

**ENVIRONMENT DIRECTORATE  
ENVIRONMENT POLICY COMMITTEE  
TASK FORCE FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION  
PROGRAMME FOR CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE, CAUCASUS AND CENTRAL ASIA**

**Possible Inputs of the EAP Task Force to the 2016 “Environment for Europe” Ministerial Conference  
and the future of the EAP Task Force**

**Note by the Secretariat**

**Annual meeting of the EAP Task Force, 7-8 October 2015, Tashkent Uzbekistan**

*Agenda item: 2 and 10*

*This note originally was prepared for the Bureau meeting of the EAP Task Force (Paris, 13 April 2015) and was revised on the basis of that discussion (ref. the Summary Record ENV/EPOC/EAP/M(2015)2).*

*ACTION REQUIRED: For discussion.*

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## POSSIBLE INPUTS OF THE EAP TASK FORCE TO THE 2016 “ENVIRONMENT FOR EUROPE” MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE AND THE FUTURE OF THE EAP TASK FORCE

### NOTE BY THE SECRETARIAT

#### 1. The EAP Task Force – Origins

1. The Environmental Action Programme (EAP) for Central and Eastern Europe was adopted in 1993 by Environment Ministers in Luzern, Switzerland, as part of the “Environment for Europe” process after the political changes of 1989-90. The EAP provided an analytical framework and guide for identifying the most serious environmental problems in Central and Eastern Europe and for developing realistic, efficient and cost-effective solutions to address priority problems while building on and reinforcing the market economy and democratic reforms in Central and Eastern Europe.

2. In Luzern Ministers established an inter-governmental Task Force to implement the EAP. The OECD was asked to provide a secretariat to facilitate drawing upon policy analysis and recommendations prepared within OECD directorates and committees, dealing not only with environmental matters but also financial and enterprise affairs, public management, economics, regulatory reform and many others.

#### 2. EAP Task Force work in the EECCA region

3. The accession of four Central European countries to the OECD in 1995-2000 and anticipated accession of several countries from the region to the European Union in the 2000s led to the adjustment of the EAP Task Force geographical coverage. Since the 1998 Arhus Ministerial Conference, the EAP Task Force’s main mission has been to guide reforms of environmental policies in the transition economies of twelve countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus, and Central Asia (EECCA), including Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

4. The work of the EAP Task Force continued to promote the integration of environmental considerations into the processes of economic, social and political reform and to strengthen institutional and human capacities for environmental management. Since 2011, the EAP Task Force work has been organised around two programme areas:

- *Strengthening water management* - which facilitates the reform of water policies and the water sector in EECCA, and helps to mobilise finance for achieving the water-related Millennium Development Goals. The initial focus was on water supply and sanitation and on the development and implementation of financially realistic national strategies in this area. More recently, work has broadened to include water resource management. The main aim has been to support National Policy Dialogues based on robust analysis. The work has been implemented by the OECD in cooperation with UNECE as part of the European Union’s (EU) Water Initiative (EUWI).
- *Policies for green growth* - which focuses on issues of a cross-cutting character, with a high potential to simultaneously contribute to environmental improvements, economic development, and the rule of law, with emphasis on reforming economic instruments for managing environmentally harmful products, greening small and medium-sized enterprises, reforming environmentally harmful subsidies, mobilising financing, both public and private, for green investment and developing a framework for measuring progress towards green growth. The implementation of this programme was accelerated in 2013 by launching the EaP GREEN project

funded by the European Union and implemented jointly by the UNECE, UNEP and UNIDO and OECD.

5. Over the years the EAP Task Force budget reached about EUR 1.5-2 million annually which provided much needed stabilisation in the implementation of its work programme. The major donors have been the European Union, Germany, Finland, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, and Switzerland, as well as Austria and the Czech Republic.

6. Since its inception, the EAP Task Force has provided important support to the policy and institutional reform in Central and Eastern Europe, and in EECCA, with tangible results on the ground. Under the EAP Task Force, a number of tools have been developed and applied in individual countries, including computer based planning and financing tools, policy guidelines and toolkits, good practices, assessment methodologies and recommendations. The key value added of the EAP Task Force was related to:

- Building local ownership and consensus on policy principles and good practices through analytical work and dialogue within regional networks.
- Facilitating access to best practices and tools for effective environmental management.
- Implementing in-country pilot projects to demonstrate how policies and tools can be applied in practice.
- Facilitating dialogue and co-operation between OECD and partner countries to better target development co-operation efforts.

### **3. Inputs to the 2016 Batumi Ministerial Conference and the future of the EAP Task Force**

7. The EAP Task Force mandate has been linked to the “Environment for Europe” process and related Ministerial Conferences. At the last conference in Astana (21-23 September 2011), the Ministers “... welcomed the work of the EAP Task Force...” and “...invited the OECD to continue this work... in co-operation with RECs and other partners”.

8. The next “Environment for Europe” Ministerial Conference, that will take place on 8-10 June 2016 in Batumi, Georgia, provides an opportunity for presenting the wealth of the EAP Task Force work and for influencing the policy debate. The OECD/EAP Task Force has, at the request by the organisers of the Batumi Conference, provided inputs to two background documents on the main themes of the conference: green economy and air pollution. The OECD has also contributed to the preparation of one of the key outcomes of the conference, the Pan-European Strategic Framework for Greening the Economy.

9. The EAP Task Force could also consider developing policy briefs that summarise policy recommendations, lessons learned and best practices, highlighting key achievements of the EAP Task Force’s work since the Astana Ministerial Conference (2011). All major reports developed within the EAP Task Force, and the information material (e.g. the updated EUWI EECCA brochure), could be presented at an information stand at the Batumi Conference venue. The EAP Task Force could also consider organising a side event during the Conference on a selected priority topic, for example related to green growth/greening the economy/water management. The feasibility of highlighting the work of the OECD/EAP Task Force during one of the Ministerial sessions will be assessed with the UNECE.

#### 4. Re-branding of the current EAP Task Force

10. Since the mandate of the EAP Task Force has been linked to the “Environment for Europe” Ministerial Conferences, the Batumi Ministerial Conference will provide an occasion to consider the future of the EAP Task Force, including its substantive and geographical focus as well as modes of operations. The new mandate, and any adjustments to it, should aim to make the EAP Task Force brand and institutional arrangements more relevant to new priorities and reinforce the effectiveness of support, especially in light of the increasing diversification of the EECCA region, emerging priorities in the regional and international context, including recent emphasis on green growth but also uneven commitment to reform and fundraising constraints.

11. The Bureau of the EAP Task Force (at its meeting on 13 April 2015) noted that there is continued demand for the EAP Task Force-like programme and OECD support. Given the increasing focus on green growth in the work of the EAP Task Force in recent years and the focus of the Batumi Ministerial meeting on the transition to a green economy, the re-branding of the programme should take these developments as well as the post-2015 agenda into account. The future programme could aim to support countries to devise policies that would encourage a more rapid shift towards greener growth, with a particular focus on market-based incentives and resource efficiency. Its future activities could build on the currently established priorities and draw on relevant projects carried out within the OECD’s core programme of work. The main areas of work could include:

- Supporting countries to accelerate policy reforms, including by devising regulatory and economic instruments and strengthening the rule of law and compliance with environmental requirements (e.g. air quality and waste management), also those stemming from the EU *acquis communautaire* and OECD standards. This could also include activities aimed at greening of industry (e.g. small and medium-sized enterprises, state-owned enterprises, extractive sectors) and strengthening the green growth measurement framework by using green growth indicators.
- Helping countries to leverage and diversify financing for infrastructure development, especially to address climate change mitigation and adaptation. Working with International Finance Institutions (IFIs) and local banks to enable private-sector green investments would be important so as to enhance the countries’ readiness for accessing finance at various levels (e.g. national and sub-national governments, financiers and local implementing entities).
- Guiding the reform of water policies for inclusive green growth, and when appropriate supporting convergence with the principles and objectives of the Water Framework Directive and related EU Directives as well as the OECD recommendations. The activities could assist institutional stakeholders and donors to exchange information and coordinate work on water-related projects and help to mobilise financial support to achieve more realistic policy objectives and establish more robust institutional frameworks for water management. Special emphasis could be placed on managing water-energy-food-ecosystems security nexus and transboundary water co-operation.

12. Overall, the OECD could help countries to make more tangible progress in strengthening institutional frameworks and capacity that would enable transition to green growth. Activities may focus on reforming institutions and further strengthening the budget planning capacity in line with green growth objectives.

13. The OECD is already helping countries to align policies across different line ministries that will be needed to shift to a green economy. The rebranded programme could continue to provide a platform to

further facilitate this type of cross-ministerial policy dialogues<sup>1</sup> as appropriate, at the national and regional/international levels. At the same time, traditional issues on the agenda of Environment Ministries will continue to be addressed (e.g. air pollution, waste management).

14. The OECD could also help the EECCA countries exchange experiences and best practices (and analytical tools) as well as lessons learned with relevant OECD and non-OECD countries from other regions, as appropriate.

15. The future activities under the rebranded programme could also aim to maximise synergies with work by other international organisations, such as UN agencies, the European Environmental Agency, and International Financial Institutions.

## **5. Issues for Discussion**

- i. What inputs from the EAP Task Force to the Batumi Ministerial Conference would be most relevant and useful for the EAP Task Force members and the future work?
- ii. Should the post Batumi work programme, supported by the OECD, continue to focus on the current work programme areas: i) water management (including the work on the water-energy-food nexus) and ii) policy reforms and financing for green growth (including addressing climate change) or should it consider additional and/or different priorities? How could such a work programme be funded in a sustainable way?
- iii. How could the EAP Task Force be “rebranded” (by changing its name) taking account of new policy priorities related to the reinforced emphasis on green growth/economy?
- iv. How can the EAP Task Force (under a new name) reinforce political support from a wider range of OECD and partner countries, reflecting the growing diversity in the EECCA region, as well as a wider range of Ministries (Environment, Economy/Finance, Energy)?

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<sup>1</sup> For water resources management, the National Policy Dialogues currently serve as such a platform at the national level.