

Key Messages from the First Stakeholders' Forum of the Green Recovery Platform for Ukraine

Thematic Panels

NATURE AND BIODIVERSITY PANEL

Overview: The panel featured five speakers discussing the critical themes surrounding the recovery of Ukraine's natural environment amidst ongoing challenges, particularly due to the war. The discussions emphasized the integration of ecological considerations into recovery efforts, the importance of biodiversity, and the need for sustainable infrastructure development.

Main Themes Discussed:

1. Green Recovery Principles:

- o The necessity of integrating environmentally friendly principles into the recovery and reconstruction processes was a central theme. The speakers advocated for a holistic approach that considers ecological impacts at the planning stage rather than retrofitting "green" solutions after the fact.

2. Impact of War on Biodiversity:

- o The war has exacerbated existing environmental crises, including biodiversity loss i.g. in forest, steppe, marine ecosystems, etc. The speakers highlighted the indirect effects of the conflict on ecosystems, such as increased pressure on natural parks and forest ecosystems due to population influx and resource depletion.

3. Infrastructure Development and Environmental Risks:

- o Discussions included the challenges of developing linear transport and energy infrastructure without harming biodiversity. The speakers stressed the importance of planning infrastructure projects that avoid ecological fragmentation and protect migration routes for wildlife.

4. Ecosystem-Based Recovery:

- o The concept of ecosystem-based recovery was emphasized as a means to restore and enhance natural environments while supporting human well-being. The Carpathian region was cited as a model for integrating ecological health into recovery strategies that can be extended to other regions of Ukraine.

5. Institutional Capacity and Community Engagement:

- o A significant challenge identified was the lack of institutional capacity and resources to implement effective biodiversity strategies. The speakers called for increased collaboration with NGOs and international partners to bolster efforts in biodiversity preservation and recovery. It was also proposed to create a Nature Protection Agency, which would allow for the effective implementation of a substantial number of assigned tasks given the lack of staff in the Ministry of Environmental Protection.

6. Future Directions and Legislative Framework:

- o The need for updated legislative frameworks to support biodiversity and sustainable development was highlighted, in particular, the Law on the Emerald Network of Ukraine. The speakers discussed ongoing efforts to create new natural reserves including in the temporarily occupied and heavily mined territories and the importance of community involvement in these initiatives.

Conclusion: The panel underscored the urgent need for a coordinated and comprehensive approach to environmental recovery in Ukraine, emphasizing that the integration of ecological considerations into all aspects of recovery is essential for sustainable development and the preservation of biodiversity.