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EU4Green Recovery East (700002623)

Recovery through a Circular Economy and Pollution Reduction in the Eastern Partnership countries

EVENT REPORT

WEBINAR ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE OLD AND NEW URBAN WASTE WATER TREATMENT DIRECTIVE (UWWTD)

REGIONAL (ARMENIA, AZERBAIJAN, GEORGIA,
MOLDOVA AND UKRAINE)

Date	Mission lead	Output n°
11.12.2025	Bogdanka Radetic	Component 2

Author(s)

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Date 10.02.2026

Implementing partners:



1. Main results / outputs of the event

1.1. Background

The webinar was organised within the framework of cooperation between the European Union and the Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries: Ukraine, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Moldova. These countries are working to improve their wastewater management systems in line with European environmental standards and to address challenges related to water quality, public health, and climate change.

The Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive (UWWTD) has been a key element of EU water policy since 1991, setting requirements for the collection, treatment, and discharge of urban wastewater. The newly adopted Directive 2024/3019/EC updates and extends these rules, introducing stricter nutrient removal targets, obligations for advanced treatment of micropollutants, and requirements to reach energy neutrality and monitor greenhouse gas emissions from wastewater treatment. These changes reflect the EU's broader environmental and climate objectives as well as its commitment to not leave anyone behind.

For the EaP countries, the Directive provides a valuable reference point. While they are not legally bound by EU law, many of them have committed to closer alignment with EU standards through different cooperation frameworks. Improving wastewater collection and treatment is important not only for environmental protection, but also for economic development, and for regional cooperation and progress towards international commitments such as the Sustainable Development Goals.

The webinar offered a platform for exchange between EU experts and national stakeholders from Ukraine, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Moldova. It provided an overview of the current status of wastewater collection and treatment and sludge management in Europe, discussed the implications of the new Directive, and presented how initiatives such as EU4GRE can support the development of wastewater management in EaP countries. The event highlighted the value of knowledge sharing, capacity building, and coordinated action to strengthen wastewater treatment across the region.

1.2. Objectives of the Webinar

The webinar was designed to provide participants from Ukraine, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Moldova with an overview of the current state and future direction of urban wastewater collection and treatment policy in Europe. With this webinar, the EU4Green Recovery East programme introduced its capacity building activities targeted specifically to urban wastewater treatment.

The objective of this webinar was to raise awareness among key institutional and operational stakeholders across the region regarding the requirements and implementation pathways of the UWWTD, including its achievements since 1991 and its updated version from January 2025.

The webinar was meant to provide an opportunity to learn about EU Member State experiences, discuss technical and institutional implications of compliance, and explain the need for long-term national wastewater strategies. It was also meant to introduce the SIIF (Structured Implementation and Information Framework) as a planning and monitoring tool of wastewater



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collection systems and treatment plants and open space for dialogue on planned EU support at national and regional level.

1.3. Expected outcomes

- Improved Awareness and Understanding:
 - Participants gain a clear overview of Directive 91/271/EEC and the new requirements introduced by Directive (EU) 2024/3019.
- Clarification of key changes, such as stricter nutrient removal, micropollutant treatment, energy neutrality and extended producer responsibility.
- Capacity Building:
 - Strengthen the understanding of ministries, agencies, and utilities regarding the new Directive's requirements and implications for wastewater management.
 - Facilitate the identification of technical gaps and financial resources needed to achieve compliance and plan future investments.
- Regional Knowledge Exchange:
 - Sharing of best practices and lessons learned from EU Member States.
 - Discussion of regional challenges (e.g., infrastructure gaps, financing, monitoring).

1.4. Programme

The first session provided an overview of the objectives of the original Directive 91/271/EEC, which has guided wastewater collection and treatment across Europe for more than three decades. Presentations focused on the current status of implementation in Europe, with detailed insights from Austria and France. Speakers emphasized both the successes achieved in improving water quality and the persistent challenges, such as compliance gaps, infrastructure modernisation needs, and the integration of climate considerations.

The second major session introduced the newly adopted Directive 2024/3019/EC, which updates and strengthens requirements for wastewater. Key changes include smaller agglomerations, stricter nutrient removal targets, micropollutant treatment and its financing via the extended producer responsibility, energy neutrality, expanded monitoring and reporting obligations, protection of the vulnerable populations, and provisions for greenhouse gas emissions from wastewater treatment. Speakers outlined the challenges that Member States will face in implementing these new requirements, ranging from financial and technical constraints to the need for capacity building at local levels. This session concluded with an interactive discussion, where participants raised questions about national differences in implementation and shared experiences from their own contexts.

The third session focused on the European information system for wastewater treatment, designed to enhance transparency, comparability, and accountability across Member States. Presenters explained how the system will integrate national data components, ensuring consistency while respecting local contexts. Discussion centered on data quality, reporting burdens, and the opportunities for improved policy-making through better information flows.

The final session introduced the EU4GRE project and its workplan to support wastewater treatment development in Eastern Partnership countries. For all further details please see Annex 1_Agenda of the Webinar.

1.5. Feedback results

In total, more than 200 participants registered for the event, and 168 participants actively attended the webinar. This strong level of participation reflects the relevance of the topic and the interest among stakeholders in Ukraine, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Moldova. The table below provides an overview of the distribution of participants by country, illustrating the broad regional engagement. The detailed list of participants is in Annex 2: EU4GREE_UWWTD Webinar_LoP

country	Number of Participants
AM	24
AZ	13
GE	3
MD	23
UA	79
Different organisations	18
Not known	8
Total	168

Feedback was collected from 39 participants through the post-event survey. Their responses offer valuable insights into the effectiveness of the webinar and the areas where future activities could be further strengthened. The majority of respondents indicated that the webinar met or exceeded their expectations, particularly in terms of the clarity of presentations, the usefulness of the information provided, and the opportunity for discussion with experts.

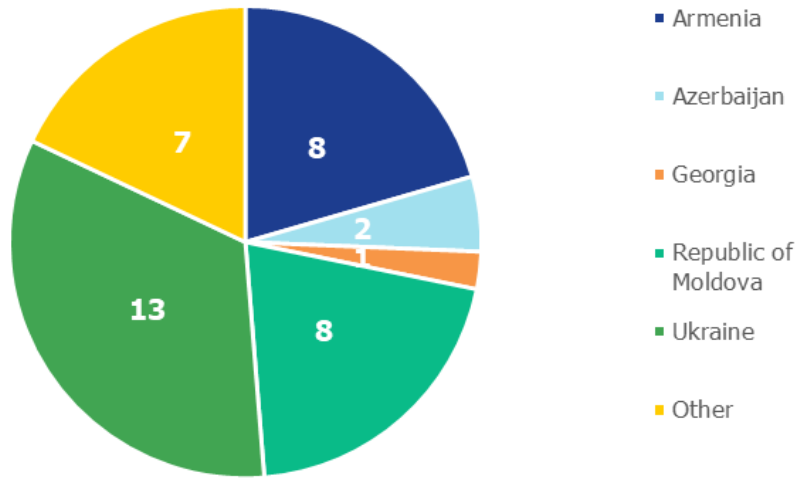
The following graphs present the detailed results of the feedback survey. They show how participants assessed the overall organisation of the webinar, the relevance of the topics covered, and the quality of the contributions from speakers.



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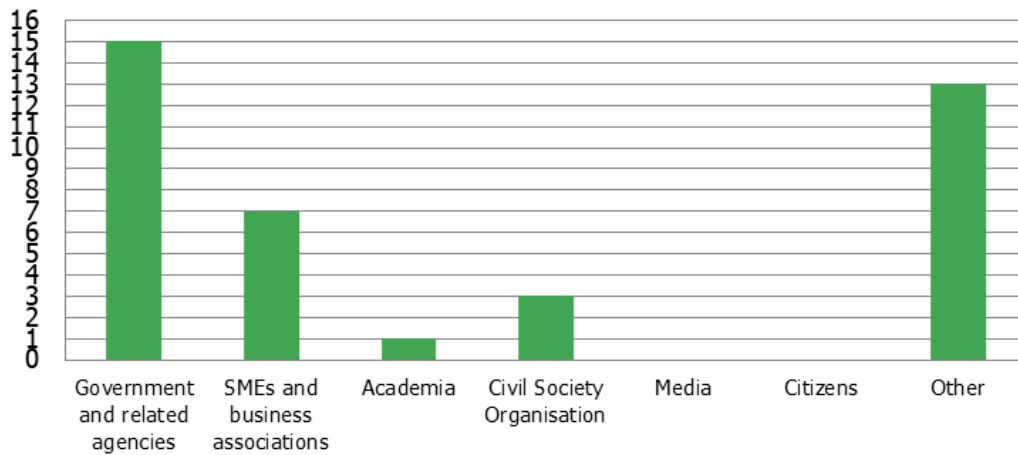
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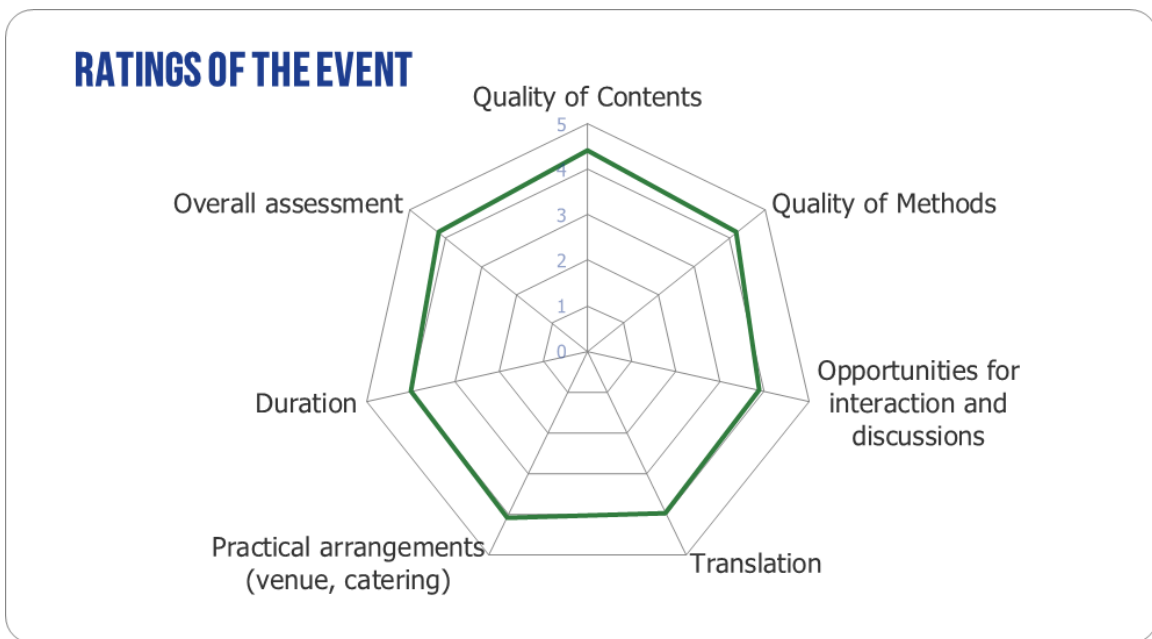
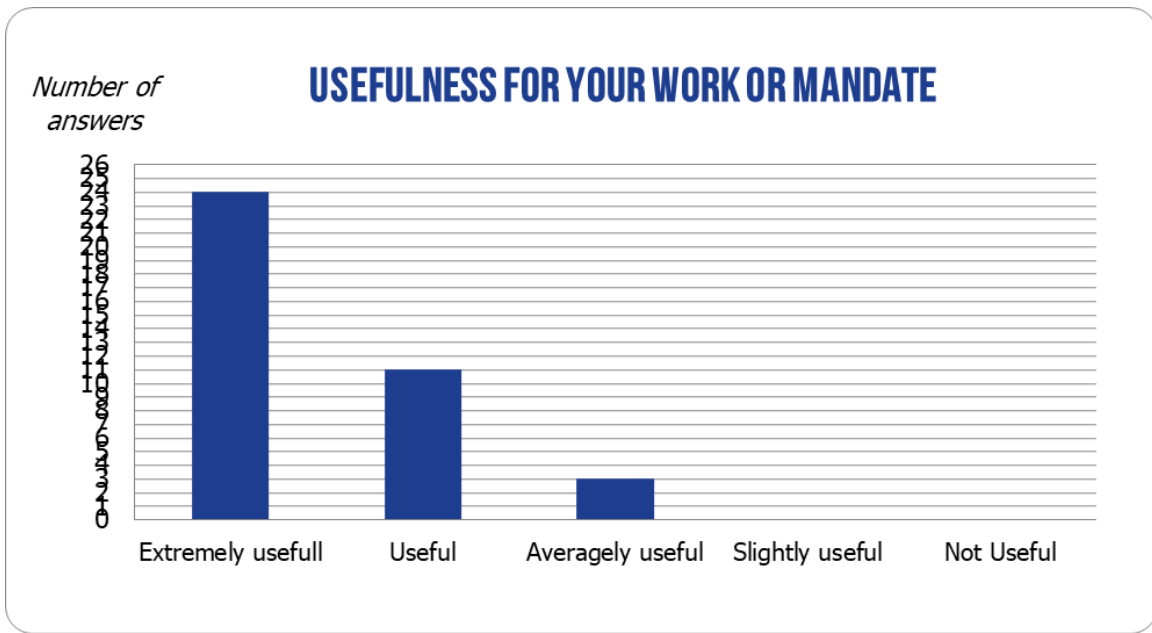
Number of participants

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Overall, the results confirm that the webinar successfully achieved its objectives: raising awareness of the (old and) new Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive, sharing experiences from EU Member States, and discussing the implications for Eastern Partnership countries. The feedback received will be taken into account in the planning of future events to ensure that they continue to meet the needs of participants and support the development of wastewater management in the region.

In addition to the quantitative survey results presented in the graphs, participants also provided qualitative feedback through free-text responses. Overall, the feedback was positive and confirmed that the webinar met its objectives.

1.5.1. What was your biggest takeaway from this event Bilateral Talks in country approaches

1. There are many challenging aspects for EU accession countries when it comes to complying with both the old and the new Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive (UWWTD).
2. The presentation was clear in the part about responsibilities.
3. Excellent background on differences between old and new directive.
4. The experience gained from the Austrian and French case studies was exceptional. I have never before encountered such a clear and well-structured overview of this information within such a limited timeframe. I believe that my overall understanding of the UWWTD has significantly improved, and this knowledge is highly valuable.
5. High costs but potential benefits for the Environment.
6. Introduction to the requirements of the new Directive.
7. Types of wastewater treatment facilities, treatment stages, technical characteristics.
8. Requirements of the new Directive and experience of the two member countries.
9. Before estimating costs and plans, we must have discussions and institutionally coordinate each change and provide recommendations after the analyses made.
10. The need for cooperation with states that have a longer period of activity in the field of wastewater treatment and that have implemented several modernization projects.
11. The need for a centralized information system for planning and monitoring of wastewater treatment plants as well as for the distribution of information to the public.
12. The level of ambition of the new Directive is very high, considering the conditions in the Republic of Moldova.
13. Comparison of directives and examples of France and Austria
14. Update on the implementation of Directive 2024/3019 and examples of France and Austria
15. Movement towards solving wastewater treatment issues.
16. This is the first such survey on an international platform.
17. The data from examples of the implementation of the urban wastewater directive in the presented countries (France, Austria) were interesting.

1.5.2. What aspects would you like to see improved or further developed (topics, format)?

1. Bilateral talks in country approaches.
2. A practical example of implementation and compliance can be seen in how large to medium scale agglomerations in EU Member States - and increasingly in candidate countries - must plan, finance, and operate fully compliant wastewater collection and treatment systems in line with the UWWTD.
3. It would be more effective if the program lasts several days with 1–2 hours of sessions each day. It would also be beneficial to organize site visits to places where this program has been implemented as an example, so participants can observe how it works in practice.
4. Needs of Eastern Partnership Countries
5. From a Georgian perspective, it would be beneficial to further develop several aspects of the training. First, additional focus on practical implementation challenges - especially those relevant to countries in transition, such as financing mechanisms, institutional coordination, and compliance monitoring - would be highly valuable. More case studies from countries with similar socioeconomic and regulatory contexts to Georgia would also enhance the applicability of the content. In terms of format, incorporating more interactive sessions, such as hands-on exercises and facilitated group discussions, could strengthen understanding and help participants relate the material to national realities. Finally, providing more detailed guidance on aligning national legislation with EU directives, including step-by-step examples, would greatly support Georgia's ongoing approximation efforts.
6. Zoom on the different steps of preparation of the new obligations
7. Practical solutions for EAP countries
8. More practical examples
9. Adaptation to the local requirements of the given country.
10. Clarification of stepwise implementation for Armenia and development of corresponding legal framework.
11. More advice on the transposition of European good practices would be desirable. In a way, a guide with questions and answers in a more restricted format.
12. More graphic presentations.
13. Development and presentation of a more practical support plan from EU4GREEN to confront the challenges in implementing the directive given the existing conditions in Eastern European countries.
14. More specific information on technical requirements in the upcoming meetings
15. More on how operators have implemented the Directive in practice?
16. More practical examples
17. Continuation of the discussion of the topic raised
18. It is important for Ukraine to understand the priority steps for implementing directives and methodologies at the European level
19. Operation of municipal wastewater treatment plants



20. The topic of urban wastewater treatment itself is multidisciplinary: here are management systems at the state, municipal and enterprise levels, the introduction of risk-based approaches and safety plans for wastewater collection and treatment, issues of state standards, tools and mechanisms for encouragement and implementation, improvement of treatment systems, conducting audits and developing development plans for treatment systems, analysis, selection and justification of the most effective and optimal treatment technologies in specific conditions, the topic of various types of wastewater monitoring, creating databases, sludge management, reuse of treated wastewater, the financial component and the level of competence of people involved in this topic at all levels in the state are very important, informing consumers and citizens, explaining the importance and necessity of such work, not to mention the energy independence and neutrality of treatment enterprises, minimal and zero emissions from the point of view of the circular economy. In addition, everyone works in their own unique local conditions, on which it is important to creatively impose requirements and best practices. This could go on for a long time, because there are quite a lot of questions and problems. In terms of format, I would like more opportunities for communication.

The feedback can be summarised as follows:

- Participants want more practical examples and case studies, including site visits and demonstrations.
- Need for country-specific approaches, tailored guidance, and step-by-step support for legislative alignment.-specific approaches, tailored guidance, and step-by-step support for legislative alignment.
- Requests for deeper technical content (compliance, financing, monitoring, sludge management, operator practices).
- Preference for a different format: shorter sessions spread over several days, with more interactive elements.
- Desire for ongoing communication and follow-up, including bilateral talks and continued discussions.-up, including bilateral talks and continued discussions.

2. Next steps / to do's

In the framework of the EU4GreenRecovery project, and planned capacity building activity (2.3.2), and taking into account the above feedback received, the following capacity building tasks could be considered in the project.

- At regional level: one additional regional webinar with for example a focus on possible ways to implement old (91/271) UWWTD and giving the orientation to the countries where they could start, an integrated step by step, pragmatic and efficient approach.
- At national level:
 - Possibly for each country: one national webinar to discuss the implementation of 2024/3019 in a step by step approach with the national situation as starting point: country presentation, key questions and interactive sessions.

- For Armenia: one or two webinar(s) and/or 1 day training in AM with study visit to Erevan treatment plant, dedicated to basic knowledge and understanding on wastewater management with illustrations: collection, treatment, sludge...
- For Ukraine and Moldova:
 - o Assess the current training needs on UWWTP management with some sorting criteria: type of staff, topics to be covered, size of the plants where the needs are most prominent. (questionnaire, interviews, bibliographic research) and summarise them in a small document proposing key priorities.
 - o Discuss and refine proposed training priorities with national representative and their counterpart.
 - o Based on this, develop a training programme for the top priority(ies).
 - o To illustrate what would be a training course, develop one technical training module on operation of biological wastewater treatment.

In addition, the pilot multiday training module will be developed for WWTP operators in Ukraine and Moldova. This module will be delivered over two to three days and will combine theoretical and practical sessions to strengthen skills for evaluating the performance of WWTPs. This approach is designed to support operators in enhancing operational efficiency and improving overall plant performance. Implementation of this training module in Armenia is currently not feasible, as biological wastewater treatment has not yet been established.

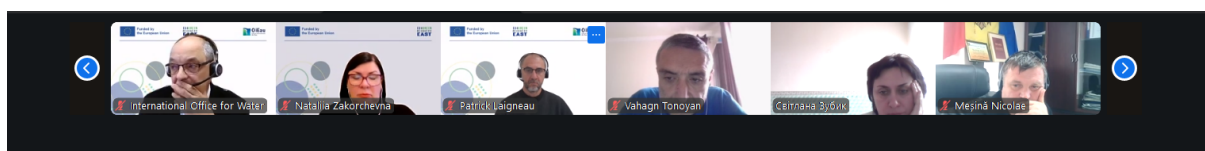
STEP/TASK	RESPONSIBILITY	DEADLINE
Questionnaires to be conveyed to the WWTP operators and decision makers	Bogdanka Radetic Benoît Fribourg Blanc	Q1/2026
Assessment of capacity building gaps related to urban wastewater treatment and proposed priority(es)	Bogdanka Radetic Benoît Fribourg Blanc	Q1/2026
Regional webinar: Orientation for Stepwise Implementation of the UWWTD (91/271/EEC) From Low Compliance to Achievable Performance	Benoît Fribourg Blanc Bogdanka Radetic	Q2/2026
Selection of 1-2 priorities and preparation of training material based on assessment of capacity gaps	Bogdanka Radetic Benoît Fribourg Blanc	Q2/2026
Organisation of the online training for WWTP operators/on site	Bogdanka Radetic Benoît Fribourg Blanc	Q4/2026
NATIONAL WEBINAR Roadmap for Stepwise Implementation of UWWTD– A National Pathway for Armenia	Lead: Benoît Fribourg Blanc Support: Bogdanka Radetic	2027
NATIONAL WEBINAR	Lead: Benoît Fribourg Blanc	2027



Roadmap for Stepwise Implementation of UWWTD– A National Pathway for Moldova	Support: Bogdanka Radetic	
NATIONAL WEBINAR Roadmap for Stepwise Implementation of UWWTD– A National Pathway for Ukraine	Lead: Benoît Fribourg Blanc Support: Bogdanka Radetic	2027

3. Annexes

- **Annex 1: Agenda_UWWTD**
- **Annex 2: List of participants**



EU 4 Green Recovery East

Official title: "Recovery through a Circular Economy and Pollution Reduction in the Eastern Partnership countries"

Webinar: implementation of the old and new UWWTD

- Objectives and current status of implementation of **Directive 91/271/EEC (Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive)** in Europe/AT/FR





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- Objectives and current status of implementation of **Directive 91/271/EEC** (Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive) in Europe/AT/FR

Implementing partners: 1



Directive 2024/3019 - EU

- Replaces the UWWTD (91/271) from **1/08/2027**
- **35 articles**, 59p (vs 91/271 - 20 articles, 13p)
- **Enhanced ambition**, e.g.
 - A **key tool** in the EU action plan to “zero pollution”
 - Agglomerations **≥ 1,000 PE**
 - Integrated urban wastewater **management plans** (Art. 5)
 - **Nutrient removal**: stricter performance, all large plants (50% of load at EU level) (Art. 7)
 - **Quaternary** treatment, microplastics & micropollutants (Art. 8)
 - Extended Producer Responsibility – **EPR** (Art. 9 and Art. 10)
 - **Energy neutrality** (Art. 11), Green House Gases emission and reduction (Art. 21)
 - **Health** and early warning systems and Antimicrobial resistance (Art. 17)
 - **Human right**: Access to sanitation (Art. 19)
- A need to **shift** from reporting to **public access to information**
- **3 EU working groups** to work on 18 implementing acts and 5 delegated acts



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Implementing partners: 30



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