



Action funded by
the European Union

EU4Environment

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

EU4ENVIRONMENT VIRTUAL COUNTRY CONSULTATIONS

ARMENIA

Tuesday, 19 May 2020

Start: 10h Brussels/Paris time - 12h Yerevan time
End: 11h30 Brussels/Paris time - 13h30 Yerevan time

Summary Record

Action implemented by:



Summary record

Item 1. Welcome by the Chair of the meeting

Mr. Michael Rupp, Team Leader, opened the meeting and welcomed the participants on behalf of the European Commission (EC). He pointed out the importance of these consultations on EU4Environment with Armenia, the first in a series of virtual meetings in the challenging times of the COVID-19 pandemic. Mr. Rupp emphasised the European Union's comprehensive support to the Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries to address the COVID-19 challenges, including an expeditious contract concluded with the World Health Organization to deliver personal protective equipment, diagnostic tests, and other necessary equipment and technical support to the EaP countries. Mr. Rupp emphasised high uncertainty related to the development of the pandemic but called for actions using alternative tools.

Item 2. Update on in-country situation

The participants took note of:

- Ms. Irina Ghaplanyan, Deputy Minister of Environment intervention in which she highlighted challenges of living in the isolated world, but encouraged to remain positive, though acknowledging that the world would need to live with the virus for some time.

Ms. Ghaplanyan emphasised particular interest of Armenia in finding the most effective recovery measures for the post-COVID-19 and to use this situation to make the economy more sustainable. She also highlighted proactive response of the Armenian government, which included 17 supporting acts with a wide spectrum of measures to support to businesses, and vulnerable people. These include engaging the private sector, flexible provision of financial resources taking account of the limitations within the fiscal space. She also provided an example of a project to plant trees as a means to create jobs which is an important component of the recovery plans. Ms. Ghaplanyan pointed out the readjustments of working methods in the Ministries in Armenia (few persons in Ministries, core staff working from home).

In the context of the EU4Environment implementation, she emphasised the importance of timely communication, ensuring country ownership of activities, the need to create a coordination mechanism for better synergies within the Action and review the feasibility of using resources not spent on travel and meetings during the confinement for additional activities. She asked also for an update from the EC on the World Bank component of EU4Environment.

- Mr. Rupp response concerning a contract with the World Bank (WB) that it is temporary on hold due to on-going negotiations of a wider framework agreement between the EC and the WB, and related legal issues. He offered to keep Armenia and the Partners informed on further progress.

Decisions and follow up:

The participants agreed to:

- continue ensuring the country ownership of activities;
- discuss the speedy creation of a national coordination mechanism for EU4Environment, linked with mechanisms for inter-ministerial dialogue on green economy;
- consider how savings from travel and meetings not carried out during the confinement period can be used for additional activities in Armenia;
- receive updates from the EC on the progress with the World Bank contract under EU4Environment.

Item 3. Update on past and on-going EU4Environment activities and plans for the rest of the year

The participants took note of:

- Updates on the implementation of activities under the Armenia Work Plan by the Implementing Partners:
 - Result 1 (UNEP, UNECE) – see [Slide 2-3](#);
 - Result 2 (UNEP, UNIDO) – see [Slides 4-5](#);
 - Result 3 and 5.3 (OECD) – see [Slides 6-7](#).
- Armenia's preference to continue the communication and meetings via virtual modes, but for webinars/trainings explore an option of engaging local consultants;

- Armenian strategy on reduction of plastic pollution, including a provision for the ban on the use of plastics bags till 2022, and relevance of UNIDO's work with SMEs (notably, extending the list with companies working with plastics) and UNEP's work on investment analysis that will focus on a deposit-refund system for PET bottles.
- Response from UNIDO on the approaches applied within Resource Efficient and Cleaner Production (RECP) activities following a request from the EU Delegation to Armenia to clarify expected impacts of the RECP work, and
- Comments about the need for closer links between work on environmental enforcement and compliance and that on energy efficiency;
- Clarification from UNIDO about only one on-going UNIDO contract with the REC Caucasus and acknowledgement of importance of full compliance with the EU visibility requirements.

Decisions and follow up:

The Participants agreed to:

- Continue to implement the activities as envisaged in the Work Plan, using alternative modes of operation (virtual communications/meetings and engaging local consultants);
- Not to delay or postpone activities and/or timeline of the Programme;
- Follow up on bilateral basis on questions related to individual activities (ex. UNIDO – RECP, companies working with plastics, OECD - on compliance) and continue sharing the new project documentation as available (ex. UNIDO – new leaflet, OECD - on subsidies work);
- Follow up by UNIDO with the REC Caucasus on the visibility requirements.

Item 4. Preparation for the EU4Environment Regional Assembly meeting

The participants took note of:

- Update by the OECD on coordination activities, and proposed options to hold the next Regional Assembly, see [Slide 9](#) of the Presentation;
- Request from Armenia on the importance of moving forward and a general agreement to maintain the date of the Regional Assembly as planned on 22-23 September 2020 as a virtual meeting, and a possible in-person meeting in November-December 2020;
- Information from Armenia about a change in the leadership of the Ministry of Environment;
- Update from the EC on:
 - the organisation of the EaP Panel on Environment and Climate in the virtual format in June (with a possible second part in July, also virtual);
 - the organisation of the EaP Environment Ministerial on 7 October 2020, possibly in a virtual format (subject to further discussion and confirmation (with green finance as one of the agenda items which will also be discussed at the Panel meeting).

Decisions and follow up:

The participants agreed to:

- Suggest keeping the dates of the second Regional Assembly meeting as planned on 22-23 September 2020 as a virtual meeting; and consider organising the in-person meeting in November-December 2020, subject to lifting of the travel restrictions.

Item 5. Communication (Result 5.2) and coordination with other projects

The participants took note of:

- Update by the OECD on communication activities, see [Slide 10](#) of the presentation;
- Proposal of the EU Delegation in Armenia to publish a link of their [Facebook account](#);
- UNECE's plans to produce a video, similar to one under the EaP GREEN, on transboundary impact assessment;
- EC invitation for the Partners to provide inputs to the OPEN communication campaign for the World Environment Day, which will run from 1 to 5 June 2020, and for Ministries to echo some posts, made available during this campaign;
- The EC's suggestion for UNEP to contribute to a training of the Young European Ambassadors as part of the OPEN programme and in preparation for World Environment Day.

Decisions and follow up:

The Participants agreed to:

- Continue implementing the communication activities, as envisaged in the Work Plan;
- Continue paying particular attention to comply with the EU's visibility requirements;
- UNECE consulting with the EC on the visibility requirements and the translation into national languages;
- Publishing a link of the EUD Facebook account by OECD;
- Provide inputs to the OPEN WED's campaign by the Partners;
- Follow up on a training for the young EU ambassadors by UNEP.

Item 6. Progress on administrative issues (Result 5.1)

The participants took note of:

- Update by the OECD on the Action Registration, National Action Coordinator (NAC) and the National Implementing Committee (NIC);
- Information by OECD that there is no need for the Programme registration in Armenia;
- OECD and UNEP's work on appointing the National Action Coordinators (NAC), following DoA provisions, in all EaP countries to support the implementation of activities (with UNEP contracting out the NACs in Azerbaijan and Moldova, and OECD – in Armenia, Georgia and Ukraine; in Belarus, a NAC will be formally contracted after the official registration);
- Information by OECD about the NAC in Armenia (Mr. Tigran Sekoyan is currently on a short-term contract, and that OECD is in process of preparing an announcement for a longer-term contract, in compliance with the internal procurement requirements);
- Information from Armenia about not having currently working arrangements for an inter-ministerial dialogues on the environment (there is one on climate) and its request to move forward to establish the NIC, making this instrument useful for Armenia to promote the green economy dialogue among agencies and co-ordinate the activities under EU4Environment;
- Offer of the Ministry of Environment to share a number of existing legal instruments and explore an opportunity of using one of these instruments to oversee the Programme implementation;
- UNEP's initiative to support setting up inter-ministerial working group on green economy, which may bring additional benefits beyond the Programme implementation (opening cross-sectoral dialogue, support to various policy developments).

Decisions and follow up:

The participants agreed to:

- Update the Ministries and the Partners by OECD upon the completion of the internal procedures and share the announcement for a longer-term NAC contract;
- Share existing legal instruments on inter-ministerial co-operation by the Ministry of Environment
- Although Activity 1.1.3: Facilitation of National Policy Dialogues on Green Economy was not included in the Work Plan for Armenia given the expressed interest UNEP and OECD to support setting up a coordination mechanism for dialogue on issues of green economy.

Item 7. Other issues and closure

- Ms. Irina Ghaplanyan, Deputy Minister of Environment, thanked the participants and highlighted the importance of the EU4Environment work for Armenia, especially synergies and opportunities to show case the Ministry's agenda. She expressed her wishes for the success of the project despite the challenging situation of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Mr. Michael Rupp, European Commission thanked the participants for the discussion and closed the meeting.

Decisions and follow up:

- OECD will prepare and circulate a draft Summary record for comments;
- All meeting documents will be re-sent to the participants.

Agenda

- | | | |
|---------------------------|---|--|
| 10:00-10:05
(5 min) | 1 | Welcome by the Chair of the meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Mr. Michael Rupp, EC/DG NEAR |
| 10:05 - 10:15
(10 min) | 2 | Update on in-country situation <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Short presentations on the current situation by the National Focal Points (NFPs), the post COVID-19 recovery plans and their potential impacts on greening the economy<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Ms. Irina Ghaplanyan, Deputy Minister of Environment● Mr. Avetis Hovhannisyan, Advisor to the Minister of Economy |
| 10:15 - 10:55
(40 min) | 3 | Update on past and on-going EU4Environment activities and plans for the rest of the year <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Presentations by Implementing Partners (see a PPT presentation)<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Result 1 (UNEP and UNECE)● Result 2 (UNIDO)● Result 3 and 5.3 (OECD)○ Reactions from the country NFPs after each result: feasibility of using alternative modes of operation (ex. virtual meetings, web-based trainings, use of local consultants), and maintaining/postponing/advancing activities. More in-depth discussions could be carried out on a bilateral basis after the consultation. |
| 10:55 - 11:05
(10 min) | 4 | Preparation for the EU4Environment Regional Assembly meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Presentation of the proposed options by OECD (see a PPT presentation)<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Maintaining the planned date for the Regional Assembly in the week of 21 September 2020 (suggested 22-23 September) as a virtual meeting by Zoom (e.g. 3 hour morning sessions over two days)● an in-person meeting after travel restrictions are lifted, possibly November-December in Kyiv, Ukraine○ Reactions from the country |
| 11:05 - 11:15
(10 min) | 5 | Communication (Result 5.2) and coordination with other projects <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Presentation by OECD (see a PPT presentation)○ Reactions from the country |
| 11:15 - 11:25
(10 min) | 6 | Progress on administrative issues (Result 5.1) <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Presentation by OECD on the Action Registration, National Action Coordinator and the National Implementing Committee○ Reactions from the country |
| 11:25 - 11:30
(5 min) | 7 | Other issues and closure <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Mr. Michael Rupp, EC/DG NEAR |

List of participants

Government representatives		
Ministry of Environment	Ms. Irina GHAPLANYAN Deputy Minister EU4Environment National Focal Point	
	Ms. Ruzanna GRIGORYAN Head of the International Cooperation Department	
	Ms. Lusine AVETISYAN Head of the Strategic Environmental Department	
Ministry of Economy	Mr. Avetis HOVHANNISYAN Advisor to Minister EU4Environment National Focal Point	
National Action Coordinator and Partners' focal points		
EU4Environment National Action Coordinator	Mr. Tigran SEKOYAN	
UNIDO Country Representative	Ms. Anahit SIMONYAN	
European Commission and EU Delegation		
EC/DG NEAR	Mr. Michael RUPP Team Leader Connectivity	
	Ms. Angela BULARGA International Aid / Cooperation Officer	
EC/DG CLIMA	Ms. Justyna GLODOWSKA-WERNERT Policy Officer	
EC/DG ENV	Andrzej JANUSZEWSKI	
EU Delegation in Armenia	Mr. Andrea BAGGIOLI International Aid/Cooperation Officer	
Implementing Partners		
UNEP	Ms. Rie TSUTSUMI Project Coordinator	
	Mr. Alex LESHCHYNSKY Technical Officer – Eco-innovation	
UNECE	Mr. Leonid KALASHNYK Project Coordinator	
	Ms. Elena KASHINA Programme Management Assistant	
UNIDO	Ms. Carolina GONZALEZ MUELLER Project Manager	
	Ms. Tatiana CHERNYAVSKAYA Project Coordinator	

OECD	Mr. Krzysztof MICHALAK Senior Action Coordinator	
	Ms. Irina BELKAHIA Assistant Action Coordinator	
	Ms. Maria DUBOIS Communications officer	
	Mr. Jonathan WRIGHT Project Assistant	
	Ms. Nelly PETKOVA Policy Analyst	
	Mr. David SIMEK Policy Analyst	
	Mr. Guy HALPERN Policy Analyst	
	Ms. Isabella NEUWEG Policy Analyst	
	Ms. Dianne FOWLER Resource Management Advisor	
	Ms. Nausicaa MASI Resource Management Advisor	
World Bank	Mr. Hmayak AVAGYAN WB office in Yerevan	