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**GREEN Action Task Force**

**The 2022 “Environment for Europe” (EfE) Ministerial Conference and the GREEN Action Task Force: Possible inputs and mandate renewal**

**Discussion note**

Annual Meeting of the GREEN Action Task Force, 12-13 October 2021, Video Conference

Agenda item 7

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# The 2022 “Environment for Europe” Ministerial Conference and the GREEN Action Task Force: Possible inputs and mandate renewal

## The 2022 Environment for Europe (EfE) Ministerial Conference and the GREEN Action Task Force

The GREEN Action Task Force’s mandate (as well as the mandate under its earlier name EAP Task Force) has always been linked to the “Environment for Europe” (EfE) Ministerial Conferences. At the 8<sup>th</sup> EfE Conference in Batumi (June 2016), Ministers “welcome[d] the work of the Environmental Action Programme Task Force and invite[d] the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development to continue its activities under its new name, the Green Economy and Environment (GREEN) Action Programme Task Force, in cooperation with relevant partners”.

The next EfE Ministerial Conference, that will take place on 5-7 October 2022 in Nicosia, Cyprus, provides an opportunity for showcasing the results of the GREEN Action Task Force’s work and for influencing the policy debate. The OECD, and the GREEN Action Task Force, have already been asked by the UNECE’s Committee on Environmental Policy (CEP) Bureau as organisers of the Nicosia Conference to contribute where possible to the two chosen themes of the conference: (1) greening the economy of the pan-European region: working towards sustainable infrastructure and (2) applying principles of circular economy to sustainable tourism.

In the period leading up to the 2022 EfE Ministerial, the Task Force should consider the following three items:

- What inputs can the Task Force provide to the EfE Ministerial?
- What outputs and outcomes of the work of the Task Force could be showcased at the EfE Ministerial and how?
- How could the Secretariat and Members encourage the 2022 EfE to renew/extend the Task Force’s mandate beyond 2022?

***What can the Task Force provide as input to the topics to the EfE Ministerial?***

The OECD Secretariat proposes to (i) contribute to the 2022 EfE conference preparations led by the UNECE, and (ii) showcase the outputs and achievements of the GREEN Action Task Force at the EfE conference. The first has already started, including through the Secretariat's participation in the EfE preparatory meetings as appropriate. Further contribution is being made for example through commenting on and contributing to EfE documentation in close consultation with the UNECE and UNEP.

***What outputs and outcomes of the Task Force could be presented at the EfE Ministerial?***

As for highlighting the achievements of the GREEN Action Task Force, the OECD Secretariat proposes to organise side-events and prepare substantive and communication material for tabling at the EfE Conference.

As reference, at the last EfE conference in Batumi (2016), the GREEN Action Task Force and the OECD Secretariat organised three side events (one of the wider GREEN Action Task Force, one on the EU-funded EaP GREEN project, and another on the EU Water Initiative), contributed to one of the key Ministerial outcomes the BIG-E through close cooperation with the UNECE and UNEP, and tabled several communications material. Similar approaches could be taken to prepare for the 2022 EfE Conference in Nicosia. The OECD Secretariat proposed to coordinate with the UNECE in the coming months to this effect.

All major reports developed within the GREEN Action Task Force, and the information material could be presented at an information stand in the foyer of the Nicosia Conference venue. The GREEN Action Task Force could also consider organising a side event(s) during the Conference on its work or on selected priority topics, for example related to the energy-water-land nexus transformation, sustainable infrastructure, green finance or policy instruments for the promotion of green growth.

The GREEN Action Task Force could also consider developing an analytical synthesis report on the achievements of the GREEN Action Task Force's work in promoting green growth in the EECCA region in the 5-year period since the Batumi EfE Ministerial. Preparing such a substantive report has resource implications, i.e. diverting staff time away from other activities or securing additional funding. This could be supplemented by a high visibility brochure highlighting Task Force's activities, successes and lessons learned since Batumi.

***Renewal and possible adjustments of the Task Force mandate beyond 2022***

The current mandate of the GREEN Action Task Force was given by countries at the 2016 Batumi EfE Ministerial Conference and covers the period up to the next EfE conference. The Task Force Secretariat proposes to seek renewal of the mandate at the 2022 Nicosia EfE Conference, and seeks Bureau members' guidance on how to ensure wide support by countries and partner organisations for a renewed mandate for the GREEN Action Task Force. For example, Task Force member countries could propose, through their participation in next meeting (3-5 November 2021) of the UNECE's Committee of Environment Policy (the body preparing the Nicosia EfE Conference), inclusion of a statement supporting the Task Force's continued work in the outcome document of the 2022 EfE Ministerial meeting.

It is also an opportune occasion to consider the future of the GREEN Action Task Force, including its substantive and geographical focus as well as modes of operations. The new mandate, and any adjustments to it, should build on the GREEN Action Task Force's brand and institutional arrangements and make it more relevant to new priorities. It should also reinforce the effectiveness of support, especially in light of increasingly diverse countries within the EECCA region and emerging priorities in regional and international contexts.

If there is a continued demand for the work of the GREEN Action Task Force, and the OECD support as its Secretariat, substantive focus of its activities after the EfE Ministerial in October 2022 could build on established priorities as well as new challenges in the region. It could also draw on relevant projects carried out within the OECD's core programme of work. Activities may focus on reforming institutions, further strengthening the budget planning and expenditure management, reforming regulatory and market-based incentives, as well as strengthening the rule of law and compliance with environmental requirements, including those stemming from the EU *acquis communautaires*, and alignment with OECD and other international standards and best practices. These focus areas could be reflected in the 2023-2024 Programme of Work to be prepared for further discussion by the Task Force in 2022.

In terms of geographical focus and modes of operation, the main aim of the Task Force's future work could continue to be **helping countries in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia to devise policies to enable a more rapid transition towards a green economy**. The Secretariat proposes to continue with the same geographical focus, while being open to opportunities for meaningful exchange of experience with those outside of this group of countries as appropriate. The Secretariat proposes to continue to engage with both Ministries of Environment and Ministries of Economy (and/or other relevant government entities as appropriate).

Overall, the Task Force could reinforce its role in building regional commitment to reform and reaching consensus on policy principles and good practices through analytical work and dialogue carried out within various networks. It could also deepen dialogue and co-operation to better target development co-operation efforts and accelerate mobilisation of financial and technical support for regional and country-specific activities. Further strengthening the co-operation with partner organisations such as UNECE and UNEP as well as International Financing Institutions and local financial institutions to enable private-sector green investments will continue to be crucial.

## Issues for Discussion

1. What inputs from the GREEN Action Task Force to the Nicosia Ministerial Conference would be most relevant and useful for the GREEN Action Task Force members and the future work? How could the Task Force's achievement be best highlighted at the conference?
2. What would be the best ways of ensuring the renewal of the Task Force mandate at the 2022 EfE Conference?