



**Funded by
the European Union**



EU4Environment final regional meeting

Ecosystem services and livelihoods in the Eastern Partnership countries: From project results to future action

Summary Record

Date: 8 June 2026

Format: Hybrid format (Brussels, Belgium, and online, Zoom)

Languages: English with simultaneous interpretation into Armenian, Romanian, and Ukrainian

About EU4Environment

Since 2018, the “European Union for Environment” (EU4Environment) Action has helped 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 was funded by the European Union and principally implemented over the 2019-2024 period by OECD, UNECE, UNEP, UNIDO and the World Bank. Over 2025-2026 period, the World Bank will finalise the implementation of programme's Result 4 area.

The meeting documents are available on the webpage:

<https://www.eu4environment.org/events/ecosystem-services-and-livelihoods-in-the-eastern-partnership-countries-from-project-results-to-future-action/>.

Disclaimer: This document was produced with the financial assistance of the European Union. The views expressed herein can in no way be taken to reflect the official opinion of the European Union, its members or the Governments of the Eastern Partnership Countries. This document and any content included herein are without prejudice to the status of, or sovereignty over, any territory, to the delamination of international frontiers and boundaries, and to the name of any territory, city or area.

Summary Record

The EU4Environment regional programme held a concluding meeting of its biodiversity and forestry component on 8 June 2026 in Brussels. The meeting brought together representatives of the European Commission, government representatives from partner countries, civil society organisations (CSOs), academia, and the World Bank as the component's implementing partner and meeting's organiser. Participants took stock of achievements and lessons learned, and identified pathways to ensure sustainability and scaling up of this component's results. They highlighted achievements in biodiversity conservation, sustainable forest management, and community engagement. Discussions emphasised the importance of translating analytical work into investments thus ensuring long-term impact. Participants also reflected on implementation challenges, including institutional capacity and financing gaps, and underscored the need for continued cooperation, knowledge exchange, and alignment with EU standards.

Item 1. Opening Remarks

In his opening remarks, Michael Voegelé, Head of Unit, welcomed participants on behalf of the European Commission and highlighted the importance of advancing nature protection and sustainable development within the Eastern Partnership framework. He emphasised that natural capital underpins economic resilience, livelihoods, and public well-being, and stressed that future efforts should focus on delivering tangible benefits for communities and ecosystems. He also highlighted the importance of aligning with broader EU initiatives and maintaining strong country ownership to ensure lasting impact.

Representing the World Bank, Gayane Minasyan, Practice Manager, Environment, highlighted the significant impact of the EU4Environment programme over the past decade, thanking the European Commission for its long-standing partnership and acknowledging the contributions of governments, civil society and local communities. She outlined the programme's role in supporting policy reforms, institutional capacity and regional knowledge across four strategic areas: protected areas, ecosystem services, sustainable forest management, and biodiversity finance. She also underscored how EU4Environment has laid the groundwork for major World Bank investment operations in Armenia (RESILAND: Armenia Resilient Landscapes) and Moldova (REMAP: Restoring Ecosystems for Marine Pollution Prevention) and the wider region, while helping countries advance EU approximation and prepare future green investments, particularly in Ukraine.

Sergiu Lazarencu, Deputy Chair, Committee on Environment, Climate and Green Transition, Parliament of the Republic of Moldova, highlighted the important contribution of the EU4Environment programme to strengthening biodiversity conservation, sustainable forest management and ecosystem restoration in Moldova, while supporting alignment with European environmental standards. He emphasised the programme's role in building institutional capacity, enhancing technical expertise and engaging local communities. Stressing that healthy ecosystems are essential for economic resilience, climate adaptation and citizens' well-being, Mr Lazarencu welcomed the meeting as an opportunity to reflect on achievements, exchange regional experience and explore ways to scale up nature-positive investments and innovative financing to support Moldova's European integration and long-term environmental objectives.

Oleg Bondarenko, Chair, Committee on Environmental Policy and Natural Resources Use, Parliament of Ukraine, thanked the World Bank for continued cooperation with Ukraine and

emphasised the severe environmental losses caused by Russia's war of aggression, including substantial damage to forests and ecosystem services. He highlighted the need to better value ecosystem services, integrate them into national policy, and mobilise investment for Ukraine's green and climate-resilient recovery, while reaffirming commitment to advancing environmental reforms, including alignment with the EU acquis.

Ruzanna Grigoryan, Head of the External Relations Department, Ministry of Environment of Armenia, highlighted the contribution of the EU4Environment programme to advancing the country's green agenda and supporting environmental reforms aligned with national priorities and the Armenia–EU Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA). Ms. Grigoryan stressed the importance of sustaining the programme's results, promoting nature-positive investments, and strengthening sustainable forest management, legal timber supply chains and biodiversity conservation through continued cooperation and knowledge exchange.

Item 2. Scene-setting: purpose and expected outcomes of the final regional meeting

In this session, Fisseha Abissa, Senior Natural Resources Management Specialist, EU4Environment Task Team Leader, World Bank, outlined the objectives of the final regional meeting, emphasising that it is primarily a stock-taking exercise to assess the achievements and lessons learned from the EU4Environment programme. Participants were encouraged to reflect on policy and behavioural changes, national ownership of programme results, and opportunities to scale up successful approaches through future investments. He also highlighted that the meeting aimed to identify how the programme's technical outputs could be sustained and translated into long-term impact, with broad participation from government, parliament and civil society, underscoring the importance of country-wide ownership and continued collaboration beyond the life of the programme.

Item 3. Country-level activities: key achievements and national ownership

The World Bank country programme coordinators presented progress and key achievements under the EU4Environment Programme. These interventions were followed by a Q&A session. The following messages were conveyed by the speakers:

- **Armenia:** Karen Aghababyan, highlighted the development of a national action plan for the Emerald Network (2024–2030), management guidelines for sites under different land ownership regimes, recommendations to improve the network's coverage and increase the sufficiency index, and the pilot management plans to support implementation. Mr. Aghababyan also outlined the preparation of an Ecotourism Management Plan Template Tool and pilot plans for eight communities, providing a basis for follow-on investments under the World Bank supported RESILAND programme. Additional results included recommendations for sustainable forest management to guide forest economies and timber traceability to introduce trade controls. He noted that analytical work on ecosystem service valuation, had been conducted to assess ecosystem services and financing mechanisms and address financing gaps.
- **Georgia:** Darejan Kapandaze highlighted the preparation of technical guidelines for managing forests in Emerald sites located outside nationally designated protected areas that address a critical gap in forest governance and create enabling environment for the implementation of upcoming biodiversity legislation. She noted an important capacity-building effort through which nearly 100 participants benefited from workshops. The

programme also developed eight pilot ecotourism plans linked to local forest management units, creating a model for community-based tourism and sustainable livelihoods that can be replicated across the country. In the forest sector, analytical work assessed the conditions for introducing forest certification providing recommendations to inform government decision-making and build on recent legislative reforms. The programme further evaluated the economic value of forest ecosystem services and identified opportunities to enhance finance for natural resources management, including recommendations to improve data, valuation methods, and financing mechanisms to attract greater public and private investment.

- **Moldova:** Aurel Lozan mentioned that key results in the country include the development of three management plans for Emerald sites, covering wetlands, forests, and steppes; a national Emerald Network roadmap; and capacity-building that reached over 200 stakeholders. A major analytical achievement was the first national assessment of high conservation value forests, revealing that around 50% of Moldova's forest ecosystems fall into this category. The analysis also laid the foundation for assistance in designing the new Forest Code in 2024, which introduces ecosystem services and improved forest categorisation. On the ground, EU4Environment supported enhanced forest management on over 1,200 hectares and silvopastoral practices on more than 700 hectares, alongside community-driven restoration through assisted natural regeneration, demonstrating the potential to contribute over 2,000 hectares to the national greening initiative. At the landscape level, the Moldova Nature Restoration Potential analysis was conducted, identifying more than 600,000 hectares of degraded land with restoration potential. A flagship achievement is the National Forest Extension and Rehabilitation Programme (2023–2032), targeting 145,000 hectares of restored ecosystems, including 110,000 hectares of new forests and 35,000 hectares of rehabilitated forests. Despite this progress, Aurel Lozan noted that Moldova remains one of the least forested countries in Europe, underscoring the need for continued investment, stronger coordination, and innovative financing mechanisms to achieve national restoration goals.
- **Ukraine:** Olga Gorodnytska explained that a major focus was on the Emerald Network, where Ukraine has 357 sites. The programme supported improved site management through enhanced data, new methodologies, and the first-ever approach to assessing both anthropogenic and military impacts. It also produced guidance for management planning and tested it through pilot sites, including innovative governance models for areas without formal protection. Significant efforts were made in capacity building, reaching around 700 participants, and in community engagement. Work in eight pilot communities, covering over 116,000 hectares of forest, explored how natural resources can better support local development. Findings show that the economic potential of these resources remains underused and that stronger cooperation between communities and authorities is needed. The programme also addressed forest governance challenges, including the management of self-seeded forests, and explored legal and policy improvements. Another key area focused on legal timber trade and the competitiveness of the wood-processing sector, emphasising its role in economic development, job creation, and alignment with EU standards. Ukraine was noted as relatively advanced in its electronic timber tracking system, though further alignment with EU deforestation regulations is needed. Finally, Olga Gorodnytska highlighted growing opportunities in climate and nature finance, positioning forests not only as environmental and economic assets but also as investable assets capable of generating climate benefits and financial returns. Gratitude was expressed to national counterparts for their cooperation, engagement, and contributions.

The presentations were followed by a Q&A session and discussion. During this session, participants were invited to share experiences and plans for utilising EU4Environment outcomes by responding to the following questions:

- 1) In what ways has this programme influenced, or do you expect it to influence policies or practices?
- 2) What obstacles may you encounter in implementing the programme's suggestions and how could they be addressed?
- 3) Beyond this programme's work, what do you see as the most pressing needs or opportunities for biodiversity and forestry in your country?

Alik Badalyan, Department of Specially Protected Areas and Biodiversity Policy, Ministry of Environment, highlighted the importance of the EU4Environment programme in supporting the revision of Armenia's Emerald Network by improving spatial data, updating site information and strengthening links with protected areas. He emphasised the critical role of forest ecosystems in biodiversity conservation, ecological connectivity and climate resilience, underscoring that forests should be recognised as vital ecosystems as well as natural resources.

Ruzanna Grigoryan highlighted key challenges for sustaining programme results, including effective implementation of environmental legislation, strengthening institutional capacity, improving data and monitoring systems, and promoting behavioural change through continued outreach and private sector engagement. She also stressed the importance of interagency coordination and identified biodiversity finance and stronger synergies across international environmental processes as key priorities in the lead-up to COP17 and the implementation of the Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework by 2030.

In response to a question raised by Angela Bularga, Project Manager, European Commission, on the livelihood and job creation potential of ecotourism, Karen Aghababyan emphasised that biodiversity conservation must be accompanied by sustainable economic opportunities for local communities. Three complementary pathways were identified: ecotourism, value-added production from non-timber forest products, and emerging nature-positive financing mechanisms such as carbon and biodiversity markets. Using the example of Garni village in Armenia, Mr Aghababyan illustrated how ecotourism can stimulate local infrastructure, create jobs, reduce migration, and generate new income opportunities, while supporting biodiversity conservation and sustainable land management.

Andrzej Januszewski, DG Environment, European Commission, stressed that ensuring the long-term sustainability of EU4Environment results will require stronger administrative capacity, adequate financing and continued institutional development. He highlighted the need for sustained political commitment to invest in nature protection, noting its long-term economic and social benefits, and emphasised that countries must build the capacity and allocate the resources needed to manage protected areas, implement legislation and support the transition from Emerald Network sites to Natura 2000 where relevant.

Natia Iordanishvili, Deputy Head, National Forestry Agency in Georgia (attending virtually), noted the importance of the EU4Environment programme and the long-standing partnership with the World Bank in advancing Georgia's forestry reforms. She recalled that these reforms, launched with the 2013 National Forest Policy and strengthened by the new Forest Code, are based on multifunctional forest management, recognising forests for their ecological, social, and economic

value. Ms. Iordanishvili also pointed to the development of eight pilot ecotourism plans, which will help strengthen on-the-ground implementation. She concluded by reaffirming Georgia's strong commitment to sustainable forest management, enhanced local livelihoods, and continued collaboration with international partners to translate these reforms into tangible, long-term results.

Malkhaz Adeishvili, an independent environmental policy expert from Georgia, highlighted the role of a new study, undertaken under the EU4Environment programme, in assessing the overall economic value of Georgia's forests, showing that conservation, particularly for carbon sequestration, delivers the greatest benefits, alongside tourism, water regulation, and timber production. The study also reveals a financing gap in forest management despite government and international support, and identifies opportunities to mobilise additional resources through mechanisms such as payments for ecosystem services, carbon markets, and public-private partnerships. Mr. Adeishvili stressed the need to raise awareness, strengthen national capacity, and implement pilot projects, especially to ensure that local communities benefit more fairly from ecosystem services and developments such as hydropower.

In response to a question raised by Gayane Minasyan on the support needed from development partners to better capitalise on the value of Georgia's forests, both economically and socially, Natia Iordanishvili noted that the top priority is to strengthen and invest in multifunctional forest management. This approach moves beyond timber extraction to unlock a wider range of ecosystem benefits. She highlighted the importance of promoting ecotourism, the sustainable use of non-timber forest products, agroforestry, and alternative energy sources to help reduce pressure on natural forests. A key element, she noted, is also shifting public perception by demonstrating that forests can generate sustainable income while supporting local livelihoods and preserving critical ecological functions.

Sophiko Akhobadze, Director, the Regional Environmental Centre Caucasus, shared practical experience from developing ecotourism management plans in Georgia, describing it as the first effort to establish a standardised, replicable methodology. A key success factor was combining technical analysis with strong community engagement, enabling local stakeholders to lead the process while receiving analytical support. The project resulted in two main outputs: locally driven action plans integrated into municipal development strategies, and an investment-ready ecotourism plan for the National Forest Agency. Importantly, around 80% of proposed activities were designed to directly benefit local communities. Ms. Akhobadze also identified key challenges, including limited local capacity, lack of data, and the need to shift mindsets, especially among foresters, towards integrating tourism into forest management. Strengthening collaboration between forestry and tourism sectors and enhancing biodiversity-focused tourism products were highlighted as important steps forward.

Sergiu Lazarencu expressed Moldova's appreciation for the support provided by the EU and the World Bank through the EU4Environment programme, which has played a key role in advancing biodiversity conservation, sustainable forest management, and ecosystem-based approaches. The programme engaged 21 local communities in the sustainable management of more than 2,100 hectares of forest, strengthening both conservation efforts and local livelihoods, particularly around protected areas. It also delivered important results, including the development of management plans for Emerald Network sites, support for biodiversity protection and community development, and contributions to Moldova's national forest policy. Looking ahead, he stressed that Moldova's main challenge is transforming Emerald Network sites into opportunities for sustainable development rather than perceived restrictions for certain economic activities. This

will require greater expertise, investment, and the adaptation of successful EU practices. He also announced that the Ministry of Environment will establish a Natural Areas Agency to support local communities in the sustainable management of these protected areas.

Eduard Arustamian, Director, Department of Nature Reserve Fund, Protected Areas and Biodiversity, Ministry of Economy, Environment and Agriculture, highlighted EU4Environment's support for strengthening Emerald Network management in Ukraine, including knowledge exchange, community capacity building, and guidance on assessing war-related impacts on protected areas. He noted that nearly half of Ukraine's Emerald sites are located in non-government-controlled territories or frontline areas, and outlined ongoing efforts to advance Emerald Network legislation, coordinate next steps with the Bern Convention, and build readiness for future Natura 2000 alignment. He also emphasised the importance of developing a national policy on ecosystem services, as reflected in Ukraine's new Biodiversity Strategy and implementation plan.

Anatoliy Borsuk, Chief Specialist, Department of Policy Development and Forest Resource Conservation, Ministry of Economy, Environment and Agriculture, underscored the timeliness of EU4Environment support for Ukraine's forestry sector, particularly in strengthening climate-resilient and sustainable forest management, supporting legislative alignment with the EU, and engaging communities following decentralisation reform. He highlighted the importance of work on self-seeded forests, wood-processing competitiveness, and climate finance opportunities, noting that these areas are highly relevant despite the challenges posed by Russia's war of aggression, including limited forest access, damage to forest areas, and reduced human capacity.

Item 4. Regional-level activities: key achievements and knowledge sharing

Oksana Kovalenko, EU4Environment Programme Coordinator, outlined regional activities across four work packages, emphasising their cross-cutting design, complementarity with country-level work, and the value of regional cooperation and knowledge exchange with EU and EaP countries.

Key achievements include:

- Regional overview of Emerald Network progress and prospects to 2030, as well as country assessments of scientific reserves and readiness for future biogeographical seminars.
- Online training course on the Emerald Network and its national versions in Armenian, Georgian, Romanian, and Ukrainian.
- Regional workshops on Emerald Network management, community-based natural resource management, wood tracking systems and the implications of the EU Deforestation Regulation.
- Regional summary paper on advancing nature-positive investments with findings from country studies and a dedicated regional workshop.

Item 5. Intervention by the Civil Society Forum

Ruslan Havryliuk, Ukraine National Platform Facilitator and Steering Committee Member of the Eastern Partnership (EaP) Civil Society Forum, highlighted the role of civil society in promoting sustainable environmental, climate, and energy policies across the region. Drawing on the Forum's recent policy research, he noted that achieving environmental resilience remains a major challenge for Eastern Partnership countries. Particular emphasis was placed on the severe

environmental consequences of Russia's war against Ukraine, including the destruction of ecosystems, forests, water resources, and critical infrastructure such as the Kakhovka Dam. These impacts have significantly affected ecosystem services, with consequences extending beyond Ukraine to the wider region and globally. Mr. Havryliuk stressed the need for comprehensive assessments of environmental damage and lost ecosystem services, alongside international support for ecosystem restoration and recovery efforts. He also underlined the importance of strengthening environmental governance, institutional capacity, and ecosystem-services management to enhance regional resilience and support the European integration ambitions of EaP countries.

Angela Bularga, Programme Officer, European Commission, thanked the EaP Civil Society Forum for its valuable contributions and noted that its recommendations help shape EU policies and programme implementation. She pointed out that the EU's new strategic approach to the Black Sea region reflects civil society recommendations on environmental and climate resilience at the nexus with regional security. Ms. Bularga further noted that civil society input informs priorities for institutional reforms, bilateral cooperation, and country-specific reform agendas.

Item 6. Communication and visibility at programme closure

EU4Environment Communications Coordinator presented the programme's communication and outreach efforts aimed at increasing visibility and disseminating results across the Eastern Partnership region. The EU4Environment website remains the main communication platform, generating over two million impressions annually, while strong cooperation with EU Delegations and World Bank country offices helped amplify programme messages through national websites, social media channels, and newsletters. Communication products developed under the programme include country flyers, flyers on the Emerald Network, social media materials with infographics, feature stories illustrating the connection between nature protection and the development of sustainable economic activities in rural areas, "explainers", news articles, and learning videos on the Emerald Network and Areas of Special Conservation Interest (ASCIs) criteria. Particular attention was given to raising awareness of the Emerald Network through multilingual explainers and success stories demonstrating how biodiversity conservation can support local livelihoods and sustainable economic development. The presentation also highlighted targeted outreach and promotion of communication materials around international environmental days. Looking ahead, communication activities will focus on finalising the PSA in Moldova as part of the national campaign „Generația Pădurii” (“Forest Generation”), promoting final programme results through country profiles, report infographics for Result 4.4, and a closing video showcasing the programme's achievements and impact across the region. Final national events, or events on selected topics, to disseminate the results of EU4Environment work are also envisaged.

Item 7. Moving beyond EU4Environment: sustainability and scaling up of results

Fisseha Abissa reflected on the achievements of the EU4Environment programme and emphasised the importance of ensuring the sustainability and scaling up of its results. He noted that the programme has benefited from strong ownership and engagement from partner countries, particularly Armenia, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine, which has contributed to the successful achievement of most objectives. He highlighted ongoing efforts to build on programme outcomes through future investment projects and concept notes, particularly in Georgia and Armenia, where EU4Environment results are already informing larger-scale initiatives. Mr. Abissa stressed that

the programme was designed in a way that facilitates follow-up investments and long-term impact. He also acknowledged the strong partnership between the World Bank and the European Commission. Concluding, he called on all partners to continue working together to build on EU4Environment achievements, ensure their sustainability, and translate results into tangible benefits on the ground.

Maryna Bogush, Chief Specialist of the Department of International Cooperation, Science and Public Relations of the State Forest Resources Agency of Ukraine, highlighted that Ukraine's forest sector is undergoing a major transition towards sustainable, nature-based forest management despite the ongoing challenges of the war. She noted the valuable support provided through EU4Environment, which has helped Ukraine strengthen its strategic planning by providing data on sector financing, climate and carbon finance opportunities, monitoring and reporting systems, and ecosystem services. She noted that Ukraine is continuing to implement its Forest Management Strategy 2035 and the 2025–2027 Action Plan, while exploring opportunities for ecosystem service markets, carbon sequestration, and climate finance. Ms. Bogush also stressed the importance of mobilising investment for resilient forest restoration, modern forest inventories, wildfire and pest resilience, and value-added wood processing. She underlined that Ukraine intends to fully integrate EU4Environment results into national policies, institutions, and future investments.

Item 8. Recent policy and programme developments relevant for EaP countries

Angela Bularga recalled that EU4Environment was launched following the EaP Environment and Climate Ministerial in 2016 and was designed as a demand-driven programme to support green economy reforms while ensuring strong national ownership and political commitment. She highlighted how EU4Environment has evolved into the [EU4Green Recovery East programme](#), reflecting the new challenges and priorities that emerged following the COVID-19 crisis. The programme, operational since 2025, focuses on five key areas: circular economy, water management and nature-based solutions, environmental approximation with EU legislation, environmental data and information systems, and transboundary cooperation, particularly on shared river basins. She also presented other important EU-funded initiatives:

- [EU4Climate Resilience](#), which supports climate mitigation, adaptation and green finance with focus on taxonomy and green bonds.
- [EU4EMBLAS](#), dedicated to Black Sea environmental monitoring and protection. She highlighted achievements such as assessments of Black Sea ecosystem health, analysis of environmental impacts from the Kakhovka Dam destruction and oil spills, and support to Ukraine through laboratory equipment for water quality monitoring.

Ms. Bularga outlined ongoing efforts under both the EaP framework and the EU's strategic approach to the Black Sea. Future activities will continue to prioritise communities, particularly coastal communities, and promote the wider implementation of nature-based solutions through demonstration projects. She emphasised that these initiatives contribute directly to the objectives of the European Green Deal, the EU Biodiversity Strategy, and the Nature Restoration Law, while remaining guided by the principles of demand- and performance-driven cooperation.

In response to a question from Fisseha Abissa on the next generation of EU4Environment, Angela Bularga noted that EU support for biodiversity and forest management will continue, although the next phase is still being defined. Future efforts will focus on further mainstreaming biodiversity

into investments, addressing country-driven priorities, and expanding the use of financial instruments such as guarantees and green bonds. Regional programmes and selected demonstration projects, particularly on nature-based solutions and community engagement, will also likely continue. Greater support will be directed towards countries advancing environmental reforms, through a Team Europe approach and partnerships with international financial institutions, including the World Bank. The current EU4Environment programme continues under EU4Green Recovery East, launched in 2025. Early results are encouraging, and an assessment planned for the autumn will help review progress.

Oksana Abduloeva acknowledged the significant role of the EU4Environment programme in supporting Ukraine's EU integration process, particularly the alignment of national environmental and climate legislation with the EU acquis under Chapter 27. She stressed that, given the country's reduced institutional capacity and loss of human capital, continued support should prioritise strengthening institutional and human capacities to help Ukraine meet its environmental obligations and advance implementation of the Green Agenda.

Angela Bularga highlighted that substantial support is already in place for EU approximation under Chapter 27, with dedicated teams actively assisting Ukraine and Moldova, including during the screening process. She confirmed that support will continue through the EU for Green Recovery East programme with sufficient resources secured for at least the first 2–3 years. She also noted the scale of the challenges, particularly in Ukraine, and emphasised the need for innovative solutions. In this context, she introduced a new AI-based tool designed to support legal approximation work, which is expected to improve efficiency and help address capacity constraints. While stressing that technology cannot replace the human expertise required for reforms, she underlined its potential to accelerate and support the work of administrations.

Responding to a question on the evaluation of the EU4Environment programme, Angela Bularga explained that the European Commission regularly assesses projects after implementation, often through sector-wide evaluations. She provided the example of EU4Climate that had been included in such an evaluation after completion. EU4Environment could be evaluated in the future too. In addition, she stressed the importance of final reports that clearly demonstrate results on the ground, supported by robust logframes and project outputs. Ms. Bularga committed to helping raise the visibility of EU4Environment products and results across the European Commission and acknowledged the vital role of EU Delegations in supporting implementation and ensuring benefits for partner countries and their citizens. She also emphasised that cooperation on water and transboundary water management delivers shared benefits for both partner countries and EU citizens, including improved water quality and significant economic gains. She stressed that the EU will continue strengthening these mutually beneficial partnerships through cooperation in the Black Sea region, enhanced regional connectivity, and the Global Gateway initiative, with the aim of improving people's well-being and environmental sustainability.

Item 9. Wrap up and closing remarks

Angela Bularga welcomed the stock-taking of EU4Environment's achievements and noted that, although the programme is approaching its end, there is still time to complete remaining activities and further promote its results. She expressed appreciation for the extension that enabled the programme to maximise its impact and thanked the World Bank team, national counterparts, civil society organisations, local authorities, and communities for their contributions.