



Contribution of the Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe (REC) to the 21st Session of the UNECE Committee on Environmental Policy (CEP-21) on October 27–30, 2015

Reference: Eighth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference, particularly items 5 (b) “Greening the economy” and 5 (c) “Cleaning the air” on the provisional agenda

1. The REC recognises the importance and relevance of the two themes of the forthcoming Environment for Europe (EfE) Ministerial Conference — “Greening the economy in the pan-European region” and “Improving air quality for a better environment and human health” — as agreed upon by the UNECE Committee on Environmental Policy (CEP) at its 20th session.
2. In response to the respective thematic documents and draft strategic frameworks related to these two themes, the REC recommends launching an initiative comprising policy assistance, development, dialogue and advice, as well as capacity-building and dissemination activities, for the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and potentially beyond.
3. For more than 25 years the REC has maintained multi-stakeholder platforms and offered technical assistance to the countries of the region for fostering sustainable development through dialogue and cooperation, thereby contributing to the improvement of the environment, social cohesion, stability and well-being.
4. The REC’s recently adopted political declaration and strategy for 2016–2020 is aligned with the EfE themes. As mandated by 32 countries and the European Commission, the REC is working to advance the transition to a circular and low-carbon economy, and is contributing to improving outdoor and indoor air quality.
5. While the REC’s proposed contribution is outlined below in the context of “Greening the economy in the pan-European region”, the REC recommends a similar set of actions to the CEP for “Improving air quality for a better environment and human health”, which will be further elaborated by the REC following CEP-21.
6. In terms of geographical coverage, the initiative presented below applies to EU member states and to the enlargement and neighbourhood countries of Central and Eastern Europe, where the REC, in cooperation with UNECE and available resource partners, will engage with its well-established country offices and expert network.

Initiative prepared and proposed by the REC

Greening the economy requires the active involvement of stakeholders and a mix of policy tools, as well as actions and investments from the public and private sectors. While national stewardship is a prerequisite, the REC can help to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the initiative through policy



preparation and the planning, coordination and monitoring of cross-cutting efforts. The overall objective of the initiative is to support governments in selecting, adopting and implementing suitable economic and regulatory policy instruments to green the economy, thereby enhancing the long-term sustainability of consumption and production patterns.

The following activities are recommended by the REC for consideration by the CEP:

1. Support to develop national policies reflecting the new strategic framework for greening the economy in the pan-European region

Task 1.1: Review of green economy–related policies

A comprehensive review of existing national policies and institutional mandates in relevant government bodies, a gap analysis of existing policies and a review of existing relevant financial incentives and disincentives will be carried out.

Task 1.2: Assistance in the development of measures aimed at greening the economy at national level

Assistance will be provided in the preparation of various measures targeting consumption (procurement, awareness raising) and production (cleaner production, green jobs, green products, eco-labelling, greening the supply chain).

Task 1.3: Trainings on relevant good practices

Trainings on good practices will be held to analyse and promote the methodological approaches of different UNECE member states with the aim of showcasing successful policy instruments/tools aimed at making the economy greener.

2. Assistance to specific policy areas/sectors

Task 2.1: Assistance in increasing resource efficiency at national level

Potential measures will be identified linked to priority resources in selected countries. Guidance will be provided on identifying priority resources; setting objectives and targets; identifying possible policy instruments; establishing indicators; carrying out awareness-raising activities; promoting stakeholder participation; and establishing an effective institutional framework. A consultation will be conducted with relevant stakeholders in order to gather inputs and insights.

Task 2.2: Assistance to selected countries in elaborating waste prevention programmes

Assistance will be provided to policy makers to set up a separate waste prevention programme and to integrate the programme into waste management plans or other environmental policy programmes, particularly if these documents are in the process of being updated. Support will



be given in setting targets, identifying priority sectors to be covered, and developing measures for quantitative and qualitative prevention.

Task 2.3: Platform building for sustainable industrial networks

Platforms will be established to support the development of sustainable industrial networks in order to reduce the use of virgin raw materials and decrease environmental pressures with the overall aim of promoting the circular economy in the selected countries. Sustainable industrial networks are built on collaboration between companies from various industrial sectors and the synergistic possibilities offered by geographical proximity. In such networks, the waste or by-product of one company is used by another as raw material. The platforms will integrate industry and policy representatives in selected countries. Synergy workshops will be organised for industrial representatives, providing them with matchmaking possibilities.

3: Awareness raising and international dissemination

Task 3.1: Awareness raising

Stakeholder consultations/events will be held to raise awareness in selected relevant sectors, thus ensuring unified understanding, prioritisation, and the coordination of efforts towards greening the economy.

Task 3.2: Visibility and international dissemination

A communication strategy and plan will be designed and implemented to strengthen the visibility of activities within and beyond the target regions of the initiative. Visibility-related activities will also be supported through the International Partnership for Expanding Waste Management Services of Local Authorities (IPLA), capitalising on the REC's role as IPLA's sub-regional secretariat for Central and Eastern Europe, selected Black Sea countries and Turkey.

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