

Minutes of the 3rd M4EG Steering Committee Meeting

(25 June 2019, Tbilisi, Georgia)

The third annual “Mayors for Economic Growth” Steering Committee Meeting gathered together the representatives from DG NEAR, the implementing consortium partners (ECORYS NL, PMCG, Noblet Media), line ministries from all the 6 participating countries, national associations of local authorities from Armenia, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine, and the representatives of the 3 M4EG Pioneer Projects in Georgia (Bolnisi, Gori and Tbilisi).

The meeting was opened by Mr. Hoa-Binh Adjemian, Head of Sector, DG NEAR, who welcomed the participants and stated: “We, the EU, believe that getting EaP municipalities and stakeholders together for an open discussion on their achievements and challenges ahead is key for the implementing successful projects”. He also underlined that one of the key objectives of the meeting is to define the way forward for the Initiative and to make sure that it does not duplicate but creates synergies with the efforts made within the framework of the EU “focal regions” in each of the countries.

Ms. Mzia Giorgobiani, Deputy Minister of Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia also addressed the participants, noting: “We are very happy with the support M4EG is offering our Georgian municipalities, and we are hoping this initiative will be continued”.

The meeting continued with a short presentation from the M4EG Secretariat team, outlining the main developments and focus areas of the Initiative implementation in general, reporting the main results achieved since June 2018, and providing short M4EG snapshots by country.

During the discussion, several important points and observations were made, such as:

Viola Calabrese (DG NEAR) confirmed EU intention to continue supporting the initiative beyond 2020 through new TA and granting schemes (grants to be contracted at the end of 2020/beginning of 2021). Although the mechanism is still to be determined, the intention is to support smaller projects as well as bigger ones (approximately same size as the previous CfP).

Austin Kilroy (WB): It is important to understand the motivation of the new signatories so that we can design the future support measures the optimal possible way. It cannot be just grants. Another important thing for the next grant scheme is taking into account social and environmental considerations for the proposed actions to make sure the projects do not have a negative impact on vulnerable groups or the environment as a side effect.

For the remaining year of the project, the World Bank shall focus on measuring the outcomes of the M4EG initiative. The approach needs to be defined in the view of the results achieved, which are quite overwhelming in scope and quality and could have never been envisaged at the design phase.

Viola Calabrese:

It is really good to hear about the achievements of the Pioneer Projects to date, but it is important to focus not only on successes but investigating challenges and mistakes in order to

design better projects in the future. Maybe, organizing a dedicated event for M4EG Pioneer Projects can be considered to explore that.

It is to be noted that gender mainstreaming is not just about balance in the team or beneficiaries (although good starting point, as we need to lead by the example), but should be mainly about promoting the involvement of women in local business sector as a resource for economic development. Specific indicators need to be established in future LEDPs.

VitaliyKniazev(MFA BY) noted that difficulties with registering grant projects in Belarus really exist, but they are in no way discriminatory and specific to the M4EG initiative. This is the situation everybody has to face, but this does not mean implementing projects in Belarus is impossible. It is worth noticing that after the projects are finally registered, they are usually implemented really well and without problems. If planned in advance, project events can be hold in Belarus and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is ready to support.

When discussing potentially relevant focal areas for the next Phase of M4EG (beyond 2020), the participants jointly agreed that re-focusing (as compared to the current M4EG Phase) will be needed in the future to solidify the achieved results. The following activities were mentioned as important:

- Using more experienced and better performing members as a resource – e.g. Acting members mentoring Junior Members.
- Coming up with ways of supporting LEDP implementation by the Acting members – this is the main challenge at present.
- Continue capacity building on specific thematic areas (maybe also through e-learning).
- Continue to support networking activities among the Signatories.
- Strengthen cooperation with national associations of local authorities.

At the closing session of the SCM, a ceremonial hand-over of certificates for the completion of the M4EG online training course to students of GIPA and Caucasus University was held.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS
3rd Steering Committee Meeting
25 June 2019
Tbilisi, Georgia

#	Name	Title
1	Hoa-BinhAdjemian	Head of Sector, DG NEAR
2	Viola Calabrese	Program Manager for Mayors for Economic Growth, DG NEAR
3	Dominik Papenheim	Programme Officer, EU Delegation to Georgia
4	Lilit Saroyan	Head of the Department of International and Cross-Border Cooperation, Ministry of Territorial Administration and Development of the Republic of Armenia
5	Natalya Lapauri	Executive Director, Union of Communities of Armenia
6	Vitaly Kniazev	First Secretary of the European Cooperation Department, Directorate General for Europe and Northern America, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus
7	Mzia Giorgobiani	Deputy Minister, Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia
8	Nikoloz Rosebashvili	Head of Local Self-Government Development and Policy Department, Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia
9	Davit Melua	Executive Director, National Association of Local Authorities of Georgia
10	Andria Basilaia	Head of Economic Development Office, Tbilisi City Hall, Georgia
11	Sandro Kandelaki	Manager of Tbilisi Business Accelerator, Tbilisi Grant Project, Georgia
12	ZaurRostomashvili	LEDO, Gori Municipality, Georgia
13	LashaKhmaldze	Project Coordinator, Gori Grant Project, Georgia
14	Davit Sherazadashvili	Mayor, Bolnisi Municipality, Georgia
15	MeryAbramishvili	Head of Project Management Unit, Bolnisi Municipality, Georgia
16	Natalia Kakabadze	Project Manager, Bolnisi Grant Project, Georgia
17	Igor Malai	Head of Regional Policy Department, Ministry of Agriculture, Regional Development and Environment of Moldova
18	Valentina Casian	Deputy Chairman, Congress of Local Authorities from Moldova
19	ViktoriiKaras	Deputy Director of the Department for Implementation of regional development priority projects, Ministry for Regional Development, Construction and Housing of Ukraine
20	GrygoriiRudiuk	Deputy Head, All Ukrainian Association of Amalgamated Territorial Communities

21	Austin Kilroy	Senior Economist, World Bank
22	AtzeVerkennis	Project Director, Ecorys Nederland B.V.
23	Anna Shevchenko	Regional Director, Noblet Media CIS
24	David Lezhava	PMCG
25	Peter Korsby	Team Leader, M4EG Secretariat
26	Julia Dzingailo	Regional Coordinator, Communications Manager, M4EG Secretariat
27	Tamar Bezhanishvili	Office Manager, M4EG Secretariat
28	Sevak Hovhannisyan	Country Coordinator for Armenia, M4EG Secretariat
29	ZviadArchuadze	Country Coordinator for Azerbaijan and Georgia, M4EG Secretariat
30	Natalia Efremenko	Country Coordinator for Belarus, M4EG Secretariat
31	Lilian Danilov	Country Coordinator for Moldova, M4EG Secretariat
32	Olexander Tsepko	Country Coordinator for Ukraine, M4EG Secretariat