

## **Capacity-Building Workshop on Development of Hydrogen Infrastructure**

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09:00 CET

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### Opening remarks

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is my pleasure to address this workshop and join the distinguished representatives of Ukraine and my UNECE colleagues in welcoming you.

Among the outcomes of this fruitful, cross-sectoral, collaboration under UNECE's Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation, the workshop will present the draft Strategic Environmental Assessment scoping report for the draft Hydrogen Roadmap.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) allows States, including Ukraine, to mainstream environmental, climate and health objectives into draft governmental plans, programmes and other strategic documents. It is therefore a concrete and an effective tool towards achieving Sustainable Development Goals and global climate commitments, including through the promotion of energy transition and green growth.

In this regard, the UNECE Protocol on SEA, which Ukraine ratified in 2015, provides for legal obligations, a procedural framework and best practice for the implementation of SEA in countries that are Parties to it.

With the economic recovery from the COVID-19 crisis the need for systematic and effective environmental assessment of recovery initiatives is more pressing than ever. The Protocol, and, at the project level, the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (or the Espoo Convention), provide a robust legal and institutional framework to help countries "build back better" by making this recovery healthy and green.

At a time when the pandemic further exacerbates the worsening climate change, a biodiversity crisis and increasing pollution, the Protocol plays an important role in supporting Ukraine in building a green and sustainable future.

I wish to congratulate the Ministry of Energy on its initiative to undertake the scoping of its plans for the production and use of hydrogen at this very early and still preparatory “road-map” stage. This allows defining crucial environmental and health issues and next steps related to SEA well *before* the drafting of a formal draft Concept on Hydrogen is initiated and subject to a mandatory SEA in accordance with the national legislation. This will considerably speed up the subsequent development and approval of the formal concept document.

Today’s discussion is an excellent opportunity to receive feedback and valuable perspectives by different stakeholders on the SEA scoping report – that was developed with the support of UNECE and its SEA experts. I encourage the Ministry of Energy, the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Natural Resources, the Ministry of Health and other relevant stakeholders in Ukraine to make the best use of the report findings for the later SEA of the future Concept on Hydrogen.

UNECE delivers since many years a wide range of technical assistance and capacity building activities in the area of SEA and transboundary EIA in support of Ukraine, and the other countries in the region, including in Eastern Europe. Currently, it provides this assistance with the European Union funding under the EU4Environment programme.

One of the programme’s key activities is a future SEA pilot project to provide Ukraine with hands-on learning for applying SEA to a draft government plan, to be selected by it. I would encourage Ukraine to consider making use of the pilot for effectively applying SEA to the draft Concept on Hydrogen that the Ministry of Energy intends to develop.

Please accept my best wishes for a productive meeting.