
Committee on Environmental Policy

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Geneva, 9-12 May 2022

Item 3 (d) of the provisional agenda

The Ninth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference:

Progress report on the implementation of the Batumi Initiative on Green Economy

Information paper No.5

8 May 2022

Progress report on the implementation of the Batumi Initiative on Green Economy

Report by the secretariat

Summary

At the Eighth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference (Batumi, 8–10 June 2016), ministers endorsed the voluntary Pan-European Strategic Framework for Greening the Economy and welcomed the Batumi Initiative on Green Economy, a set of voluntary commitments to operationalize the Strategic Framework (ECE/BATUMI.CONF/2016/2/Add.1, para. 5). Ministers also encourage countries and other stakeholders to implement commitments under the BIG-E in order to facilitate the transition to a green economy, and to report on progress thereon in accordance with the Strategic Framework.

At its twenty-third session (14–17 November 2017), the Committee on Environmental Policy invited stakeholders to report on progress achieved in implementing the commitments under the Batumi Initiative on Green Economy, on the basis of a survey template prepared by the secretariat in consultation with the Bureau. Following this request, and based on the responses received from stakeholders, the secretariat prepared the mid-term report “Implementing the Pan-European Strategic Framework for Greening the Economy and the Batumi Initiative on Green Economy” (ECE/CEP/2019/4). At its twenty-fourth session (29–31 January 2019), the Committee welcomed the document. The Committee also affirmed that the two Batumi initiatives continue to provide a solid mechanism for the implementation of the decisions of the Batumi Ministerial Conference; noted with satisfaction the active participation of stakeholder countries and organizations in the reporting on the two initiatives; welcomed the progress achieved in implementing voluntary commitments by the member States and organizations participating in the Batumi Initiative on Green Economy and the Batumi Action for Cleaner Air; and called upon the member States and other stakeholders to continue active participation in the two Batumi initiatives.

At its twenty-seventh session (3–5 November 2021), the Committee on Environmental Policy took note of the draft list of documents to be prepared for the Ninth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference. The list includes the Progress report on the implementation of the Batumi Initiative on Green Economy. The Committee also welcomed the continuation of activities by the countries under the Pan-European Strategic Framework for Greening the Economy and the Batumi Initiative on Green Economy and welcomed the proposal by Switzerland to advance the development of the catalogue of actions/measures on possible voluntary actions/commitments under the Batumi Initiative on Green Economy on the two themes of the Ninth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference.

The online reporting tool "Efe Progress report on the implementation of the Batumi Initiative on Green Economy (BIG-E)" has been launched by the secretariat on 1 April 2022, with the deadline of April 25th. At the same time the group of experts in green economy, convened under the leadership of Switzerland, with support from the secretariat and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) prepared the draft list of possible actions (information paper No.6) aiming to serve as inspiration for interested countries and organizations in identifying green economy initiatives to voluntarily commit to at the Nicosia Ministerial Conference.

The responses to the online reporting tool have been received from 6 member States, providing updated information on 19 commitments in total (13 implemented, 6 in progress). The secretariat found that the process of collecting responses from the stakeholders on the present status of their commitments should be continued during May to obtain comprehensive information. The report will be updated based on the secretariat report "Implementing the Pan-European Strategic Framework for Greening the Economy and the Batumi Initiative on Green Economy" prepared for the mid-term review of the main outcomes of the Eighth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference and welcomed by the Committee at its twenty-fourth session (29-31 January 2019, attached in the Annex).

The Committee will be invited to consider the information provided, as appropriate, and to provide guidance on developing further the progress report, with a view to its submission as an official document for the Conference. The Committee will also be invited to decide on the next steps with regard to the catalogue of actions/measures on possible voluntary actions/commitments, including inviting interested Committee members and observers to submit voluntary commitments under the Batumi Initiative on Green Economy, especially with the focus on the two themes of the Ninth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference.

Annex

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Economic Commission for Europe**Committee on Environmental Policy****Twenty-fourth session**

Geneva, 29–31 January 2019

Item 4 (a) of the provisional agenda

Mid-term review of the main outcomes of the Eighth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference: greening the economy and cleaning the air, including the activities of the GREEN Action Task Force and the regional environmental centres**Implementing the Pan-European Strategic Framework for Greening the Economy and the Batumi Initiative on Green Economy****Report by the secretariat***Summary*

At the Eighth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference (Batumi, 8–10 June 2016), ministers endorsed the voluntary Pan-European Strategic Framework for Greening the Economy and welcomed the Batumi Initiative on Green Economy, a set of voluntary commitments to operationalize the Strategic Framework (ECE/BATUMI.CONF/2016/2/Add.1, para. 5). To follow up on progress in implementing these instruments, ministers requested the Committee on Environmental Policy to convene a mid-term review in 2018 of the Conference's main outcomes (*ibid.*, para. 16).

Following the request of the Committee at its twenty-third session (ECE/CEP/2017/5, para. 46, and ECE/CEP/2017/16, para. 22), and based on the responses received from stakeholders, the secretariat prepared the present overview of the progress made in implementing the Pan-European Strategic Framework for Greening the Economy and the Batumi Initiative on Green Economy. The document aims to facilitate the Committee's discussion during the mid-term review of the Batumi Conference's main outcomes to be held in the framework of the Committee's twenty-fourth session.

Introduction

1. Since 2009, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) Committee on Environmental Policy has been working on the issue of greening the economy as an approach to foster economic progress while ensuring environmental sustainability and social equity. The ECE secretariat, jointly with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and in cooperation with the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and other organizations active in the region, supports the work of the Committee on green economy, which is considered to be a promising approach to contribute towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals.

2. A key result is the endorsement by ministers at the Eighth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference (Batumi, 8–10 June 2016) of the Strategic Framework for Greening the Economy, a voluntary tool that supports countries' efforts in transitioning to green economy and, at the same time, in contributing to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and its Goals. The Strategic Framework is meant to serve environment ministers in initiating and sustaining discussions on the green economy transition in their national Governments and, ultimately, in creating an interministerial policy process to bring forward such an agenda involving key constituencies, including the public at large and the private sector.

3. In Batumi ministers also launched the Batumi Initiative on Green Economy (BIG-E), which consists of voluntary commitments to operationalize the Strategic Framework until 2030. Ministers encouraged countries and other stakeholders to implement commitments under the initiative in order to facilitate the transition to a green economy. At present, 124 commitments have been submitted by 27 countries and 13 lead organizations.¹ The committing countries are Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Croatia, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. The organizations include the Cittadellarte-Pistoletto Foundation; ECE; European ECO Forum; the Green Growth Knowledge Platform; the Group of Friends of Paragraph 47; the Interstate Commission on Sustainable Development of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea; the International POPs Elimination Network; the International Resource Panel; OECD; the Regional Environmental Centre for the Caucasus; the Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia; the Regional Environmental Centre for Central and Eastern Europe; and UNEP. The initiative remains open for more stakeholders to join.

4. Registered actions to which countries and organizations have committed in the framework of the Batumi Initiative on Green Economy are available on the ECE website;² in addition, the commitments are promoted through the Green Growth Knowledge Platform,³ in accordance with the ministers' request in Batumi (ECE/BATUMI.CONF/2016/2/Add.1, para. 5).

5. At its twenty-third session (Geneva, 14–17 November 2017), the Committee on Environmental Policy decided that, to support the review of progress achieved in implementing the Strategic Framework and the Batumi Initiative on Green Economy, it would invite stakeholders to report on the progress achieved in the implementation of their commitments on the basis of a template prepared by the secretariat together with UNEP, in consultation with the Bureau of the Committee. On the basis of those reports, the secretariat

¹ Several actions will be implemented in partnership with other organizations nominated in the commitments; the present document mentions only lead organizations.

² See www.unece.org/environmental-policy/environment-for-europe/initiatives/big-e.html.

³ See www.greengrowthknowledge.org/big-e.

jointly with UNEP and with support from a consultant was requested to prepare a mid-term review report (ECE/CEP/2017/5, para. 46, and ECE/CEP/2017/16, para. 22).

6. A survey questionnaire was prepared by the secretariat in consultation with the Bureau of the Committee and UNEP. The online tool “EfE mid-term review: Survey on the implementation of BIG-E commitments” was prepared by the secretariat and launched on 13 April 2018. The secretariat also made efforts to reach out not only to Committee members but also to the contact points nominated for individual voluntary commitments.

7. The present report was prepared by the secretariat based on the responses to the survey received from the stakeholders up to November 2018; all references to “the survey” in this document refer to these responses, unless specified otherwise. The report synthesizes the responses received from 23 countries and 8 organizations. These countries are Azerbaijan, Belarus, Croatia, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Switzerland and Ukraine. The organizations that responded are ECE, the Green Growth Knowledge Platform, the Interstate Commission on Sustainable Development, the International Resource Panel, OECD, the Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia, the Regional Environmental Centre for the Caucasus and UNEP. The document reflects the progress made on 96 (77%) of the 124 voluntary commitments submitted to the Batumi Initiative on Green Economy.

8. The report summarizes the progress made and offers some observations that may be helpful in illustrating patterns and trends of national approaches aggregated at the regional level. The report also addresses the views expressed on the usefulness of the Batumi Initiative. Tables and charts illustrating some of the key findings are presented in an annex to the present document.

I. Overview of progress in the implementation of commitments made within the framework of the Batumi Initiative on Green Economy

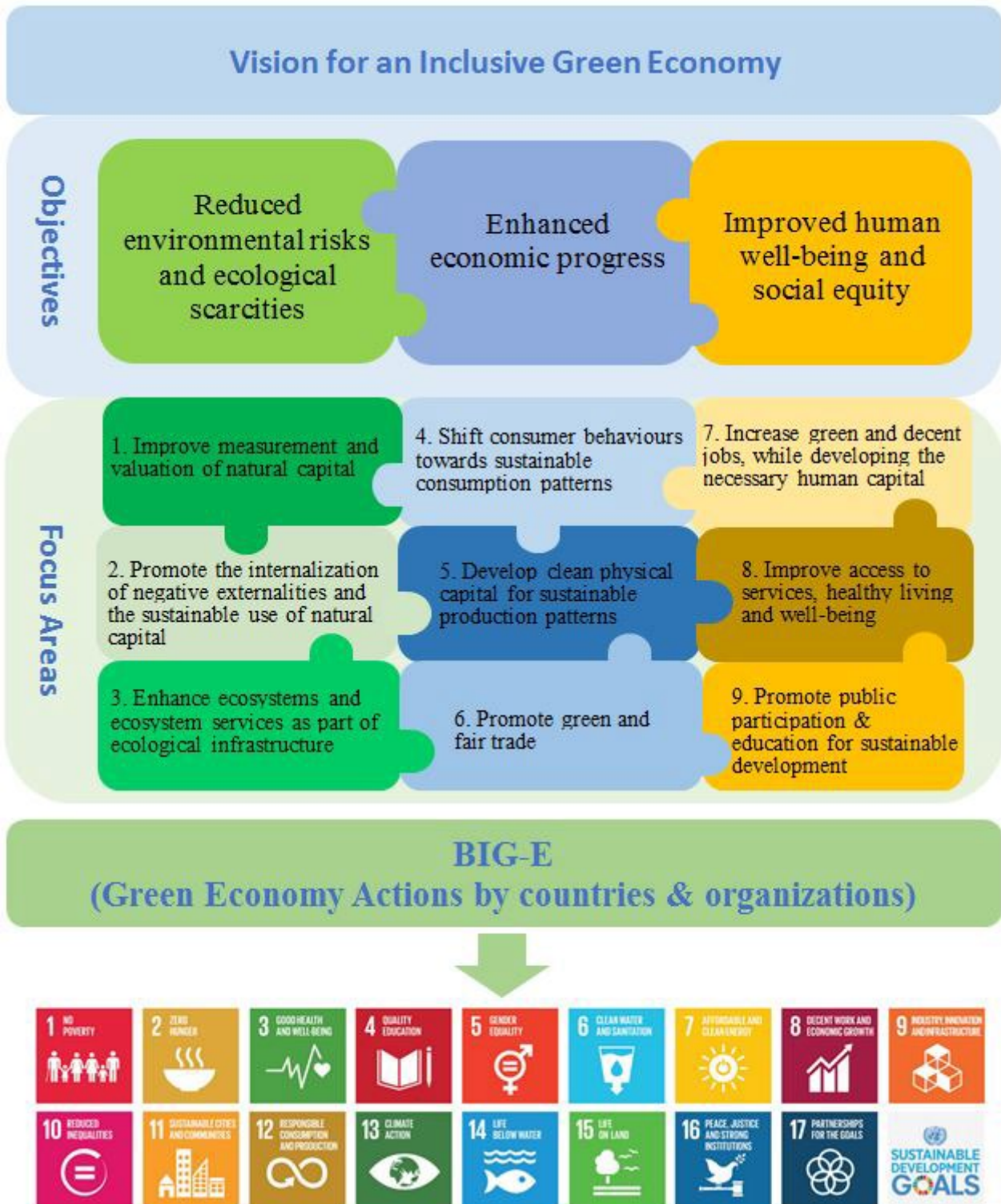
A. Scope and methodology

9. The present report analyses the 124 commitments made so far under the Batumi Initiative on Green Economy to undertake green economy actions,⁴ with a view to revealing observable patterns and trends in regional approaches to green economy. The review also assesses the present status of implementation of the commitments.

10. The methodology for the review is based on the structured approach of the Strategic Framework and the Batumi Initiative. The Strategic Framework identifies three main objectives to be attained, divided into nine integrated focus areas indicating priorities for achieving the three objectives (figure I). Under the Batumi Initiative on Green Economy, when submitting a voluntary commitment the stakeholders must provide detailed information on several aspects, including but not limited to: focus area(s) of the action; the type of action; economic sectors targeted; and the Sustainable Development Goals and targets that the action may contribute to implementing (figure II).

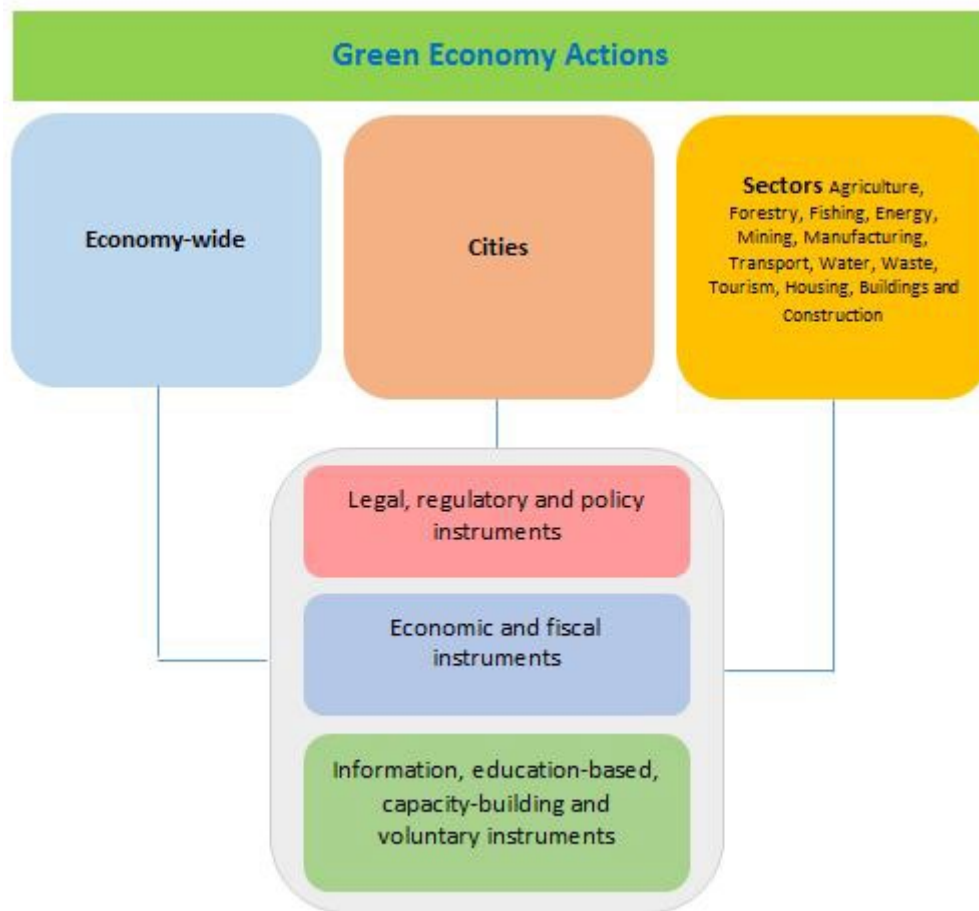
⁴ Selection criteria to guide the identification of green economy actions are specified in the appendix to the Strategic Framework.

Figure I
The Strategic Framework at a glance



Source: ECE/BATUMI.CONF/2016/6.

Figure II
Green economy actions at a glance



Source: ECE/BATUMI.CONF/2016/6.

11. Assessment of the present status of implementation of the commitments uses the data supplied through the survey. As recommended by the Committee and the Bureau, the survey questionnaire was short, with just a few questions on each commitment, using checkboxes for responses. The survey also addressed the question of the usefulness of the Batumi Initiative on Green Economy separately.

12. To compensate for such a simplified approach, the respondents had the opportunity to leave extended comments. These comments, which contain very rich and useful information on the challenges and lessons from the practical implementation of the green economy approaches, could not be incorporated in the present document owing to word limitations. This information is therefore being issued by the secretariat as a separate document (information paper No. 9),⁵ which provides an essential addition to the present report.

⁵ Available from the web page for the Committee's twenty-fourth session (www.unecce.org/index.php?id=50063).

B. Analysis of the status of the commitments under the Batumi Initiative on Green Economy

Background

13. The 124 commitments submitted by 27 countries and 13 organizations to the Batumi Initiative on Green Economy reflect the substantial interest of the stakeholders in the Initiative. The 27 participating Governments represent almost half (48%) of the membership of ECE and 60% of the member States attending the Batumi Conference. Most commitments were submitted before or during the Conference; several stakeholders, both governments and others, submitted their commitments after the Conference, increasing the total number of commitments by 23% (from 101 to 124) and the number of stakeholders by 17% (from 34 to 40).

14. Geographical distribution of the participating Governments is fairly even, with 18 European Union member States, 1 non-European Union country from Western Europe, 3 countries from the Eastern Europe (non-European Union), 2 countries of the Caucasus and 3 Central Asian States (annex, figure I). The two subregions particularly absent are South-Eastern Europe (non-European Union) and North America.

Focus areas⁶

15. The distribution of 124 commitments across the three objectives and nine subsequent focus areas of the Strategic Framework offers an interesting insight into the regional approaches (annex, figure II). Eleven commitments are positioned by the stakeholders as “overarching”; the rest refer to one or more focus areas under the three objectives. Of those, focus areas under objective II, “Enhanced economic progress”, are referred in 76 (61%) of the commitments.⁷ Objective III, “Improved human well-being and social equity”, is the least mentioned, with only 36 commitments (29%) referring to this area. Fifty-one commitments (41%) are aimed at focus areas under Objective I, “Reduced environmental risks and ecological scarcities”.

16. An in-depth look into the commitments’ focus areas reveals that the theme of greening production and consumption patterns (focus areas II.5 and II.4) is quite prominent overall and is particularly prominent among the commitments made by Governments. Focus area III.7, “green and decent jobs”, is the least addressed, closely followed by II.6, “green and fair trade”. The ranking of the focus areas by the frequency of mention is as follows:

- (a) **Focus area II.5** (Develop clean physical capital for sustainable production patterns) – 49 commitments, 37 of them from Governments;
- (b) **Focus area II.4** (Shift consumer behaviours towards sustainable consumption patterns) – 42 commitments, 29 of them from Governments;
- (c) **Focus area I.2** (Promote the internalization of negative externalities and the sustainable use of natural capital) – 32 commitments, 16 of them from Governments;
- (d) **Focus area I.1** (Improve the measurement and valuation of natural capital) – 25 commitments, 12 of them from Governments;
- (e) **Focus area III.9** (Promote public participation and education for sustainable development) – 19 commitments, 9 of them from Governments;

⁶ As categorized in the Strategic Framework, para. 18.

⁷ Most commitments cover several focus areas, so the total number of focus areas and objectives referred in the commitments exceeds the number of commitments themselves; therefore, the sum of calculations in some paragraphs is more than 100%.

(f) **Focus area III.8** (Improve access to services, healthy living and well-being) – 17 commitments, 10 of them from Governments;

(g) **Focus area I.3** (Enhance ecosystems and ecosystem services as part of ecological infrastructure) – 16 commitments, 9 of them from Governments;

(h) **Focus area II.6** (Promote green and fair trade) – 14 commitments, 7 of them from Governments;

(i) **Focus area III.7** (Increase green and decent jobs, while developing the necessary human capital) – 12 commitments, 6 of them from Governments;

(j) **Overarching actions** – 11 commitments, 8 of them from Governments.

17. The three objectives are largely speaking environmental (objective I), economic (objective II), and social (objective III). The bias noted towards the “economic” component in the commitments is even more pronounced in government commitments: out of 87 commitments, objective II is mentioned in 57 (66%), objective I in 28 (32%) and objective III in 19 (22%). The pattern is different for the non-governmental commitments. Out of 37 commitments, objective I is the leader, with 23 commitments referring to it (62%), followed by objective II, with 18 commitments (49%). Objective III is the least mentioned here, too, albeit by a slight margin, with 17 commitments mentioning this objective (46%). The group of non-governmental stakeholders is heterogeneous and relatively small, so any further breakdown of data is uninformative.

Types of actions⁸

18. Reviewing the type of actions among the 124 commitments submitted to the Initiative reveals another facet of the approaches in use in the ECE region (annex, figure III):

(a) **Legal, regulatory and policy instruments** – 64 commitments, 55 from Governments;

(b) **Economic and fiscal instruments** – 29 commitments, 27 from Governments;

(c) **Information, education-based, capacity-building and voluntary instruments** – 74 commitments, 41 from Governments.

19. The Governments hold a near monopoly on commitments to actions involving economic and fiscal instruments and also predominate for commitments concerning legal, regulatory and policy instruments. However, information, education-based, capacity-building and voluntary instruments also form the target of numerous Government green economy actions in both European Union and non-European Union countries.

Economic sectors⁹

20. The distribution of commitments across three broad categories (“economy-wide”, “cities”, and “sectors”) shows interesting characteristics (annex, figure IV). First, “cities” are the least popular (10 commitments in total). Imprecise definitions might be a factor here, as some commitments in, for example, the urban transport or energy sectors, are not attributed to the “cities” category.

21. A noticeable difference is observed between the commitments of government versus non-governmental groups of stakeholders in addressing particular sectors: a typical governmental commitment generally indicates only one or two beneficiary sectors, while a typical non-governmental commitment refers to about six. Thus, it makes sense to consider government and non-governmental commitments separately.

⁸ As categorized in the Strategic Framework, annex, para. 8.

⁹ As categorized in the Strategic Framework, appendix, para. 6 and footnote c.

22. Some 61% of the government commitments are of an economy-wide nature, with 12 of them also indicating a few beneficiary sectors. The distribution of government commitments by sectors is as follows:

- (a) Economy-wide (53);
- (b) Energy (15);
- (c) Agriculture (13);
- (d) Transport (12);
- (e) Water (10);
- (f) Waste (9);
- (g) Housing, buildings and construction (9);
- (h) Other (8);
- (i) Forestry and fishing (6);
- (j) Manufacturing (6);
- (k) Tourism (5);
- (l) Cities (4);
- (m) Mining (3).

23. The picture is different for non-governmental commitments: only 7 out of 37 have indicated one or two sectors as a beneficiary, while the remaining 30 (81% of the non-governmental commitments) are economy-wide measures either explicitly or implicitly and are related to 6 to 10 sectors.

Sustainable Development Goals and targets

24. The data on Sustainable Development Goals (annex, figure V) linked to commitments are assessed separately for the Government and non-governmental stakeholders in order to see both the similarity and the difference in the approaches.

25. For the Governments, Sustainable Development Goal 12 (responsible consumption and production) is a clear leader. Below is the percentage of governmental commitments related to the various Goals:

- (a) Goal 12: Responsible consumption and production – 63%;
- (b) Goal 9: Industry, innovation and infrastructure – 39%;
- (c) Goal 13: Climate action – 36%;
- (d) Goal 7: Affordable and clean energy – 35%;
- (e) Goal 11: Sustainable cities and communities – 34%;
- (f) Goal 8: Decent work and economic growth – 32%;
- (g) Goal 6: Clean water and sanitation – 27%;
- (h) Goal 15: Life on land – 27%;
- (i) Goal 3: Good health and well-being – 22%;
- (j) Goal 14: Life below water – 20%;
- (k) Goal 17: Partnerships for the Goals – 20%;
- (l) Goal 2: Zero hunger – 12%;

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- (m) Goal 4: Quality education – 10%;
 - (n) Goal 16: Peace, justice and strong institutions – 9%;
 - (o) Goal 1: No poverty – 6%;
 - (p) Goal 10: Reduced inequalities – 3%;
 - (q) Goal 5: Gender equality – 1%.

26. There is some difference between the government commitments from the 16 European Union member States and the 8 countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia that are participating in the Initiative. More than half of the commitments of the latter group address Goal 9 (56% of commitments, as compared with 31% for the European Union) and Goal 8 (52% of the commitments, as compared with 27% for the European Union) and about a quarter address Goal 16 (26% of commitments, as compared with 2% for the European Union) and Goal 17 (22% of commitments, as compared with 7% for the European Union). Commitments related to Goal 4 display a similar discrepancy on a lower scale (15% for the countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia as compared with 4% for the European Union). In contrast, Goal 14 is almost neglected by the countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia, with only 7% of commitments related to this Goal, while it is relevant for a quarter (22%) of the European Union commitments.

27. The links of non-governmental commitments to the Sustainable Development Goals present largely the same picture as those set out for Governments above, with the exception of Goal 17 (partnership for the Goals). For this group, Goal 17 is the second most frequently linked to committed actions – not surprisingly, as many commitments from this group rely on transboundary collaboration on the regional and subregional level. Environmental (but not social) Sustainable Development Goals are also slightly more prominent in this group. The percentage of non-governmental commitments related to the various Goals is as follows:

- (a) Goal 12: Responsible consumption and production – 57%;
- (b) Goal 17: Partnerships for the Goals – 41%;
- (c) Goal 9: Industry, innovation and infrastructure – 38%;
- (d) Goal 13: Climate action – 38%;
- (e) Goal 6: Clean water and sanitation – 35%;
- (f) Goal 15: Life on land – 32%;
- (g) Goal 3: Good health and well-being – 32%;
- (h) Goal 11: Sustainable cities and communities – 32%;
- (i) Goal 7: Affordable and clean energy – 30%;
- (k) Goal 8: Decent work and economic growth – 30%;
- (l) Goal 14: Life below water – 30%;
- (m) Goal 2: Zero hunger – 16%;
- (n) Goal 4: Quality education – 16%;
- (o) Goal 16: Peace, justice and strong institutions – 8%;
- (p) Goal 1: No poverty – 8%;
- (q) Goal 10: Reduced inequalities – 3%;
- (r) Goal 5: Gender equality – 0%.

Results of the reporting on the status of implementation of the commitments

28. Responses have been received from 23 Governments (85% of participating member States) and 8 organizations (62% of participating organizations) – 78% of stakeholders overall (31 out of 40). Information has been provided on 96 actions (77% of total commitments).

29. While for each commitment submitted a responsible contact point is identified, the survey tool was designed to allow for decentralized responses, with reports submitted on a “per commitment” basis. Thus, in some cases more than one contributor has reported on behalf of some stakeholders. As a result, 41 officials and experts representing 31 stakeholders contributed to the survey.

30. The status of implementation of the commitments is calculated based on the survey data. The survey question (“Has the commitment been implemented?”) identified three options: “Yes”, “In progress” and “No”. Due to this rather simplified approach, some respondents indicated both “Yes” and “In progress” for some commitments, meaning that the action was implemented but was still ongoing.

31. The status (annex, figure VI) of 96 commitments (out of 124) was reported¹⁰ to the secretariat (77%). The reporting rate is the same 77%–78% across various groups of stakeholders – Governments, non-governmental entities, Governments of European Union member States, and Governments of Eastern European, Caucasian and Central Asian States.

32. Only 4 commitments (4% of those reported) have shown no implementation; 1 is reported as being both “in progress” and “not implemented”; 49 (51%) are under implementation; 15 (16%) are reported as being both “in progress” and “implemented”; and 28 commitments (29%) are reported to be fully implemented.

33. Governments have reported on the status of 67 out of their 87 commitments (77%). Of these, 2 commitments (3% of those reported by Governments) have not progressed in implementation; 1 is reported as being both “in progress” and “not implemented”; 35 (52%) are under implementation; 8 (12%) are reported as both “in progress” and “implemented”; and 23 commitments (33%) are fully implemented. The status of implementation of the commitments from the European Union member States is almost evenly split between “in progress” and “implemented”; however, for the Governments of States in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia this ratio is 3 to 1.

34. Non-governmental stakeholders reported on the status of 29 out of 37 commitments (78%). Of these, 3 (10% of those reported) have not progressed in implementation; 14 (48%) are under implementation; 7 (24%) are reported as both “in progress” and “implemented”; and 5 commitments (17%) are fully implemented.

Value of the Batumi Initiative on Green Economy

35. Out of 35 respondents that expressed their opinion on the statement “the Batumi Initiative on Green Economy is useful in supporting transitioning to green economy in the Pan-European region”, 34 (97%) agreed to it either strongly (18 responses or 51%) or somewhat (16 respondents or 46%), and 1 respondent was neutral. In addition, three respondents had “no opinion”, and two respondents made written comments. The agreement was stronger for the government respondents from Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia and for the respondents from organizations, with two thirds of each group agreeing strongly with the statement.

¹⁰ Due to the extended reporting period, the actual rate of implementation of the commitments may be greater when the present document is issued November 2018.

II. Conclusions: lessons and challenges

36. The theme of greening the economy continues to attract lasting interest from the ECE member States. Already two ministerial conferences of the Environment for Europe process (Astana, 2011, and Batumi, 2016) have addressed this topic as one of the two main themes. The Pan-European Strategic Framework for Greening the Economy and its operationalizing Batumi Initiative on Green Economy are the logical result of those efforts. The Initiative remains open to new participants and to the new commitments from the existing participants.

37. The survey demonstrated that the Batumi Initiative is a useful tool to operationalize the Strategic Framework, as 97% of those that responded declared it to be useful in supporting transitioning to green economy in the Pan-European region. However, there is also a noticeable difference among the groups of respondents: the government respondents from Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, and Central Asia and respondents from organizations strongly endorsed the Initiative as useful, whereas respondents from the European Union Governments' group, although also positive, found the process to be "somewhat" useful rather than "strongly" so. This may be the consequence of the existing set-up of regional and transboundary cooperation in general, with its current distribution of sources and recipients of both experience and funding.

38. The reasonably high rate of response to the reporting survey makes it possible to draw the following conclusions on the progress in the implementation of voluntary commitments with a sufficient degree of confidence:

(a) As a whole, the pan-European region is actively implementing measures to build a green economy, as demonstrated by the fairly even geographical distribution of stakeholders with commitments across the region;

(b) The analysis of the objectives and focus areas of the commitments indicate that:

(i) A default government approach to a green economy action is that it should have principally economic objectives, often supplemented by calculated environmental (rarely social) effects. While this approach is not inconsistent with the definition of green economy, the reasons and consequences of a relative lack of social ambitions could be a subject for further discussions;

(ii) Sustainable consumption and production themes are the major focus of the green economy actions for both government and non-governmental stakeholders, with green jobs and green trade being unpopular. This pattern can be partially explained, on the one hand, by greater experience of government in regulating consumption and production and, on the other, by the drive to achieve fiscal neutrality or even surplus. Actions in the less popular areas might also require innovative instruments that are either relatively less tested or require significant initial investment;

(c) The analysis of the types of actions committed to:

(i) Confirms Governments' traditional preference for using command-and-control approaches, with legal, regulatory and policy instruments outnumbering economic and fiscal instruments by a 2-to-1 margin;

(ii) Also reveals that this preference is progressively being augmented by the recognition of the need for the broad involvement of the public and other stakeholders through information, education-based, capacity-building and voluntary instruments, with the wide participation of non-government stakeholders;

(d) The analysis of the beneficiary economic sectors reveals that:

(i) Government measures are usually aimed either economy-wide or are narrowly focused on one or two sectors. In contrast, the aim of actions by non-governmental

stakeholders is much broader, targeting six sectors on average. Among reasons for this could be the differences in definitions, the nature of the entities' work and the criteria for obtaining necessary funding;

(ii) The energy, agriculture and transport sectors are the most favoured by government green economy measures, while the mining sector is the least popular.

(e) The analysis of the links of actions to the Sustainable Development Goals reveals that:

(i) Stakeholders appreciate the link between their actions and the Sustainable Development Goals;

(ii) Governments tend to address the green economy as a primarily economic concept (similarly to the focus areas' analysis above): almost two thirds of the commitments are related to Goal 12 (responsible consumption and production), with industry- and energy-related goals following close behind, reinforcing this point;

(iii) Within the government group, there are numerous actions among countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia addressing Goal 9 (industry, innovation and infrastructure), Goal 8 (decent work and economic growth) and Goal 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions), which may be a reflection of development priorities like strengthening the industrial base and governance structures. This sub-group also favours Goal 4 (quality education) higher than the other groups;

(iv) Organizations are remarkably active on Goal 17 (partnerships for the Goals), which seems natural. However, the response from Governments on this Goal is less pronounced;

(v) Gender, inequality and poverty-related goals are scarcely addressed by the green economy actions, while the Goals linked to the environment and well-being of the population are somewhere in the middle.

39. The challenges encountered by countries and organizations were described in the form of comments and clarifications entered into the survey. Among some of the challenges cited to greening the economy were:

(a) **General policy and legislation:** problems with legal definitions; and a lack of green economy considerations in sectoral strategies;

(b) **Authorities:** limited human and financial capacities in environment authorities; limited awareness and expertise in non-environment ministries; frequent institutional changes and high staff turnover; difficulties regarding interministerial dialogue and coordination; cross-sectoral measures hard to design; different competent authorities interpreting the same subject differently; very low awareness on green economy or Sustainable Development Goals at the local level; slow nomination of contacts or focal points impeding transboundary and subregional cooperation; insufficient level of political power designated to environment authorities; and institutional instability leading to delayed decisions and revised agreements;

(c) **Private sector:** confidentiality concerns; new legal requirements may present a challenge for old installations; low access to green finance; human capacity problems among small and medium-size enterprises; not enough availability of modern technologies; low level of awareness about green economy; low motivation to transition to green economy;

(d) **Markets:** new recycled products are difficult to introduce; too few green producers and service providers; green products and services in competition with low-cost alternatives; distortions by environmentally harmful subsidies; poor recognition of eco-labels; problem with fake labels or "greenwashing";

(e) **Data and research:** lack of adequate data for decision-making; difficult to harmonize different legal frameworks for data collection and methodologies on indicators; local data difficult to obtain; research inconclusive, subjective, more extensive than planned, or hard to transform into practical measures;

(f) **Greening public procurement:** a relatively new topic, especially in transitional economies; perceived as expensive and complicated; fears regarding restricted competition and appeals of tender results; not included at the planning phase and difficult to include later; complicated procedures and small volumes unattractive to companies; staff involved in procedures need training;

(g) **Public:** consumer behaviour hard to shift; a challenge to communicate benefits; scarce information in national languages;

(h) **Education:** Lack of donor interest to support activities; and limited progress in revising technical and vocational education and training programmes.

III. Future steps and follow-up

40. The present document and the Committee discussion represent the fulfilment of the provisions of the Strategic Framework (paras. 40–41), specifying in particular that the first round of reporting on progress should be conducted during the mid-term review of the Batumi Conference main outcomes.

41. National experience on using particular green economy instruments and approaches obtained through practical implementation of the voluntary commitments under the Batumi Initiative can be extremely valuable, especially to the member States seeking optimal ways to facilitate the greening of their economies. Exchange of information and experience through bilateral and multilateral contacts may help to simultaneously increase the motivation of key national actors and remove some resistance towards practical application of the green economy measures.

42. The Committee is in a good position to stimulate the necessary transition to green economy in the region: it is a tested platform for regional policymaking, including the Environment for Europe process; it has in place a region-wide approved policy to promote green economy – the Pan-European Strategic Framework for Greening the Economy; and to operationalize the policy, it possesses a practical vehicle for information gathering and exchange – the Batumi Initiative on Green Economy.

43. Therefore, it is essential for the Committee to discuss and agree on the future steps to reinforce the present impetus. Some are already agreed and in place – such as making the results of the reporting available to relevant high-level regional platforms in accordance with the Strategic Framework (para. 41) and continuing the support for the Initiative to operationalize the Framework through the ECE and Green Growth Knowledge Platform websites (possibly with some re-designing aimed at more active promotion). In addition, new measures could be proposed and discussed, including organizing stakeholder meetings in a form suitable for the better exchange and promotion of experience.

44. Periodic review by the Committee of the implementation of the Strategic Framework and the Batumi Initiative should continue, based on the modalities decided by the Committee.

IV. Questions for discussion by the Committee on Environmental Policy

45. The Committee is invited to discuss the following questions:

(a) How effective is the present regional cooperation on greening the economy? The respondents to the mid-term review survey seem to agree on the usefulness of the Batumi Initiative on Green Economy. Does this consensus reflect the real added value of the Pan-European Strategic Framework for Greening the Economy and the Initiative?

(b) Which results of the present overview of progress in the implementation of commitments are most interesting? Do they confirm the Committee's expectations? Is the relative lack of social aspects in the commitments a matter of concern?

(c) What are the positive and negative lessons so far that can be drawn from implementation of the Batumi Initiative on Green Economy? What are the main challenges in implementing it? What are the regional and national aspects of these challenges? How can they be overcome?

(d) What steps can be proposed to maximize the impact of the Batumi Initiative on Green Economy at different levels? How can the experience-sharing between stakeholders be intensified?

(e) What should be the periodicity of reporting on the progress and results of the Batumi Initiative on Green Economy? How should it be reported to the next Environment for Europe conference? Should there be some interim reporting to the Committee – and in what form?

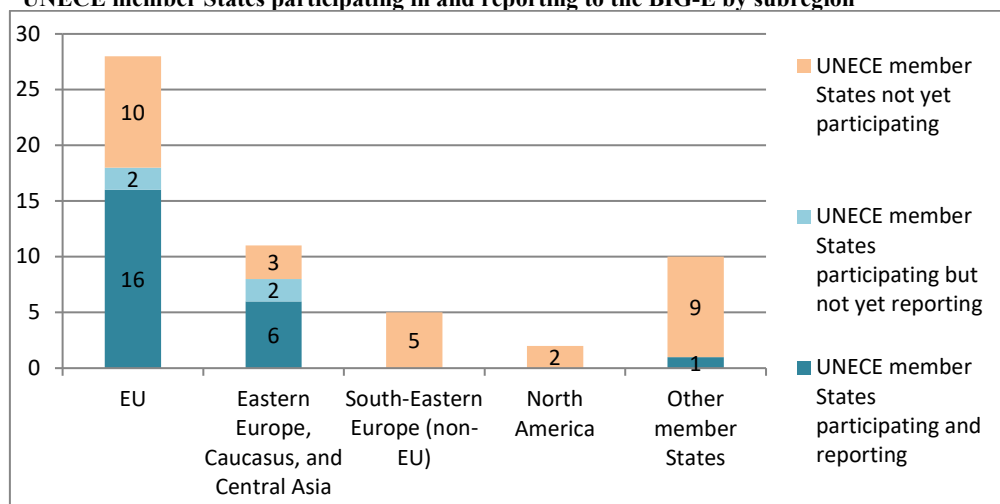
Annex11

Fact sheets and graphs

Table II
Number of commitments taken/reported by the participants in the Batumi Initiative on Green Economy

Albania	0	Estonia	2/2	Liechtenstein	0	Serbia	0		
Andorra	0	Finland	2/2	Lithuania	5/5	Slovakia	1/1	CAREC	8/7
Armenia	0	France	2/2	Luxembourg	1/1	Slovenia	1/1	Cittadellarte-Pistoletto Found.	2/0
Austria	1/0	Georgia	4/4	Malta	0	Spain	0	European ECO Forum	1/0
Azerbaijan	1/1	Germany	4/4	Monaco	0	Sweden	4/0	GGKP	1/1
Belarus	5/5	Greece	0	Montenegro	0	Switzerland	5/4	FoP.47 / UNEP / GRI	1/0
Belgium	0	Hungary	4/4	Netherlands	5/2	Tajikistan	0	ICSD / IFAS	1/1
Bosnia and Herzegovina	0	Iceland	0	Norway	0	Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	0	IPEN / Eco-Accord	2/0
Bulgaria	0	Ireland	0	Poland	5/2	Turkey	0	IRP / UNEP	1/1
Canada	0	Israel	0	Portugal	4/3	Turkmenistan	0	OECD	4/4
Croatia	5/5	Italy	4/4	Republic of Moldova	5/5	Ukraine	4/3	REC Caucasus	4/4
Cyprus	0	Kazakhstan	2/2	Romania	2/2	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	0	REC CEE	1/0
Czechia	0	Kyrgyzstan	1/0	Russian Federation	0	United States of America	0	ECE	8/8
Denmark	0	Latvia	3/3	San Marino	0	Uzbekistan	5/0	UNEP	3/3

Figure I
UNECE member States participating in and reporting to the BIG-E by subregion



11 The present annex is being issued as received. It has not been officially edited.

Figure II
BIG-E commitments by objectives and focus areas

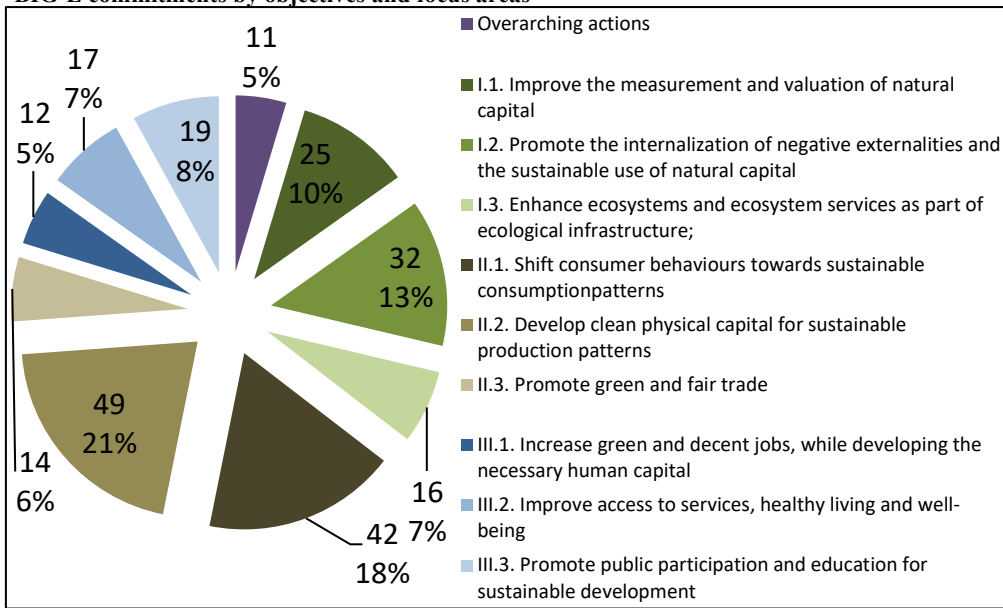


Figure III
BIG-E commitments by types of action

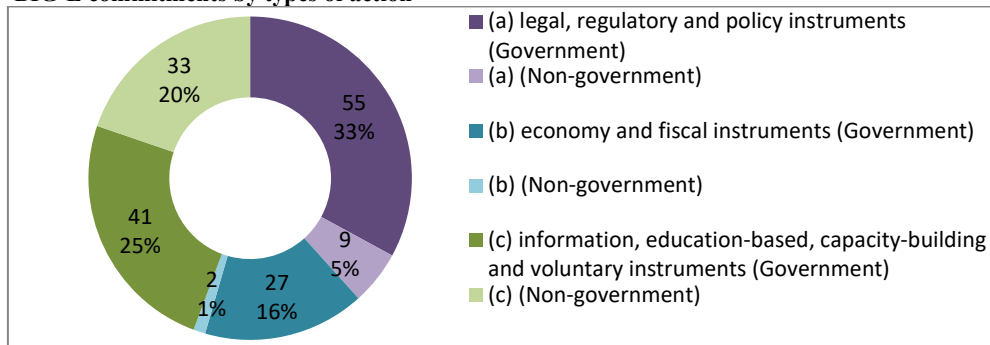


Figure IV
BIG-E commitments by sectors

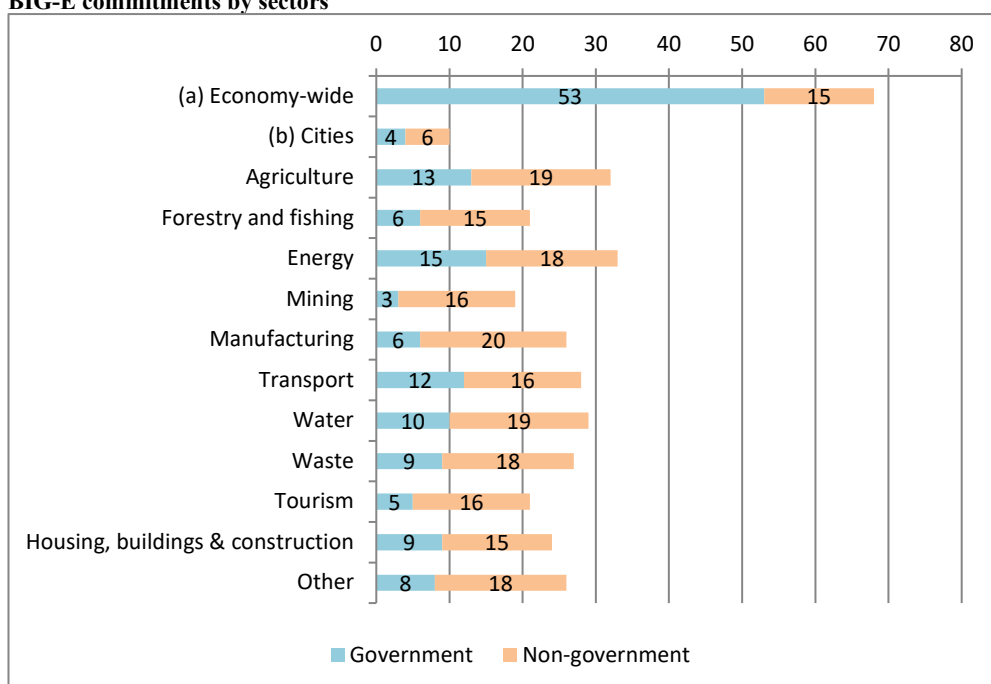


Figure V
BIG-E commitments by Sustainable Development Goals

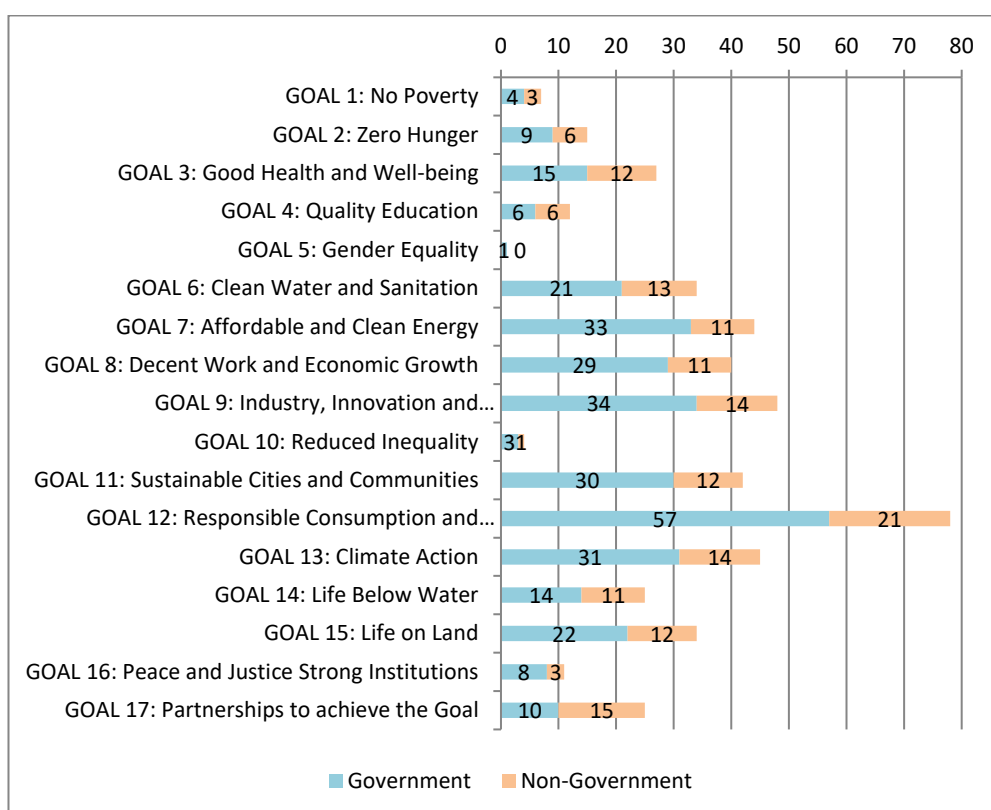


Figure VI

BIG-E commitments' progress in implementation

