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EU4Environment
Green Economy in Eastern Partner Countries

EU4Environment introduces the Product Environmental Footprint methodology in Armenia

Yerevan, 13 March 2023

Resource scarcity and the need for sustainable practices are key issues in the transition towards a green and Circular Economy. For this reason, under the European Union (EU) funded, EU4Environment programme, UNIDO is helping industries in the Eastern Partnership (EaP) region become greener by introducing practices related to Circular Economy and Resource Efficient and Cleaner Production (RECP). Concretely, on 13 March 2023, a hybrid event took place in Armenia's capital to introduce the potential impact of the Product Environmental Footprint (PEF) methodology in Armenian Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs).

The methodology, part of the EU Single Market for Green Products (SMGP) initiative, has emerged as a valuable tool in recent years, as it measures the environmental impact of a product across its entire lifecycle (from production to disposal). By using PEF to assess products, SMEs can identify ways to improve resource efficiency, reduce waste, and minimize environmental harm. PEF is also a crucial component in the drive towards a more sustainable future, as producers and consumers become increasingly conscious of the environmental impact of products and manufacturing practices.

On behalf of the Ministry of Environment, I would like to emphasize that the engagement with SMEs and the business community is crucial in the shift towards a green economy. Whereas the Government can provide support and help exchange experiences, the green transition depends on the ability of Armenian enterprises to seek and utilize the opportunities available at hand. Such an opportunity is embracing a green mindset when it comes to production. Here, Armenia is already piloting several novel concepts which are also resource efficient, said Ms. Gayane Gabrielyan, Deputy Minister of Environment, Republic of Armenia.

Gathering over 50 participants, the event was packed with presentations and discussions with experts in the field and provided a comprehensive understanding of the concept of PEF and that of environmentally-friendly products.

The introduction of the EU SMGP initiative is a crucial component in our efforts to embrace a green economy, as we firmly believe that its success depends on the collaboration of all relevant stakeholders. As Government representatives, we are committed to working together with the private sector and creating a regulatory framework and level playing field for all producers. In this sense, today's event is an

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important way to provide information and a platform for discussion and collaboration, said Mr. Alik Sargsyan, Head of EU Programmes Division, Department of EU Economic Cooperation of the Ministry of Economy, Republic of Armenia.

The three major topics that marked the event revolved around the applicability of green product instruments to support sustainable economic growth, the EU policy landscape on green products (with a focus on the EU SMGP, PEF and the EU Green Deal), and ways to apply PEF at the company level (by looking at preliminary assessments on green products initiatives in Armenia, existing eco-labelling practices, and the relevant legislative background).

When it comes to promoting green production, we have come a long way both within the European Union and outside it. The EU has high ambitions when it comes to green, sustainable development, and tools such as the EU Green Deal will help transform the economy into a modern, competitive, and resource-efficient one, while decoupling economic growth from environmental degradation and leaving no one behind. In this sense, we appreciate our cooperation with UNIDO in the country as well as in the EaP region to promote sustainable economic growth, said Mr. Frank Hess, Head of Cooperation Section, EU Delegation to Armenia

Within the EU4Environment Action, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) is introducing the EU SMGP and PEF methodology in the EaP region, including Armenia, where it is supported by Civitta (a consultancy firm with extensive experience in environmental and sustainability projects).

While remembering the results of a previous regional programme on resource efficiency, EaP GREEN, we are grateful to the Government of Armenia for being receptive and results-oriented in both programmes. Resource efficiency is a core aspect in developing industries as it orients them towards the benefits of becoming greener. From theory to practice, as the Resource Efficient and Cleaner Production (RECP) methodology encourages circularity, today, we also have a first attempt to speak about green products, starting with their very design. Here, we bring forth the opportunities of the EU SMGP and encourage SMEs to become pioneers in the Armenian market by looking at their environmental footprint and by greening their supply chains. We also work to bring this notion closer to stakeholders and industries to boost inclusive and sustainable industrial development, said Ms. Tatiana Chernyavskaya, EU4Environment Project Manager, UNIDO.

Background

The “European Union for Environment” (EU4Environment – Green Economy) Action helps 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. It is funded by the European Union and implemented by five Partner organizations - OECD, UNECE, UNEP, UNIDO, and the World Bank – over the 2019-2024 period, with a budget of EUR 20 million. For more information about the Action,

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please visit: www.eu4environment.org. For more information about resource efficiency in Armenia,
please visit: www.recp.am

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