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EU4Environment

Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Republic of Moldova, Ukraine

Training Workshop on the Practical Application of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in Regional and Spatial Planning

Draft Agenda

26-27 April 2021
Baku, Azerbaijan

Due to COVID-19, this workshop will be delivered as a virtual event, using the Zoom platform. All registered participants will receive connection details to access the platform.

Action implemented by:



Training Workshop on the Practical Application of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in Regional and Spatial Planning

26-27 April 2021

14:00 Baku time

Background

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is recognized as a practical and efficient planning and environmental governance tool/system applied in order to ensure that a wide range of public plans, programmes and other strategic documents that can have serious impacts on the environment (e.g., draft governmental plans or programmes concerning land use, transport, energy, waste, agriculture, etc.) are developed while taking into account environmental, climate and health considerations. Following the principles and procedures laid down in the UNECE Protocol on SEA to the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) in a Transboundary Context (Espoo Convention) and in the European Union's Directive on SEA (2001/42/EC), Azerbaijan is implementing the SEA to allow for identification of the most sustainable and cost-effective strategic development alternatives and attracting new investments, while safeguarding and improving the environment. When applied effectively, the SEA also helps strengthen the country's environmental governance through fostering transparency and consultation with relevant stakeholders and the public prior to the approval of plans and programmes. SEA in a transboundary context can also greatly facilitate regional cooperation on environmental matters. Spatial planning, including regional plans, is one of the biggest and most comprehensive sectors of SEA application with considerable developments over the past decades and the vast experience available, in particular, from countries in the European Union.

Within the framework of the European Union funded EU4Environment programme (2019-2022), UNECE is assisting the Eastern Partnership countries, including Azerbaijan, in comprehensive capacity-building and institutional building for SEA and transboundary EIA and in finalizing legal reforms in this area.

The application of SEA in practice however remains rather limited in the country as the overall institutional capacities for SEA require significantly more strengthening to be fully fit for purpose. There is still a need to support environmental, health and sectoral planning authorities through capacity-building and awareness-raising activities addressing, inter alia, relevant procedures and challenges as well as respective roles of different authorities and stakeholders in the implementation of SEA procedures.

Since 2004, UNECE has been providing technical assistance and capacity-building support related to SEA and transboundary EIA including in Eastern Europe. This support was provided under the European Union funded EaP GREEN programme in 2013-2018 and is currently being provided under EU4Environment.

This workshop is the first of two SEA training workshops under the EU4Environment workplan for Azerbaijan. Along with the workplan's other SEA-related activities, it will promote the more systematic and effective application of SEA in accordance with the UNECE Protocol on SEA, EU SEA Directive and the national legislation on SEA. It is dedicated to the application of SEA in the context of Regional and Spatial Planning, which constitute a very significant but also specific

and challenging domain of SEA application. The workshop will be facilitated by SEA consultants to UNECE.

Meeting objectives, expected outputs and outcomes

The main objectives of the workshop are to:

- Enhance capacities for the application of SEA in Azerbaijan in line with the requirements of the UNECE Protocol on SEA, EU SEA Directive and the national legislation on SEA.
- Support the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources in raising awareness about the SEA, SEA-related regulatory framework and its application;
- Facilitate the engagement of key stakeholders and exchange of experience on SEA in the Regional and Spatial planning context.

The workshop is expected to help to further engage relevant stakeholders to participate in SEA implementation effort and to facilitate expert discussion on practical application of SEA in Azerbaijan.

Participants

The meeting will gather up to 40 participants from the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources, sectoral ministries and agencies as well as environmental NGOs active in this area.

Practical Information

The meeting will be organized as a virtual event via Zoom. All registered participants will receive connection details to access the platform. Simultaneous interpretation in English and Azerbaijani will be provided.

About EU4Environment

The “European Union for Environment” (EU4Environment) aims to help the six partner countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Republic of Moldova, Ukraine preserve their natural capital and increase people's environmental well-being, by supporting environment-related action, demonstrating and unlocking opportunities for greener growth, and setting mechanisms to better manage environmental risks and impacts.

The Action is funded by the European Union and implemented by five Partner organisations: OECD, UNECE, UNEP, UNIDO and the World Bank based on a budget of some EUR 20 million. The Action implementation period is 2019-2022.

For further information contact: EU4Environment@oecd.org

For further information specifically on activities on SEA and transboundary EIA implemented by UNECE, please contact: leonid.kalashnyk@un.org

AGENDA

DAY 1, 26 April

Time (Baku)	Item
13:30 – 14:00	Connection testing (30 min)
14:00 – 14:15	Welcoming remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Representative of the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of Azerbaijan</i> • <i>Representative of the EU Delegation to Azerbaijan (tbc)</i> • <i>Mr. Leonid Kalashnyk, Environmental Affairs Officer, EU4Environment Project Manager at UNECE</i>
14:15 – 14:30	Meeting objectives and agenda, introduction of participants <i>Facilitated by consultant to UNECE</i>
14:30 – 15:00	Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA): Purpose, legal framework, process and benefits <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective, principles and benefits • Procedural steps • UNECE Protocol on SEA, EU SEA Directive • Implementation challenges and opportunities in the region <i>Presentations by consultants to UNECE and Leonid Kalashnyk</i>
15:00 – 15:15	SEA in Azerbaijan: Legislation and practical experience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recent developments of the national legal framework for SEA <i>Presentation by Ms. Aysel Rzayeva, Head of Subdivision, International Cooperation Division, focal point to the Espoo Convention, Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practical experience from the pilot SEA applications in Azerbaijan <i>Presentation by national consultant to UNECE</i>
15:15 – 15:30	Break
15:30 – 16:15	SEA and Regional and Spatial Planning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental analysis within Planning and SEA • Opportunities and challenges • Typical key environmental problems <i>Presentation by consultants to UNECE</i> Questions and answers
16:15 – 17:00	SEA for Regional and Spatial Plans: Selected case examples <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approaches, methods, typical tasks, interesting problems illustrated based on real SEAs from countries in the EU and UNECE region (Czech Republic, Slovakia, Turkey) Interactive discussion

	<i>Facilitated by consultants to UNECE</i>
17:00 – 17:10	Concluding remarks of Day 1 <i>Leonid Kalashnyk, UNECE</i>

DAY 2, 27 April

Time (Baku)	Item
13:45 – 14:00	Connection testing (15 min)
14:00 – 14:15	Reflection on Day 1 <i>Facilitated by consultants to UNECE</i>
14:15 – 15:30	Hypothetical SEA for a city Master Plan in Azerbaijan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SEA process, approaches, methods, typical tasks, likely problems and issues in the context of a selected real Master Plan in Azerbaijan Interactive discussion – group work <i>Facilitated by consultants to UNECE</i>
15:30 – 15:45	Break
15:45 – 16:30	SEA in Spatial Planning: Key issues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cumulative and synergic effects Indirect effects Uncertainties Public participation SEA and Decision making <i>Presentation by consultant to UNECE</i> Questions and answers
16:30 – 17:00	Concluding discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key takeaways from the workshop What next for SEA in Azerbaijan? Interactive discussion <i>Facilitated by consultants to UNECE and Leonid Kalashnyk, UNECE</i>