



Belgrade Initiative on Strategic Environmental Assessment

Work Programme for the First Implementation Period

Timeframe: from 2008 to the seventh “Environment for Europe” Ministerial Conference, 2011

1. Background

The Belgrade Initiative of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), proposed by the governments of Armenia, Belarus and the Republic of Moldova, was recognized in the Ministerial Declaration – *Building Bridges to the Future* – adopted at the “Environment for Europe” ministerial conference in Belgrade on 16 October 2007 (see the enclosed text of the Belgrade SEA Initiative). The countries participating in the Belgrade SEA Initiative held two working meetings: in Belgrade in October 2007, and in Chisinau in June 2008. This Work Programme is a result of discussions and agreements made at those two meetings.

2. Recap of aims & objectives

The aim of the Belgrade Initiative on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is to provide a platform for the open exchange of experience between government officials responsible for the development of SEA systems in the participating countries. The participating countries are Belarus, Ukraine, Republic of Moldova, Armenia and Georgia and, possibly, some other countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA) that demonstrate a strong interest in acceding to the Protocol (see Annex 1).

The Initiative primarily focuses on the exchange between the participating countries of experience gained during national activities supporting the development of legal and methodological frameworks for implementation of the UNECE Protocol on SEA. The networking activities in the sub-region will be greatly facilitated by the use of the common language (Russian).

Effective SEA leads to better environmental protection and management and promotes sustainable development; it can be used as a tool to integrate key development issues such as climate change mitigation and adaptation. It also strengthens the process of making plans and programmes and, to the extent appropriate, policies and legislation, thereby providing benefits for planning authorities, governments and other stakeholders. The procedural benefits of SEA include a more efficient planning process and improved governance.

3. Focus of the work programme

Reflecting the above, implementation of the ‘Belgrade SEA Initiative’ (hereafter referred to as the Initiative) will lead to the following **outcomes**:

- Countries prepared for developing the national legal and regulatory systems complying with the SEA Protocol requirements;
- Existing procedural and methodological base for an effective SEA application in the countries;
- Increased understanding on the role and concept of SEA and increased individual and institutional capacity for SEA application.

The Initiative will focus on three main areas and is structured in three pillars accordingly:

- A) Development of effective legal and regulatory systems for national transposition of the SEA Protocol requirements
- B) Development of procedural and methodological base (guidelines) for SEA Protocol application
- C) Awareness raising and institutional and human capacity-development for SEA application

Each pillar consists of activities that are in line with and support implementation of the national SEA capacity-development strategies of the participating countries.¹ The activities listed below have been proposed and agreed on by the 6 countries participating in the ‘Belgrade SEA Initiative’ at the sub-regional meeting in Chisinau, Republic of Moldova (11-12 June 2008).

- A) Development of effective legal and regulatory systems for national transposition of the SEA Protocol requirements;
 - A.1 Prepare a subregional review of the current environmental assessment related national legislation in the participating countries and provide general recommendations for its improvement; as appropriate, prepare an outline (“model”) law.
 - A.2 Organization of a subregional seminar to present the legislation of other countries (including from the European Union) for comparison and to use good practice examples in making the national legislation of participating countries compatible with EU standards.

¹ All participating countries (as of August 2008) have developed national SEA capacity-development strategies within part projects supported by UNDP, REC, UNECE and the Government of the Netherlands. The strategies may be found at the http://www.unece.org/env/sea/ecca_capacity.htm

- A.3 Prepare a background paper on financial and economic consequences and mechanisms for the implementation of SEA in the participating countries.
 - A.4 Organization of a subregional workshop to present and discuss possible ways of introducing the SEA Protocol requirements in national legislation, based on the results of the earlier activities (A.1 to A.3).
- B) Development of procedural and methodological base (guidelines) for SEA Protocol application
- B.1 Organization of seminars presenting recent international experience in applying SEA. May be combined with activity A.2.
 - B.2 Development of supplementary notes to the UNECE/REC *Resource Manual to Support Application of the SEA Protocol*² on specific aspects and components of SEA process, such as: public participation, SEA report preparation and linking SEA to different planning processes.
 - B.3 Development of national guidelines for introduction and application of SEA (based on the UNECE/REC Resource Manual); Supplementary notes (activity B.2) may be used in the process of developing national guidelines.
 - B.4 Organization of subregional seminars or working meetings to discuss specific aspects of SEA process; will be linked to activity A.4.
 - B.5 Supporting national seminars or working meetings to discuss specific aspects of SEA process (providing resource persons).
- C) Awareness raising and institutional and human capacity-development for SEA application
- C.1 Development and organization of subregional and national training courses, including ‘training for trainers’ and seminars on SEA for different stakeholder groups (government officials, practitioners, trainers, civil society organizations, etc.).
 - C.2 Implementing national SEA demonstration or pilot projects to (i) provide an opportunity of ‘learning by doing’, (ii) support the process of developing national guidelines on SEA application, and (iii) inform and involve a wide range of national stakeholders.
 - C.3 Preparation of promotional and demonstration materials covering different aspects of the SEA concept and process, such as good

² Available at http://www.unece.org/env/eia/sea_manual/.

practice examples, benefits of SEA, basic elements of SEA, public participation in SEA, etc.

C.4 Development and maintenance of the Initiative-related website and CD-ROM resource library, and SEA expert roster (from EECCA as well as other subregions).

C.5 Update³ or develop national SEA capacity needs assessment studies

The above activities may be combined as appropriate (e.g. combining meetings or studies covering different SEA-related subjects). The sequence and time-frame of the activities' implementation will be set in the 'Belgrade SEA Initiatives' annual work plans developed by the Joint Secretariat, in cooperation with the lead countries, and approved by the participating countries.

Internal 'Belgrade SEA Initiative' management meetings, might be organized as back-to-back meetings to the events (seminars, workshops) listed above. Other activities necessary for the effective management of the 'Belgrade SEA Initiative' implementation will be additional to those under pillars A, B, and C.

4. Roles and responsibilities

Lead countries

Lead countries agreed to share responsibility and to take leadership of the three pillars of the work programme (above) as follows:

Armenia – leading pillar A on development of effective legal and regulatory systems for national transposition of the SEA Protocol requirements

Belarus – leading pillar C on awareness raising and institutional and human capacity development for SEA application

Republic of Moldova – leading pillar B on development of procedural and methodological base (guidelines) for SEA Protocol application

Each lead country will perform the following tasks within the respective pillar:

- Propose the specific topics to be covered and priority actions to be implemented
- Support elaboration of and review working documents prepared by the Joint Secretariat
- Support elaboration of and review deliverables related to the pillar activities
- Chair meetings

³ National SEA capacity needs assessment studies were developed in 2004 in five participating countries within the subregional project 'SEA – Promotion and Capacity Development', supported by UNDP, REC and UNECE. The studies can be found at http://www.unece.org/env/sea/eccca_capacity.htm.

- If possible, provide in-kind support to implementation of activities, e.g. meeting rooms, meals, accommodation, etc.
- Represent and report on the Initiative's implementation at national and international events

Joint Secretariat

Implementation of the activities will be coordinated and supported by the Joint Secretariat, comprising representatives of UNDP, UNECE and REC. Tasks of the Joint Secretariat, directly linked to the activities listed above, are the following:

- Provide overall support to the lead countries and other countries involved in the Initiative for implementation of the activities specified in the overall work programme (above)
- Elaboration of the Initiative's detailed annual work plans with specified targets, activities, timeframe and budget
- Organization of international meetings within the Initiative framework
- Drafting working documents and other materials as requested by the countries participating in the Initiative
- Presentation of the Initiative at international events
- Resource mobilization, including preparation of documents for submission to donors
- Maintaining the website of the Initiative
- Monitoring the implementation of the Initiative's work programme

Costs related to the function of the Joint Secretariat listed above will be included in the overall budget for the implementation of the Initiative. If any partner in the Joint Secretariat is requested to perform any other project-related activities, such as contributing to reports, elaboration of studies and analytical papers, such inputs need then to be included in the specific activity budget.

Table 1: Belgrade SEA Initiative work programme and budget

Pillar / Output	Activities	Lead Country	Inputs	Budget (USD)
A. Development of effective legal and regulatory systems for national transposition of the SEA Protocol requirements	A.1 Elaborate subregional review of EA legislation, recommendations (+ model law development)	Armenia	International consultants, national consultants, travel, direct costs	50,000
	A.2 Organize subregional seminar on EU and other countries' EA legislation			50,000
	A.3 Develop background paper on financial and economic consequences and mechanisms for the implementation of SEA			25,000
	A.4 Organize subregional workshop to present and discuss possible ways of introducing Protocol requirements in national legislation			40,000
Total				165,000
B. Development of procedural and methodological base (guidelines) for SEA Protocol application	B.1 Organize seminar presenting recent international experience in applying SEA	Republic of Moldova	International consultants, national consultants, travel, direct costs	50,000
	B.2 Develop supplementary notes to the UNECE/REC Resource Manual on specific aspects and components of SEA process (4 notes max.)			60,000
	B.3 Elaborate national guidelines for introduction and application of SEA (6 guidelines max.)			100,000
	B.4 Organize subregional seminar or working meeting to discuss specific aspects of SEA process			40,000
	B.5 Support national seminars or working meetings to discuss specific aspects of SEA processes (6 seminars max.)			60,000
Total				310,000
C. Awareness raising and institutional and human capacity-development for SEA application	C.1 Develop and organize subregional and national training courses, including 'training for trainers' (2 subregional; 4 national)	Belarus	International consultants, national consultants, travel, direct costs	180,000
	C.2 Implement national SEA demonstration or pilot projects (3 pilot projects)			300,000

Pillar / Output	Activities	Lead Country	Inputs	Budget (USD)
	C.3 Prepare promotional and demonstration materials covering different aspects of SEA			50,000
	C.4 Develop and maintain the initiative-related website, CD-ROM resource library and SEA expert roster			20,000
	C.5 Update or develop national SEA capacity needs assessment studies (6 studies)			60,000
Total				610,000
Joint secretariat	Travel	UNDP, UNECE, REC	International consultants, travel, direct costs	30,000
	Communication			15,000
	Management and administration costs			55,000
Total				100,000

Annex 1: Criteria for countries' participation in the Initiative

EECCA countries that are Signatories of the SEA Protocol, together with the proponents of the Initiative at the Belgrade Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe", may participate in the Initiative.

Other EECCA countries that wish to participate in the Initiative should send to the UNECE Secretariat official letter:

- Expressing the interest to participate in the Initiative
- Listing national preparatory activities for accession to the Protocol;
- Agreeing with the Initiative's work programme
- Including the name and contact details for a focal point for the Initiative.

The Joint Secretariat would evaluate each request and would determine whether the applying country would be invited to join the Initiative or some of its specific activities. Partial membership might also be offered.