

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

Thematic Panels

SAFE ENVIRONMENT PANEL

Overview: The Safe Environment Panel featured five speakers who discussed critical themes surrounding Ukraine's environmental recovery in the context of the ongoing war and its aftermath. The discussions emphasized the importance of sustainable practices, the integration of environmental considerations into recovery efforts, and the need for collaboration among various stakeholders.

Main Themes Discussed

1. Environmental Impact of War:

- The war has led to significant environmental degradation, including pollution of water bodies and destruction of ecosystems. The need for recovery and restoration of these natural resources was emphasized by several speakers.
- It was pointed out that the destruction of infrastructure has resulted in substantial waste, which can be viewed as a resource for green recovery.

2. Demining and Environmental Safety:

- Participants discussed the dual focus on demining efforts and environmental safety, emphasizing the need for careful management of natural resources during recovery.
- The integration of international demining standards into national legislation was proposed to minimize environmental damage during demining operations.

3. Integration of Environmental Standards:

- The panelists stressed the importance of aligning Ukraine's recovery efforts with European Union standards and the European Green Deal. This alignment is crucial for achieving sustainable development goals.
- The need for transparency in mineral resource management and adherence to environmental legislation was highlighted to prevent corruption and ensure sustainable practices.

4. Collaboration and Capacity Building:

- The discussions underscored the necessity for collaboration among government bodies, international organizations, and civil society to effectively address environmental challenges.
- Capacity building and knowledge sharing across sectors were recommended to foster innovation and sustainable practices in environmental recovery.

5. Sustainable Wastewater Management:

- It was highlighted the significance of treating wastewater as a valuable resource rather than a problem. Sustainable wastewater management is essential for Ukraine's green recovery, contributing to public health and environmental restoration.
- The potential for wastewater to serve as a decentralized energy source was discussed, with the possibility of meeting up to 20% of urban energy demands.

Conclusions

The Safe Environment Panel highlighted the urgent need for a coordinated approach to environmental recovery in Ukraine. Emphasis was placed on sustainable practices, adherence to international standards, and the importance of collaboration among various stakeholders. The discussions laid a strong foundation for future actions aimed at restoring Ukraine's ecosystems and ensuring a resilient and sustainable future.

Impacts by Scale and Focus Areas – Key Messages

- Debris, asbestos, and other hazardous materials present immediate and long-term environmental risks.
- The presence of explosive ordnance (EO) and unexploded ordnance (UXO) significantly complicates recovery and safe land use.
- Ecosystems, especially those related to water resources and sensitive biotopes, are under severe threat and must be prioritized in recovery plans.

Legislation and Regulation – Key Messages

- Environmental considerations must be integrated into all stages of reconstruction through robust legal and regulatory frameworks.
- Such legislation should align with international standards to ensure sustainability, safety, and long-term resilience.

Capacity Development and Green Job Opportunities – Key Messages

- Ukraine must strengthen its technical and institutional capacities to meet environmental recovery challenges.
- Green job creation across all sectors offers a key opportunity for sustainable economic development.
- Waste management strategies should emphasize beneficial use and reuse of:
 - Hazardous waste;
 - Non-hazardous waste;
 - Wastewater, which can be repurposed for heating and biogas production.

Coordinated Strategies and Digital Tools – Key Messages

- Coordinated, multi-stakeholder strategies are essential to maximize the efficiency and impact of environmental recovery.
- Digital tools can enhance transparency, facilitate communication, and help visualize opportunities and progress.

Continued Support – Key Messages

- Long-term technical, financial, and institutional support is vital to sustain environmental recovery.
- Continued international and national collaboration is necessary to ensure Ukraine's transition to a greener, more resilient future.