

# LEDS capacity building for Government of Macedonia institutions — a pathway to sustainable development

Macedonia and U.S. share the view that climate change presents a critical development challenge and requires action towards a more sustainable economic growth path. This view is based on the Copenhagen Accord statement which noted that low emissions development strategies (LEDS) are indispensable to sustainable development (SD). LEDS has its roots in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) adopted in Rio in 1992. In the context of this convention, Low Carbon Development is generally expressed using the LEDS term. LEDS are generally used to describe forward-looking national economic development plans or strategies that encompass low-emission and/or climate resilient economic growth.

SD can be described as the development or growth that serves the requirements of the current generation without affecting the future generations' ability to succeed. It takes into consideration not only the economic, but also the environmental factors, and prevents possible adverse



Natasa Markovska, LEDS and GHG inventory expert at MANU presenting the LEDS methodology to the members of the technical working group within the National Council for Sustainable Development, comprised of representatives from all relevant Government Ministries and Agencies.

climate change impact. As such, this concept was embraced in development planning by the Government of Macedonia (GoM).

The U.S. Government, through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and the GoM, are collaborating on low emissions development through the USAID Clean Energy Investment Project implemented by Winrock International. This Project is under the umbrella of

the U.S. Government Enhancing Capacity for Low Emissions Development Strategies (EC-LEDS) regional program. The joint effort has a goal to build the capacity of Macedonia to develop, enhance and implement LEDS. More specifically, the project will support Macedonia's efforts to pursue long-term, transformative development and accelerate sustainable, climate resilient economic growth, while slowing the growth of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

In order to strengthen the capacities of the GoM to incorporate a LEDS approach into ministries' programs and action plans and to implement them, the Clean Energy Investment Project (the Project) initiated a preparatory process of mapping national strategies with respect to LEDS considerations. This initiative was implemented in close cooperation with the Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs (DPMEA) cabinet. Specific LEDS opportunities that will be incorporated into the national strategic planning for SD can contribute to reduction of GHG emissions in particular sectors, and further enhance the SD.

The main objective of this effort was to deliver recommendations on how to integrate LEDS elements into the forthcoming national strategic planning for SD, more specifically the National Sustainable Development Action Plan (NSDAP) – a planning effort coordinated by the National

Council for Sustainable Development (NCSD). Therefore, the Project hired a local LEDS expert from the Macedonian Academy of Science and Arts (MANU) to design the mapping analysis. The mapping analysis included:

- How and to what extent LEDS is addressed in the relevant international, European Union (EU) and national planning documents.
- LEDS-SD cross-cutting analyses.
- Identification of LEDS-SD synergies and trade-offs in national context, particularly taking into account the eleven key challenges from the National Strategy for Sustainable Development (NSSD).
- Conducting of a targeted workshop and initiation of the institutional involvement (preparation of a tailor-made questionnaire)
- Analyses of the feedback received from the institutions.

To begin, the Project organized a targeted workshop for members of the technical working group within the NCSD, comprised of representatives from all relevant government ministries and agencies in order to present the international good practices of the LEDS concept, as well as to define the LEDS sector in the national context including the tailor-made LEDS questionnaire. However, prior to inception

of the planning process, the working group needed up-to-date information on the incorporation status of LEDS elements in the relevant strategies.

Therefore, a tailor-made LEDS questionnaire aimed at assessing the level of inclusion of the LEDS approach in the strategic planning processes implemented by the GoM was developed, presented and explained in details to the members of the technical working group during the workshop. The LEDS questionnaire was designed to identify the planning documents, legislation, policies, and measures that directly and indirectly address the defined LEDS sectors, assess the level of their implementation, as well as to identify the cross-cutting topics including their coherence. In order to ensure high quality results and feedback from the LEDS questionnaire, a targeted workshop was organized in September 2013 for the members of the technical working group, and representatives of other relevant ministries and institutions. LEDS questionnaires were sent to all relevant ministries and governmental agencies.

After feedback from the questionnaires was received, an additional series of one-on-one meetings with representatives from relevant institutions was organized. Based on the feedback from the LEDS



Participants in the final workshop on integrating LEDs approach in national planning. Presenters Natasa Markovska of MANU is the furthest on the left, and Marija Ignatova Gjosheva of CEI Project is the furthest on the right hand side.

questionnaires and meetings, the final mapping report with findings and recommendations was completed and was presented to the technical working group within the NCSD. As a result, the document was included in the information adopted by the GoM on its session held in March 2014.

This process of developing the LEDS mapping was closely coordinated by the DPMEA cabinet with participation from representatives of relevant institutions, thus increasing their awareness and knowledge in regards to LEDS while at the same time building their capacities for this new innovative concept. In addition the results of this effort will serve as an important guiding document that will be presented at the next session of the

NCSD, and will serve as preparatory work and guidance for future undertakings of the GoM with regards to SD planning, to enable the country to capitalize from inclusion of the LEDS into national development pathways.

“The activities supported by the USAID Clean Energy Investment Project will have sustainable impact, building the capacity of relevant institutions. The specific activity of mapping the LEDS sectors in the frames of the strategic development planning, helped the Government of Macedonia institutions and policymakers in building the capacities towards a comprehensive understanding and implementation of the LEDS paradigm, into the sustainable development, and to move forward with the green growth agenda. The cooperation with the Project is on very high level, we are closely cooperating and participating in the development of annual work plans, and we are actively engaged in delivering joint outcomes,” said Sandra Andovska, Environment Advisor in the Cabinet of the DPMEA.

Other project partners and counterparts are also very supportive of these efforts:

“The mapping exercise contributed in building capacities towards better identification of LEDS sectors, responsible institutions, synergies and trade-offs between LEDS sectors and sustainable development founded on ‘academia-policymaking’ partnerships. The approach implemented and recommendations derived support ‘wise’ policy planning and sustainable development,” said Teodora Obradovic Grncarovska, State Counselor for Climate Change at the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning and UNFCCC Focal Point.

“It has been quite a challenge to bring together various stakeholders from government to think over and start working cooperatively on the development agenda that will eventually lead to lower greenhouse gas emissions. Surely, this will catalyze concrete actions that support sustainable development of the country,” said Natasa Markovska, Senior Researcher at MANU.

Winrock International is a nonprofit organization that works with people in the United States and around the world to empower the disadvantaged, increase economic opportunity, and sustain natural resources.



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