment and natural resources. In this context, she expressed hope that all ongoing EU projects can provide short and longer term assistance to address challenges faced by Ukraine and accelerate progress under the Association Agreement with the European Union. Ms. Allio called for the EU4Environment: Green Economy support to be matched with the new priorities of Ukraine. She thanked the Ministry of Environment of Ukraine for maintaining the importance of the environmental agenda in these difficult times, and reconfirmed the commitments to helping Ukraine to progress on a green transition path.
- Feedback by **Mr. Yevhenii Fedorenko**, Deputy Minister of Environmental Protection and Natural Resources, in which he highlighted:
  - Serious negative impacts of the Russian aggression on Ukraine's environment. He recalled over 200 already documented cases of environmental damage, including significant air pollution from the attacks on the oil depots and chemical plants, pollution of water and destroyed water infrastructure. He also referred to almost 3 mln hectares of forest being damaged, 20% of protected area affected by war and large amount of waste generated by the military activities. According to an assessment of the state environment inspectorate this damage already exceeds EUR 34 bln, with the figure growing every day. He pointed out that the Russia's invasion of Ukraine has consequences not only for the environmental situation in Ukraine, but on the whole continent.
  - Plans for the post war recovery which incorporate environmental considerations as the strategic goal. He referred to a recovery and reconstruction plan, elaborated by the Government that contains an environmental section developed in co-operation with over 200 experts. The plan has over 70 nature protection projects for which the funding of EUR 25 bln is needed. Mr. Fedorenko referred to Ukraine joining the LIFE programme which should enable to implement a number of projects. He also referred that the recovery plan contains the provisions for 9 urgent reforms in such fields as: waste management, state environmental control, regulation of industrial pollution, integrated environmental monitoring, and management of nature conservation areas.
- Ministry of Environment's priorities, where EU4Environment: Green Economy support is needed:
  - waste management reform that would build of a new law on waste management adopted by the Ukraine's Parliament. This includes the implementation of the EU packaging waste directive and the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for packaging waste;
  - environmental control and monitoring and;
  - the newly established department on circular economy.
- Information that several bilateral meetings were held recently between the Ministry of Environment, of Economy and other national stakeholders and the EU4Environment: Green Economy Implementing Partners to brief the Ministry staff on work so far and the priorities for the future support;
- Intervention by **Ms. Viktoriya Kovalenko**, state expert on smart specialization and resource efficiency, Ministry of Economy, in which she thanked the EU and Implementing Partners for supporting Ukraine through EU4Environment Action, in the difficult times of Russia's invasion. While acknowledging progress made under EU4Environment, she stressed the further need for the transformation of the Ukrainian economy into circular and green as part of the national economic strategy 2030 and mid- and long-term goals of the recovery plan. She drew attention that Ukraine's accession to the EU that requires improving environmental performance of the national industry to open up opportunities to enter new markets, including green market through piloting the product environmental footprint and explore new growth opportunities, involving industry, central and local authorities, financial institutions, industry associations and developing new business programmes. She underlined that these programmes should promote employment, increase resilience of national businesses while reducing environmental impact of industry to unlock new green markets of the Ukrainian SMEs. In this regard, she referred to the work on Eco-Industrial Parks that should be beneficial to various sectors of industry. She highlighted that Ukraine looks into continuation of support from EU4Environment: Green Economy with intensification of

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<sup>1</sup> World Bank; Government of Ukraine; European Commission. 2022. Ukraine Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment, August 2022. Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment. World Bank, Washington, DC. © World Bank, Government of Ukraine, European Commission. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/37988> License: CC BY 3.0 IGO.

exchange of experience and pilot projects. She pointed out that the Ministry of Economy is ready to support additional initiatives proposed by the implementing partners under EU4Environment on circular economy.

- Interventions by the Implementing Partners, in which the partners commented on the immediate needs, outlined above, and reiterated their support to Ukraine:
  - **Mr Krzysztof Michalak**, Senior Programme Manager, on behalf of the OECD, expressed his appreciation to the Ukrainian colleagues for joining virtually. He expressed the full support to Ukraine, and underlined good progress achieved in the country before February 2022 as presented in the country profile. He acknowledged that some activities had to be suspended (e.g. presentation of a report with green growth indicators) but emphasised that the support will be redirected to follow the demands. He mentioned the several sessions with Deputy Minister Fedorenko and his colleagues organised in the run up to the meeting, which provided an opportunity to better understand the needs and priorities. Mr. Michalak also signalled that the OECD has provided support and reviewed a draft of the Ukrainian post-war reconstruction plan.

He thanked Deputy Minister Fedorenko for following up in writing on the Ministry's priorities which included the importance of mobilising environmental finance, in the context of reconstruction. He pointed out that the OECD will share the work in this regard, and stands ready to provide support for setting up the environmental fund. He also signalled that the OECD is providing support to the state environmental inspectorate. He pointed out that a particular attention would be paid to disseminating widely the plans and results to the national stakeholders and citizens.
  - **Mr. Stephan Sicars**, Director, Division of Circular Economy and Environmental Protections, on behalf of UNIDO, underlined a pragmatic approach, looking at what support is possible immediately. He pointed out that UNIDO is willing to support capacity building and address the challenge of reallocation of businesses. This could include support to management of contaminated land, addressing military and construction waste and monitoring and control. He thanked Ms Kovalenko for mentioning the eco industrial parks, and reiterated UNIDO commitment to continue this work once conditions allow.
  - **Ms. Rie Tsutsumi**, on behalf of UNEP, thanked Mr Fedorenko on setting up the clear priorities, and acknowledged the follow-up exchanges. She pointed out support in the following areas: 1) EPR on packaging waste, 2) environmental control and monitoring (she reconfirmed a plan to invite around 30 people from the government inspectorate for a 5 days training to look into contamination sites assessment), 3) sustainable public procurement, in particular support to e-procurement system and 4) support the circular economy department.
  - **Mr. Leonid Kalashnyk**, Project Manager, on behalf of UNECE, thanked Mr Fedorenko for the constructive dialogue on the updated plans, including SEA/EIA activities. He welcomed that the capacity building activities remain and are agreeable to the Ministry. He highlighted that the SEA should be an important element of greening the economic recovery. Mr. Kalashnyk highlighted the opportunity to move away from the soviet-type planning and use an update of urban plan documents to introduce green elements. He mentioned that UNECE has also received a draft recovery plan, and welcomed SEA being part of integrating environmental considerations into post war recovery.
  - **Ms Madhavi Pillai**, on behalf of the World Bank, pointed out that several options have been discussed on how to proceed with the activities in this difficult time, but no final agreement was reached so far on the way to proceed. She mentioned the needs assessment, prepared by the World Bank, as well as work on the Emerald network and ecosystem services. She invited the Ukrainian colleagues to further discuss those points.
- Intervention by **Ms. Olena Maslyukivska**, National Action Coordinator in Ukraine, in which she emphasised the relevance of EU4Environment: Green Economy preparing the ground for reconstruction of the country. She highlighted the need to support the assessments, such as SEA, for rebuilding industry and infrastructure, as well as public procurement practices. She emphasised the crucial time momentum for preparing the ground for reforms.

The participants took note of short presentations, prepared by the EU4Environment: Green Economy Implementing Partners (available [here](#)) of selected achievements in Ukraine, i.e.:

- Introduction of Resource Efficient and Cleaner Production (RECP) in four regions of the country: RECP clubs in Poltava and Khmelnytskyi and Industrial Waste Mapping in Davydiv and Slavuta (60+ SMEs engaged) (UNIDO);
- Sustainable Public Procurement: legal provisions, inter-ministerial coordination body (UNEP);
- Update of the national set of green growth indicators (OECD).

## Item 5. Co-operation with Civil Society

*The participants took note of an intervention by:*

- **Ms. Elena Culighin**, Chair, National Environmental Center Moldova and also representative of the EaP Civil Society Forum, in which she updated the participants on cooperation with the civil society in the Republic of Moldova, and the latest developments on environmental and green policies in the country, in conjunction with the work done under EU4Environment. In particular, she highlighted the large scale campaign [Sustainable Lifestyle](#) - Public awareness raising campaign on Sustainable Consumption/Production and Sustainable Lifestyles (September – October 2022) (with support of UNEP, under EU4Environment), and [World Clean-up Day 2022](#) in Moldova (01-17.09.2022 and the event on 17 September 2022) in Moldova (with support of EU4Environment, EUD, Swedish Embassy, National Environmental Centre). The presentation is available [here](#).

The participants welcomed the extensive cooperation between civil society and the government in Moldova.

The participants welcomed bringing gender aspect into discussion, taking note of UNIDO's efforts to mainstream it into the industrial development, and providing trainings in Azerbaijan and Moldova.

## **Item 6. Coordination with other EU4 Programmes**

*The participants took note of:*

- Interventions by representatives of “EU4Environment: Water Management and Environmental Data” Programme, EU4Climate and EU4Business, in which they updated the participants on their respective work streams (The presentations are available [here](#))
  - **Mr Matthew Griffiths**, OECD on behalf of EU4Environment: Water Management and Environmental Data, provided an overview of the Programme launched at the start of 2022 and the main work streams under two main components of water resources and environmental data. He highlighted cooperation opportunities which include possible joint activities, capacity building, multi-stakeholder dialogues, communication and governance.
  - **Mr Yevgen Groza**, UNDP on behalf of EU4Climate, underlined EU4Climate response to the war, and two new activities 1) addressing the immediate war-related needs of the Ukrainian central and local authorities, and 2) contributing to the green reconstruction of Ukraine. He presented key programme activities (including NDC updates, developing LEDS and climate policies mainstreaming, enhancing national MRV systems, legal alignment with EU acquis, climate finance, and capacity building). He pointed out noted the recently completed climate finance budgeting studies in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia and a common angle and complementarities with EU4Environment stream of activities on green finance. He also underlined the priorities areas of work for 2022-23 and continuous coordination of the EU4Environment the activities.
  - **Mr Francesco Alfonso**, OECD on behalf of EU4Business, underlined co-operation with EU4Environment: Green Economy on country-level components of work (e.g. support to the elaboration of the SME Development Strategy of Georgia) and on the regional components of the Programme. In particular he highlighted the development of the SME Policy Index that is a tool to track progress on SME policies (covering about 40 countries, including EaP) and informed the participants about start of the new round of assessment (with data collection starting at the beginning of October 2022). He reminded that this assessment includes an environmental component, covering framework for environmental policy and financial instruments. This year's Policy Index will contain a new section on outcome-oriented indicators. It is developed in close co-operation with EU4Environment: Green Economy.

*During the discussion the participants took note of:*

- A change in the visual identify of the current EU4Environment Programme to “EU4Environment – Green Economy” to distinguish between this and EU4Environment: Water Management and Environmental Data Programme.
- Agreement to follow up bilaterally after the meeting on the individual questions, such as
  - Need for further reflection on how to collect data from companies, and make it publicly accessible.
  - Proposal from Azerbaijan to link SME policy index results to concrete technical support project to achieve better results/impact on the ground.
  - Proposal from REC Caucasus to consider its experience with water efficiency, waste water treatment, and a question on circular economy indicators, to be included in the Policy Index.
  - Potential synergies between EU4Environment Programmes' work on green growth indicators, including the proposed 10 new indicators.
  - Need to carry analysis on information/measurement about the green SMEs.
  - Value added of the meetings of the representatives of the SMEs agencies from Azerbaijan and Moldova.

## Item 7. Regional activities, governance, sustainability and communications

*During the discussion on regional activities and governance under EU4Environment: Green Economy the participants took note of:*

- A joint presentation by the Implementing Partners (available on the [meeting web page](#)), including :
  - **Ms. Rie Tsutsumi**, Project Manager, UNEP, who highlighted the selected regional level achievements from UNEP-led activities under Results 1 and 2;
  - **Mr. Leonid Kalashnyk**, Project Manager, UNECE, who highlighted the regional level selected achievements from SEA/EIA component of Result 1;
  - **Ms. Tatiana Chernyavskaya**, UNIDO, who highlighted the selected regional level achievements from UNIDO-led activities under Results 2;
  - **Mr. Krzysztof Michalak**, Senior Programme Manager, OECD, who highlighted the regional level selected achievements from OECD-led results on Results 3 and 5.

*During the discussion on the EU4Environment: Green Economy communications activities, the participants took note of:*

- Presentation by **Ms Maria Dubois**, Communication Coordinator, OECD, in which she highlighted the good progress in communication activities in the EaP countries and beyond, including:
  - The reach of 2 mln people from the Programme launch;
  - Promotion through a variety of websites and platforms: EUDs, EU Neighbours, IPs, local partners, RECP websites in all EaP countries;
  - Promotion through different social media channels: EUDs, EU Neighbours, Implementing Partners and local partners;
  - Release of newsletters on a monthly basis or around major events (since March 2022, the newsletter also features updates from EU4Environment Water and Data Programme);
  - Production of communication products, such as videos and leaflets, brochures, and annual country profiles in English and national languages;
  - Promotion around International Environmental Days (Forestry Day, Earth Day, Biodiversity Day);
  - Organisation of regional and national communications campaigns (EU Week for Waste Reduction, EU Green Week, EU Green Deal in Ukraine, Sustainable lifestyle in Moldova);
  - Organisation of media breakfasts and press tours in Georgia and Moldova to raise awareness on several activities.

*During the discussion on sustainability of the results of the Programme after its end the participants raised the following points:*

- **Continued support to the cross-Ministerial dialogue:**
  - All Ministries of Environment in the Eastern Partnership countries increased their capacities for promoting green economy as well as engaged and co-operated with other sectoral Ministries. An important element of bridging was bringing the Ministries of Environment and Ministries of Economy together. In addition, an engagement of other Ministries such as Finance, Transport or Agriculture has been growing;
  - There is a need to build on these successes and continue supporting cross-Ministerial dialogues, e.g. by maintaining regular meetings of inter-ministerial bodies and supporting networks, and by building capacity of officials in sectoral ministries (including trainings, organizing practical study tours, and knowledge sharing);
  - More emphasis should be placed on cross-sectoral dimension of further activities;
  - The Implementing Partners were providing a catalytic role so far and gradually the initiatives are picked by the countries. What is needed more is providing support to the “home grown” initiatives.
- **More can be done to build capacities at national and local levels:**
  - Prompt support should be provided to newly established units of the Ministries (such on circular economy in the Ministry of Environment of Ukraine) to quickly build critical mass and reinforce their operations;
  - There is a need to redouble efforts to develop capacity at the local level and to harmonize local requirements with national strategies. Also, communication between government and local level should be strengthened;
  - More efforts are needed to identify and engage academic institutions that can incorporate courses on green economy into their curricula to build capacities and develop skills at the early stages of academic education;
  - There is a need for “matchmaking” between SMEs and “knowledge products”, i.e. making better use of existing materials and better promotion of different knowledge products, tools for SMEs;
  - There is a need to create centres of excellency based on the existing institutions to promote green activities. As an example, the regional SME Development Centres within the SME Development Agency of Azerbaijan provide capacity building, free of charge;
  - There is also a need to create a competition in the regions for “green” companies. Best results can be rewarded and promoted to create incentives for SMEs to go green. There is a common practice in the EU countries

rewarding not with money but with recognition. Rewarding can open access to finance possibilities. Cooperation with the UN Global Compact Initiative can create incentives for enterprises to implement universal sustainable principles;

- Businesses should be not only informed but engaged. This may include support of businesses with grants, through SME development agencies, creating healthy competition, preservation of knowledge.
- **Methodological guidance:**
  - More granular methodological guidance is needed on reform of complex issues, such as SEA, EIA, the regulations of industrial emissions from large enterprises, circular economy, construction/demolition/biodegradable waste;
  - More plain language materials are needed to explain and show benefits of different elements of green economy (such as resource efficiency, circular economy) to the regulated community;
  - The provision of assessments/recommendations would be useful to direct reforms;
  - More documents should be available in national languages to maximise the outreach and impact.
- **Link between policies and finance:**
  - The link between the development of policies and financing of steps to implement them has been a missing element. There is an urgent need to strengthen co-operation between the policymakers from the EaP countries and IFIs to exchange on key enabling policies and the ways to mobilise financial flows.
- **Emphasis to strengthen data collection, digitalisation and analysis:**
  - Support is needed for better monitoring and data collection that links with the decision-making and enables evidence-based decisions for a greater impact;
  - Digitalisation of data collection and its use should be a priority.
- **Need for the continued EU support:**
  - Despite progress there will be a need for continued EU support, expressed by the beneficiaries countries, to reform of environmental policies in the EaP countries beyond the duration of the Programme;
  - There is a need for continuity to avoid possible time gaps between the support programmes and losing the established networks and co-ordination activities.

## **Item 8. Wrap up of the day**

In her concluding remarks, **Ms. Michaela Hauf**, European Commission and Chair of the meeting, briefly summarised the key outcomes of the meeting. She stressed the continued relevance of and demand for the Programme in the current geopolitical context which makes the EaP post-2020 priorities of recovery and resilience ever more relevant.

Ms. Hauf highlighted also the importance of “breaking the silos” between the Programme which was demonstrated by the participation of the EU4... family of Projects, private sector and the civil society. Furthermore, she outlined key areas for support which includes: circular economy, integrated waste management, green finance (including green bonds), biodiversity, forest preservation, and SEA.

She announced that the next EU4Environment: Green Economy Regional Assembly meeting will be organised in the second half of 2023 and that the dates and the location of the meeting will be announced shortly after the consultations with all stakeholders.

Finally, Ms. Hauf, thanked all the members of the Regional Assembly for the preparation for the meeting and their active participation and closed the first day of the meeting.

## Annex 1. Agenda – Day 1

Time	Item
09:30 – 10:00	<i>Welcome coffee and registration of the participants</i>
10:00 – 10:20 (20 min)	<p><b>Chair: Ms Michaela Hauf, Team Leader for Green and Connectivity, DG NEAR, European Commission</b></p> <p><b>Item 1. Welcome, opening and adoption of the agenda</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opening by the Chair of the meeting</li> <li>• Video message from the European Commission: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Mr Lawrence Meredith, Director, DG NEAR</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Welcome on behalf of the Implementing Partners: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Ms Jo Tyndall, Director, Environment Directorate, OECD</li> <li>○ Mr. Stephan Sicars, Director, Circular Economy and Environmental Protection Division, UNIDO</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
10:20 – 10:45 (25 min)	<p><b>Item 2. Launch of the EU4Environment Country Profiles</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Video: EU4Environment (125 seconds)</b></li> <li>• Key messages on the Action implementation on behalf of the Implementing Partners and the presentation of the Country Profiles that highlight the key activities and achievements during the period 2021-22 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Mr Krzysztof Michalak, Senior Programme Manager, Environment Directorate OECD</li> <li>○ Ms Tatiana Chernyavskaya, Programme manager, UNIDO</li> <li>○ Ms. Oksana Kovalenko, World Bank</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
10:45 – 11:45 (60 min)	<p><b>Item 3. Country-level activities: progress on the Action implementation, its impact and plans for 2022-23 in the Eastern Partner countries</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introductory presentations on key activities by Implementing Partners followed by interventions from National Focal Points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Armenia</li> <li>○ Georgia</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Short time should be allowed for immediate questions after each intervention</li> </ul>
11:45 – 12:45 (60 min)	<p><b>Item 3 cont. Country-level activities: progress on the Action implementation, its impact and plans for 2022-23 in the Eastern Partner countries</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introductory presentations on key activities by Implementing Partners followed by interventions from National Focal Points <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Azerbaijan</li> <li>○ Republic of Moldova</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Short time should be allowed for immediate questions after each intervention</li> </ul>
12:45 – 14:00 (75 minutes)	<p><b>Lunch break/ Videos</b></p>
14:00 – 15:00 (60 min)	<p><b>Item 4. Special session on Ukraine</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction by the Chair</li> <li>• Opening remarks by the European Commission <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Ms Chloe Allio, EU Delegation to Ukraine</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Recent developments in Ukraine, impacts of the war on the environment, preparation of the Reconstruction/Recovery Plan, including its environmental part <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Mr Evgeniy Fedorenko, Deputy Minister, Ministry of the Environmental Protection and Natural Resources, Ukraine</li> </ul> </li> <li>• EU4Environment contribution and support to the recovery of Ukraine <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Interventions by the Implementing Partners and presentation of the adjusted country work plan</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Open discussion</li> </ul>



<p><b>15:00 – 15:30</b> <b>(30 min)</b></p>	<p><b>Item 5. Co-operation with Civil Society</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ms Olena Kravchenko, Ukrainian NGO Environment People Law, and Mr Ruslan Havryliuk, Coordinator of Working Group 3 (WG 3) on Environment, Energy and Climate Change, EaP Civil Society Forum</li> <li>• Ms Elena Culighin, President, NGO National Environmental Centre and EaP CSF WG3, Moldova</li> <li>• Open discussion</li> </ul>
<p><b>15:30 – 16:00</b> <b>(30 min)</b></p>	<p><b>Item 6. Coordination with other EU4 Programmes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mr Matthew Griffiths, OECD on behalf of EU4Environment: Water Management and Environmental Data</li> <li>• Mr Yevgen Groza, UNDP on behalf of EU4Climate</li> <li>• Mr Francesco Alfonso, OECD on behalf of EU4Business</li> </ul>
<p><b>16:00 – 16:30</b> <b>(30 min)</b></p>	<p><b>Coffee break</b> <b>Videos</b></p>
<p><b>16:30 – 17:30</b> <b>(60 min)</b></p>	<p><b>Item 7. Regional activities, governance, sustainability and communications</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update on regional activities, governance arrangements and long-term sustainability of work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Mr Krzysztof Michalak, OECD</li> <li>○ Open discussion</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Update on communication activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Ms Maria Dubois, OECD</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Open discussion</li> </ul>
<p><b>17:30 – 18:00</b> <b>(30 min)</b></p>	<p><b>Item 8. Wrap up of the day</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Other business</li> <li>• Closing remarks by the Implementing Partners</li> <li>• Closing remarks by the European Commission</li> </ul>
<p><b>18:00 – 20:00</b></p>	<p><b>Networking cocktail</b></p>

## Annex 3. List of participants

*I agree to my name and function and/or to my image/voice being video/audio recorded and being used by European Commission for publications, both off and on-line, in accordance with the applicable European data protection regulations.*

*I consent to my contact details (First and Last Name, Organisation, Function, Country represented and e-mail) being included in the list of participants and circulated amongst the meeting participants.*

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