

Global Network for Resource Efficient and Cleaner Production (RECPnet) Eastern Europe, Caucasus, Central Asia Regional Chapter Meeting

8-10 June 2016 – Batumi, Georgia

Summary of Discussions

Opening

The meeting of the Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA) Regional Chapter of RECPnet was opened by the Regional Executive for the Chapter who welcomed all participants and led a brief round of introductions. Representatives of RECPnet's Patron Agencies, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), also addressed the Regional Chapter, expressing their confidence and satisfaction with the work of the Chapter's members as implementation partners for various UNIDO and UNEP programmes in the region, and wished the participants successful deliberations over the coming days.

The Regional Executive then briefly updated members on the *Operational Strategy for RECPnet 2015-2020* and the RECPnet Work Plan 2016. The status of implementation of both the strategy and work plan was provided, as well as description of the next steps and the expectations from the EECCA Regional Chapter members in this connection.

The opening session then turned to the status and outlook for RECPnet as of 2016, in which UNIDO and UNEP presented the current organizational and global context for RECPnet – centering on the newly-adopted 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The medium-term funding landscape for RECPnet was also outlined by UNIDO, with emphasis placed on the fact that the joint UNIDO-UNEP global RECP Programme, from which the network had previously been funded, was expiring at the end of 2017. UNIDO and UNEP's efforts at mobilizing new funds were outlined to the Chapter's members, emphasizing the concurrent need for greater member ownership and self-reliance of the network in terms of funding its operations.

The session ended with key administrative points being outlined by UNIDO related to the roles and responsibilities of RECPnet members. The Regional Chapter was provided with an overview of membership fee payments, application renewals and commitments expected from members under the Charter and Bylaws of RECPnet.

The 2030 Agenda

This segment focused on the effects which the newly-adopted 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development are expected to have on the work of RECPnet and its members. Based on the discussion paper prepared by UNEP entitled *The RECPnet We Want - Aligning the Global Network with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, a presentation was delivered by the Regional Executive summarizing the key findings of the paper.

This was followed by a group work session, in which meeting participants were asked to answer a set of key questions derived from the paper on how RECPnet can contribute most effectively to the new international

development framework centered on the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. The following questions and answers were provided:

- How broad should the perimeter of SDGs covered by RECPnet be?
Which SDGs should be targeted in the strategic positioning of the network?
 - While the core SDGs of 9 (industry/infrastructure) and 12 (responsible consumption/production) are the natural focus of RECPnet's efforts, it was proposed to also broaden the potential focus of the network's activities to include SDGs such as 2 (ending hunger through i.e. sustainable agriculture), 3 (promote health and wellbeing through i.e. the reduction of pollutants and toxins), 4 (help provide quality education through i.e. vocational skills), 6 (clean water through effective water resource management), and 7 (clean energy). Portraying RECPnet as indirectly impacting areas of human development seen as being higher on the agenda than industrial development, for instance human health, could lead to a potential appeal to a more diverse and larger group of donors and partners.
 - To provide the basis for this approach, it was proposed that each member of RECPnet indicate – in a pre-designed matrix – which SDGs and associated targets are most applicable to its work, capacity and skill set.
- Should the network invest in: deepening skills sets; re-deploying existing skills to related SDGs; or, develop new skill sets?
 - RECP was clearly seen as the core activity of network members, and as such, the need to deepen capabilities was prioritized. At the same time, it was noted that members need to better understand the connection of their activities to other realms, such as in finance, academia and government, and to build skills in interacting with these partners and stakeholders. Potential tradeoffs were however highlighted when shifting the focus from technical skills and orientation toward **soft skills**. The need for targeted capacity building supported by the Patron Agencies was discussed in this connection.
 - At the same time, the lack of technical expertise in RECP on the part of some centers was also noted, in that RECP is a new concept in many countries and regions. As such, the focus would need to remain on building core capacities in these cases.
- What relationships/partnerships are necessary to better position the network?
What activities/initiatives are needed to develop effective relations?
 - The need to build relationships *within* the network was seen as pressing, in that links between centers could be strengthened. Simultaneously, RECPnet's core competencies need to also be sold to external partners and stakeholders, including government, academia and industrial associations.
 - At the international level, it was proposed to partner with NGOs and international organizations to present tailor-made solutions and proposals to funding agencies. In this connection, it was recommended to build relationships through existing channels such as the Patron Agencies.
 - Lastly, it was proposed to regularly take part in thematic events and global forum activities, so as to lend members' expertise to strategically relevant initiatives.
- What role should the Patron Agencies play in the development of the network?
How can RECPnet members be more effectively empowered as partners for development?
 - The Patron Agencies were seen as providing a Secretariat and knowledge exchange infrastructure as a first step. The Patron Agencies furthermore ensure the networking function of RECPnet through the sponsorship and organization of the RECPnet Members' Assembly, the Regional Chapter Meetings and the Global Network Conference on RECP. On top of that, Patron Agencies provide the network with targeted outreach to donors and

- international partners. Lastly, the Patron Agencies are responsible for launching initiatives for the upgrading of members' capacities, i.e. through management training programmes.
- Members of the network can be empowered by the Patron Agencies firstly through the RECPnet membership certificate which qualifies them as recognized partners of two UN agencies in the area of global RECP implementation. Letters of support from UNIDO and/or UNEP can also be furnished upon request to members in – for example – the process of applying for a tender or call for proposal. Lastly, involvement in projects can also be facilitated by the Patron Agencies, through the establishment of appropriate contacts, or recommendations by UNIDO and/or UNEP.
 - What commitments to strategic, operational and cultural change are needed for a more effective network?
Why is the level of commitment so far perceived as low?
 - It was seen that in general, more time and resources aside from members' core business were required to adequately answer requests for technical and advocacy information. In this connection, the need for a clearly understandable added value of such exercises was seen as paramount in ensuring participation and buy-in. For most members, activities would need to be linked to income generation in order to be relevant and/or feasible.
 - The question was further raised whether the level of ambition was too high for some members, given resource and capacity restrictions. It should therefore be permitted to adjust the level of commitment based on the development stage of the member.

EECCA Regional Update

Next, each member of the EECCA Regional Chapter was provided an opportunity to present a status update and inform other Chapter members of activities of interest at the national and/or regional level. Examples provided included: sustainable tourism (Albania, Bulgaria, Montenegro), eco-efficiency in metallurgy (Finland, Turkey [TUBITAK]), eco-industrial parks (Finland), renewable energy and energy efficiency (Austria, Finland), company-level RECP assessments (Bosnia, Georgia, Israel, Montenegro, Republic of Moldova, Ukraine), awareness-raising (Georgia), country-level environmental impact assessments (Croatia), waste management (Albania, Austria, Germany, Romania, Russia [NCPC]), RECP finance (Albania, Belarus, Serbia), training programmes (Israel, Romania), chemicals management (Germany, FYR Macedonia, Serbia, Russia [NCPC]), packaging (Russia [NCPC]), water resource management (Russia [NCPC], Turkey [TUBITAK]), policy development (Republic of Moldova), labelling (Austria), eco-innovation (Germany, Romania), and RECP clubs (Belarus, Romania).

Circular Economy Training Session

The EECCA Regional Chapter Meeting featured a capacity-building session on the topic of Circular Economy. The session was delivered by an Associate Member of the Chapter – STENUM Austria – and consisted of a presentation and subsequent group-work segment. The presentation outlined the status of Circular Economy with a focus on applicable European Union policy frameworks, as well as on the needs and opportunities arising from the implementation of these policies at the regional level.

The group work focused on answering the following three questions:

1. What are white spots in your countries with regard to the Circular Economy?
2. What could be starting points for activities in a Circular Economy project?
3. What could the contribution of RECPnet members to the Circular Economy be?

The areas with need for action (white spots) were identified as:

- The gap between policy and implementation, especially in enforcement of (existing) laws
- A lack of education and awareness
- A lack of competence in waste management, and a lack of collection infrastructure (primary selection), absence of recycling facilities, all resulting in landfilling
- A lack of awareness regarding the true cost and value of waste, waste as resource, and the link between resource and waste, as well as an analysis of data
- A mismatch between recycling capacity and available waste
- Low quality of collected waste
- Waste exchanges not working
- Lack of economic incentives and support

Starting points for activities were seen as:

- Awareness generation
 - Focus on education, training: Education and awareness of youth, employment and entrepreneurship
 - Knowledge of PPPs and funding, tax incentives, payment schemes
 - Knowledge regarding national best practices, waste fees, data and benchmarking
 - Knowledge regarding political framework and district initiatives
- Development of national/regional policy on waste, CE, landfill, policy advice to government
 - Cross border-cooperation
- Twinning municipalities
- Focus on industrial waste
- Calculation of losses and value of waste
- Establishing knowledge exchange platforms
 - Collection of best practices, experience, waste prevention solutions
- Mapping waste
- Establishing benchmarks in specific industrial sectors
- Fostering industrial symbiosis
 - Connecting waste generators and recyclers
 - Working with the supply chain

RECPnet's EECCA Regional Chapter Members feel they could contribute to the Circular Economy in the following ways:

- Access to industries, access to company data, evaluation of existing practices
- Provide approach, examples and prices to assess the economic value of waste and RECP
- Contribute to knowledge platform's technical expertise, best practices
- Connecting industry with financial institutions and government, awards and recognition, local institutions and business forums, induce cooperation
- Provide knowledge on eco-design (i.e. packaging)
- Provision of training and education
- Provide knowledge on new business models
- Promotion of green entrepreneurs, start-up funding
- Assessment for potential of industrial symbiosis, planning and implementing of infrastructure concepts
- Provide knowledge on waste minimization in companies and recycling, training, regional cooperation, regional network, connecting industry to municipality, for proven models like ECOPROFIT (voluntary local initiatives)

- Provide inventory of waste on regional level
- Identification of gaps in legislation
- Advocacy for policy, policy makers, waste management planning for municipalities

RECPnet's Knowledge Management System (KMS)

RECPnet's Knowledge Management System (KMS) was presented next by the network's Global KMS Coordinator. The key functions and main operational procedures related to the use of the KMS were described, and users were reminded of the means by which to most actively and effectively contribute to the network's knowledge base. In addition, usage statistics were provided, showing an upward trend in KMS use, which was however restricted to a select group of users. The next challenge was identified as consisting of achieving a more equitable and widespread use of the KMS amongst RECPnet's members.

The Thematic Working Groups (TWGs) were outlined next, and a recently developed standardized work flow for the TWGs was presented. The work flow is designed to help members of the TWG work collaboratively towards the development of a concrete, pre-identified knowledge product, to further the objectives of the network and be of use to all network members.

The Green Growth Knowledge Platform (GGKP)

A guest speaker in attendance – Mr. Benjamin Simmons, Head, Green Growth Knowledge Platform (GGKP) - was invited to take the floor and discuss with the EECCA Regional Chapter Members the experience of setting up and populating a leading online knowledge platform with a focus on green development. The main challenges and solutions related to the launch of the GGKP were outlined, and members were provided insights into the key features and software solutions in the GGKP website (www.greengrowthknowledge.org).

Working Collaboratively through RECPnet

The RECPnet KMS' Regional Coordinator addressed the Chapter next, outlining the ways by which TWGs lead to improved and effective teamwork at the regional level within RECPnet. In particular, the experience of the TWG on Benchmarking was described, so as to provide a tangible example of how network members can work together to achieve a pre-identified objective and outcome.

Thematic Working Groups

The main activities and results of the EECCA Regional Chapters' TWGs were presented next. Four TWGs had been established in addition to a global TWG on Benchmarking, these were:

- Education – led by National Centre for Sustainable Production and Consumption, Romania
- Sustainable tourism – led by Social and Environmental Responsibility Center, Bulgaria
- Circular Economy – led by STENUM, Austria and BiPRO, Germany; formerly consisting of:
 - Eco-innovation – led by BiPRO, Germany
 - Waste reduction – led by STENUM, Austria
- RECP policies and Strategies – led by EMPRESS, Czech Republic

Each TWG Lead presented the activities undertaken to date and the results achieved so far. Following the presentations an open discussion was held to better streamline the TWGs and the contributions of the Chapter's members to them. Emphasis was placed on pursuing TWGs which focused on generating products or proposals targeting internationally funded projects. It was however debated how to best identify the needs – at the national, regional and global level – around which to coalesce TWGs. Two approaches crystallized during the debate, namely a “top-down” approach of pre-determined, strategically relevant, topics and objectives

towards which members should contribute, and a “bottom-up” approach, in which a TWG infrastructure is in place to respond to emerging topics and trends, facilitating the creation of TWGs when the need arises. Both approaches were seen as having their merits, with the RECPnet KMS potentially playing a central role by allocating members to a given TWG based on an “experts marketplace” capturing the competencies of each member.

Intense discussions revolved also around the need for strong leadership of the TWGs and the role of the Topical Leads in achieving progress. As long as members are not attached to one working group only, but can participate in different TWGs based on regional and national needs, as well as interest and eligibility for different funding schemes, the role of the Topical Leads is essential to the identification of opportunities, as well as the initiation and coordination of new of project proposals.

Closing Session

During the closing session, representatives of the Patron Agencies, UNIDO and UNEP, thanked the Chapter’s members for their participation and constructive work, emphasizing the relevance of RECPnet in the 2030 Agenda.

The EECCA Regional Chapter Meeting was closed by Regional Executive, wishing all members success in their work and looking ahead to the next meeting of the Chapter, scheduled for the first quarter of 2017, in the context of the next Members’ Assembly of RECPnet.

Annex 1 - List of Participants

1. Ms. Aida SZILAGYI
Chairman, National Centre for Sustainable Production and Consumption Romania
Regional Executive, RECPnet EECCA Regional Chapter
2. Ms. Marieta MIMA
National Director, ECAT Tirana (Environmental Center for Administration and Technology)
3. Mr. Johannes FRESNER
Managing Director, STENUM GmbH, Austria
4. Mr. Rauf RZYAYEV
National Coordinator, RECP Demonstration Component EaP GREEN Azerbaijan
5. Mr. Siarhei DAROZHKA
National Coordinator, RECP Demonstration Component EaP GREEN Belarus
6. Ms. Sanda MIDZIC KURTAGIC
National Coordinator, National Cleaner Production Programme Bosnia Herzegovina
7. Ms. Mariana ASSENOVA
Head of the Steering Committee, Social and Environmental Responsibility Center Bulgaria
8. Mr. Goran ROMAC
Director, Croatian Cleaner Production Centre
9. Ms. Ylva GILBERT
Business Director, Gaia Consulting Ltd., Finland
10. Mr. Tashko RIZOV
National Cleaner Production Centre FYR Macedonia
11. Mr. Malkhaz ADEISHVILI
National Coordinator, RECP Demonstration Component EaP GREEN Georgia
12. Ms. Anke JOAS
Director, BiPRO Germany
13. Mr. Omer ELIYAHU
Programme Officer, The Weitz Center for Sustainable Development, Israel
14. Mr. Aleksandar MARDJONOVIC
Director, National Cleaner Production Programme Montenegro
15. Mr. Daniel SCALATCHI
National Cleaner Production Programme, Republic of Moldova
16. Mr. Alexander STARTSEV
General Director, North-Western International Cleaner Production Centre
17. Mr. Izmail PETROV
National Cleaner Production Centre Russia

18. Mr. Branko DUNJIC
Director, Cleaner Production Centre of Serbia
19. Mr. Luka NAGLIC
KMS Regional Coordinator, Cleaner Production Centre of Serbia
20. Ms. Tuba BUDAK
Environment And Cleaner Production Institute - TUBITAK Marmara Research Centre
21. Mr. Igor SHYLOVYCH
Director, National Centre for Resource Efficient and Cleaner Production Ukraine
22. Mr. Abidjanov NAZIRDJAN
Director, Center of Expertise in Cleaner Production under Chamber of Commerce and Industry
Uzbekistan
23. Mr. Jacek CUKROWSKI
Chief, Regional Division - Europe and Central Asia, UNIDO
24. Ms. Carolina GONZALEZ
Industrial Development Officer, UNIDO
25. Ms. Emina ALIC
Deputy Coordinator for RECP Programme in South-Eastern Europe, UNIDO
26. Ms. Tatiana CHERNYAVSKAYA
International Project Coordinator, UNIDO
27. Mr. Michael FEGERL
RECP KMS Specialist, UNIDO
28. Mr. Hassan MEHDI
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30. Mr. Benjamin SIMMONS
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