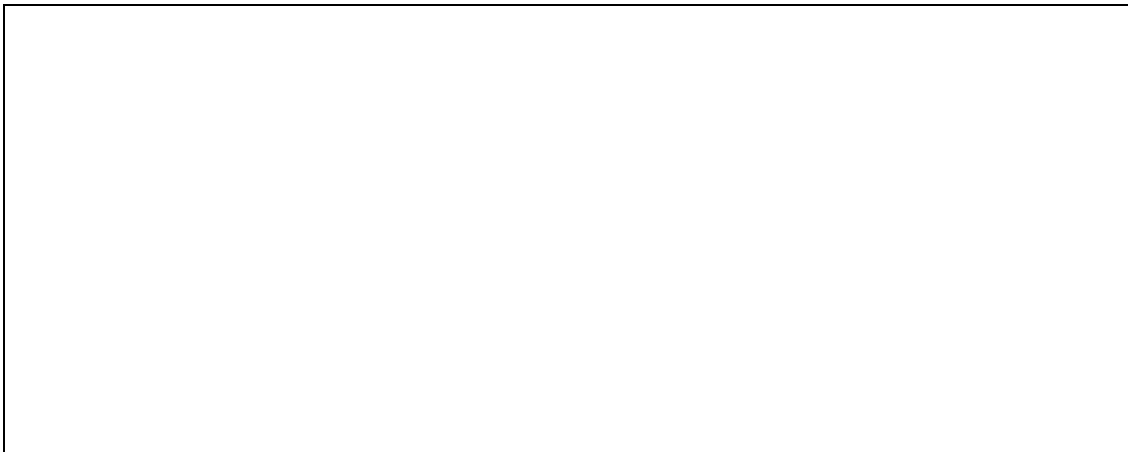


Draft Summary Record of the 2023 GREEN Action Task Force Annual Meeting

11-12 May 2023, Istanbul, Türkiye



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Draft summary record

Key outcomes of the meeting

1. The 2023 [Annual Meeting of the GREEN Action Task Force](#) was held on 11 and 12 June 2023 at the OECD Istanbul Regional Centre, Türkiye. The meeting was attended by more than 100 participants, including 45 in-person and 60 online participants. The meeting gathered government officials from the countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA) and OECD member countries as well as from representatives of development co-operation partners, civil society organisations and the private sector.
2. During the 2023 Annual Meeting the Task Force members and partners:
 - acknowledged a number of activities carried out under the GATF work programme in EECCA since the last GATF meeting in June 2022, including work on: green finance and investment (e.g., reform of environmental taxation, pollution payments and harmful subsidies, strengthening national environmental funds, development environmental project pipelines and issuing green bonds); water-energy-land use nexus; water management; sustainable infrastructure.
 - welcomed the emphasis on the concrete results on the ground and the engagement of other sectoral administration, the private sector and the public.
 - agreed to continue the implementation of the GREEN Action Task Force (GATF) work programme as proposed at the June 2022 meeting;
 - identified some opportunities and challenges related to selected substantive elements of greening the economies transition in EECCA: i) private-sector engagement; ii) greening public finance; iii) mobilising and catalysing private-sector investment and iv) the current state and ways forward for biodiversity policies.
 - designated Members of the Task Force Bureau for the 2023-24 term.
3. The GATF meeting was preceded by a special session on “Environmental Impacts of the Russian Aggression Against Ukraine, Prospects for a Green Reconstruction of Ukraine, and the Role of the GREEN Action Task Force”. During the discussion, participants reviewed the environmental impacts of the Russian aggression against Ukraine and emphasised the need for immediate support in assessing environmental damages and long-term assistance for the country’s reconstruction. Several participants also emphasised the importance of continuous environmental legislation reform and prioritising environmental issues in Ukraine’s post-war recovery activities.
4. The meeting agenda, presentation slides and relevant meeting documents, including this summary are available on the event webpage [\[link\]](#).

Item 1: Opening remarks, adoption of an agenda and a draft summary record of the 2022 Annual Meeting

Meeting documents

- Draft agenda [[ENV/EPOC/EAP/A\(2023\)1](#)]
- Summary record of the 2022 Annual Meeting [[ENV/EPOC/EAP/M\(2022\)2](#)]

5. The meeting was opened by Mr. Jürgen Keinhorst (Germany, Co-chair of the GREEN Action Task Force) who welcomed the participants and introduced the meeting agenda. He highlighted the impacts of the war in Ukraine on the region, as well as increasing challenges to accessing affordable capital and long-term financing for green transition such as transformative energy transition. On behalf of Türkiye, the participants were welcomed by Ms. Arzu Onsal from the Ministry of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change who stressed the need for developing bankable and result-oriented projects in support of green economy transition. She also underlined the importance of engaging the private sector and financial institutions, and developing regulations and instruments to facilitate climate investment, highlighting the country's recent experience in issuing green bonds amounting to USD 2.5 billion. Mr. Krzysztof Michalak (OECD), who welcomed the GATF Members on behalf of the Secretariat, highlighted the Task Force's important role in supporting the region's green economy transition. He also highlighted the role of the OECD Istanbul Centre as a n important regional hub of co-operation, including on environment and climate issues.

6. The GATF members adopted the agenda and draft summary record of the 2022 Annual Meeting of the Task Force.

Item 2: Implementation of 2023-2024 Programme of Work and Budget of GREEN Action Task Force

Background document

- GREEN Action Task Force Work Programme 2023-24 [[ENV/EPOC/EAP\(2022\)1/REV1](#)]

7. The OECD Secretariat provided an [update on the implementation](#) of the 2023-2024 Programme of Work and Budget since the last Annual Meeting in 2022 and future plans of the GREEN Action Task Force.

8. Participants welcomed progress made by the GREEN Action Task Force during the past year. The discussion focused on reinforcing the impacts, achieving practical results, and bringing benefits of cooperation under the Task Force. The participants highlighted important elements of the work programme that require further emphasis. These included: the use of indicators for measuring progress on sustainable infrastructure development; the need to mobilise further green finance, including through green bonds; the importance of promoting disclosure of Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) risks and assisting the private sector in understanding and reporting on sustainable issues in accordance with international standards.

Item 3: Thematic discussion: Private-sector engagement in green economy transition in EECCA

Background document

- Climate-resilient agribusiness in Central Asia: Selected examples of the Water, Energy, Land-use Nexus approach [[link](#)]

9. This session focused on the private sector's role in driving the green economy transition in the EECCA region. The session highlighted the importance of private-sector engagement in aligning policy commitments on green growth with actions across the real economy. Examples of good practices and challenges in engagement between public and private sectors were discussed, along with the Task Force's contribution to scaling up such practices within the region.

10. The scene-setting speakers presented several encouraging examples of the private-sector engagement, including in the climate-resilient agribusinesses in the EECCA region, the role of governments in engaging the private sector for sustainable development, experiences in promoting biodiesel production business in Georgia, the expectations of businesses in advancing government support for the green economy transition, and lessons for engagement with agri-businesses from financial institutions' perspectives. [New case studies by the OECD focusing on agribusiness in Central Asia](#) that generate multifaceted benefits for water, energy, and food security were also presented.

11. The ongoing work of the OECD on industry decarbonisation and planned activities in the [Sustainable Infrastructure Programme in Asia \(SIPA\)](#) stimulated a lively discussion about an upcoming assessment of opportunities for the development of green hydrogen for industry decarbonisation in Mongolia, as well as a discussion to be held on hard-to-abate industries in Kazakhstan.

12. During the discussion the participants highlighted a number of new and innovative initiatives by the private sector in supporting green economy transition in the region. Several speakers also underlined the governments' willingness to support innovations and policy reforms. They also highlighted the importance of further deepening dialogue between public and private sector entities, as well as supporting customer education. A new project under the GATF on promoting the European Green Deal in the EU Eastern Partner countries ("[ProGRess](#)") that will be implemented by OECD and GIZ was also presented. It aims to provide support to farmers and agribusiness for reducing environmental and climate impacts and mobilising public and private finance for the sectors.

Item 4: Thematic discussion: Mobilising and catalysing private-sector investment in green economy transition in EECCA

Background document:

- Green Economy Transition in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia: Progress and Ways Forward [\[link\]](#)

13. On the basis of the introductory presentations, participants discussed several issues related to catalysing private-sector investment for the green economy transition in the EECCA region. Despite the steady development of domestic financial systems in the EECCA countries, they still fall short in providing sufficient finance to promote the green economy transition in the region, while remaining vulnerable to external economic shocks. The recent inflationary pressure and higher capital costs resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic and Russia's aggression against Ukraine have further compounded the challenges. One of the key challenges that was raised related to accessing affordable financing for Small- and Medium-sized Enterprises which was acknowledged as a major obstacle to green growth in EECCA and globally.

14. Participants raised several points during the open discussion, including the effectiveness of capital market instruments in supporting the green economy transition, the role of different financial instruments such as green and sustainable bonds, the need to build experience and capacity for issuing and managing green bonds, and the importance of reporting standards for green assets and associated risks. Participants also highlighted the proliferation of initiatives in sustainable finance and ESG reporting standards as a challenge. Some participants also stressed that co-operation between the public and private sectors, as well as collaboration among neighbouring countries were essential. The need for further promoting themed bonds, such as climate, green or gender themed bonds, was also highlighted. The session concluded with

an acknowledgment of the need to redirect financial flows toward green and sustainable assets and to establish consistent ESG reporting standards to engage the private sector effectively. Participants also highlighted the topic of reporting standards for green assets (such as sustainable infrastructure). This was identified as an area for which governments of less advanced economies of the EECCA region would welcome analytical support and capacity-building.

Item 5: Thematic discussion: Greening public finance in EECCA countries

Background document:

- Green Economy Transition in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia: Progress and Ways Forward [\[link\]](#)

15. This session exchanged experiences in greening public finance management across the region, including: green public investment programmes and fiscal support for clean energy transition; Moldova's experience in developing and operating an Environmental Fund; the Georgian Energy Development Fund's experience in financing renewable energy projects and cooperation with international financial institutions; and insights on public expenditure management in Austria.

16. The discussion focused on improving the effectiveness and mobilising public funding for green investments as a way to leverage additional private finance. The participants reviewed the experiences and lessons learned from the GREEN Action Task Force's work on designing public environmental expenditure programmes and the role of domestic public financial institutions in supporting net-zero and local pollution reduction. The upcoming Green Finance Conference in the EU's Eastern Partnership and Central Asia, scheduled for 19-20 September 2023, in Brussels, was announced during the meeting as an opportunity to further delve into these topics. The conference will provide a platform to review progress in improving the use of existing resources for green investment and mobilising additional public and private finance. The conference will also identify ways to mobilised additional green finance in the region.

Item 6: Thematic discussion: Biodiversity policies in EECCA -- Current state and ways forward

Background document

- Biodiversity policies in EECCA - Current status and possible ways forward for the GREEN Action Task Force [Room document 1]

17. In this session, participants engaged in a thematic discussion on biodiversity policies in EECCA countries, focusing on the current state and ways forward for the Task Force. Participants from the region and keynote speakers from the EU and the International Union for Nature Conservation highlighted the recently adopted Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework as a key driver for national and regional policy processes on biodiversity conservation and natural resource management.

18. Key issues raised during the discussion included: the need for improved monitoring and data collection, addressing fragmented areas and protecting non-representative biodiversity, and engaging Ministries of Economy in biodiversity initiatives. Participants also highlighted the importance of education, raising awareness, and enhancing the skills of the younger generation. A participant shared information on the economic benefits of biodiversity conservation, including the positive impacts of protected areas on tourism and job creation. The economic aspects of biodiversity from human activities were also highlighted, emphasising the need for capacity building and awareness in industries. The concept of eco-industrial parks and the role of biodiversity in the broader sustainable development goals were discussed.

19. Several participants proposed the Task Force to consider supporting interested EECCA countries in integrating biodiversity into economic and sectoral policies, regulations, as well as project planning and implementation processes. They also suggested that the OECD consider helping interested EECCA countries develop and adopt appropriate economic and financial instruments for supporting biodiversity and furthering the private-sector engagement. The OECD-led projects on water management (EU4Environment for Water and Environmental Data) and on the Water-energy-land use Nexus were welcomed as already providing support in this area. The work being led by [the World Bank under the EU4Environment: Green Economy Programme](#) was also presented as an example of support to the region on biodiversity and eco-system management, addressing illegal logging and mobilising finance for biodiversity projects.

Item 7: Designation of Bureau Members for the 2023-2024 term

Background document

- Designation of Bureau Members of the GREEN Action Task Force for the period 2023-2024 [Room document 2]

20. Taking into account the new mandate of the GATF received from the “Environment for Europe” Ministerial meeting in October 2022, the Task Force designated its Co-chairs and Bureau Members for the term 2023-2024 as presented in a table below. The Task Force also agreed that there would be further discussion needed to identify and designate a Vice-chair from the Central Asian region and that the Secretariat would deal with this issue.

	EECCA countries	OECD member countries
Co-chair	Ms Iordanca-Rodica Iordanov Minister, Ministry of Environment, Republic of Moldova	Mr Jürgen Keinhorst Head of Division for Eastern Europe, Central Asia, Africa and the Middle East, BMUV, Germany
Vice-chair	Ms Gayane Gabrielyan Deputy Minister, Ministry of Environment, Armenia	Mr Norbert Kurilla Presidential Administration, Advisor to the President, Slovak Republic
Vice-chair	Ms Nino Tandilashvili Deputy Minister, Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, Georgia	Ms. Martine Rohn-Brossard Head of Europe, Trade and Development Cooperation. Section / Deputy Head of International Affairs Division, Federal Office for the Environment, Transport, Energy and Communications, Switzerland
Vice-chair	[Possibly from a Central Asian country]	Ms Katrin Zimmer, Programme Coordinator, Environmental Protection Agency, Sweden
Ex-officio members	European Commission / United Nations Economic Commission for Europe / United Nations Environment Programme	

Item 8: Other business and closing remarks

21. Mr. Keinhorst, the GATF Co-Chair thanks the GATF members and partners for an active engagement in the discussions and invited the Task Force members to provide further ideas and feedback related to the GATF operations to the Secretariat. He also thanked the GATF donors for their on-going support to the Task Force work. He expressed the appreciation of all the participants for the OECD Istanbul Centre’s support in the organisation of this Annual Meeting. He also thanked the Secretariat for the

organisation of the meeting and the interpreters for their service. He indicated that the possible dates of the next Task Force meeting could be 16-17 May 2024, which will be confirmed in due course.

Special Session of the GREEN Action Task Force Environmental Impacts of the Russian Aggression Against Ukraine, Prospects for a Green Reconstruction of Ukraine, and the Role of the GREEN Action Task Force (11 May 2023)

22. The Special Session on the impacts of the war on economic and environmental policies in Ukraine and the broader EECCA region was held prior to the main GATF Annual Meeting. The session began with opening remarks by Mr. Serhii Vlasenko, First Deputy Minister of Environment of Ukraine, who highlighted the significant environmental damages of the war, including toxic emissions, oil leaks, agricultural deterioration, mined territories, and the seizure of a nuclear power plant.

23. Presentations by the European Commission, UNECE and UNEP showcased various programmes that support Ukraine, such as humanitarian micro-financial assistance and the "[Phoenix Project](#)" for environmentally sound infrastructure. The activities of the Informal Inter-agency Coordination Group on environmental damage assessment in Ukraine, led by UNECE, UNEP and OECD, were also highlighted.

24. During the discussion, participants emphasised the need for immediate support in assessing environmental damages and long-term assistance for the country's reconstruction. Mr. Vlasenko offered to share with the OECD Secretariat a list of proposed projects for consideration. Several participants also emphasised the importance of continuous environmental legislation reform and prioritising environmental issues in Ukraine's post-war recovery activities.