

Event Report

Development of national SEA system in Tajikistan¹

Kick-off workshop



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1. Background information

Recognising the potential of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for greening economies and ensuring incorporation of the environmental considerations into planning and designing economic activities, Tajikistan has been expressing an increased interest in assessing feasibility of application of SEA in its country and raising awareness about its benefits among the environmental and sectoral authorities. Tajikistan, is not a Party to the UNECE Protocol on SEA but has been expressing its interest in developing a modern strategic environmental assessment system in line with the UNECE Protocol on SEA. The Government of Tajikistan requested to provide support to carry out legislative review and provide recommendations on how to amend the existing legislative system in order to introduce the strategic environmental assessment into its national legislation in accordance with the Protocol. Kick-off workshop "Development of national SEA system in Tajikistan " was held on 23 November 2018 in Dushanbe. It was organized by the UNECE in cooperation with the Committee on Environmental Protection under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan and Tajik branch of CAREC. The workshop aimed at raising awareness of the national decision-makers about the benefits of SEA and its practical application and gathered relevant governmental stakeholders at the decision-making level, national experts from the environmental and planning authorities as well as representatives of international organizations, business, public associations and academia.

2. Workshop objectives

The aim of the workshop is to support development of modern SEA system in Tajikistan in line with the requirements of the UNECE Protocol on SEA and to raise awareness of the representatives of environmental and planning authorities about the SEA benefits, to share the best practices of SEA application in the UNECE region and to facilitate a discussion about priorities and needs on further development of SEA system in the country.

2. Approach and methodology

The workshop included the following blocks: concept of SEA, UNECE SEA Protocol and other international standards, role of SEA in development control and the role of authorities and other actors, strategic documents covered by SEA scheme, concept of scoping and SEA report, public participation, transboundary procedure under SEA Protocol, adoption of the strategic document and monitoring. Each block included detailed presentations by Mr. Jerzy Jendroska, followed by presentation of the preliminary outcomes of the mapping study by Mr. Andriy Andrushevych and interactive discussion. The discussion served multiple purposes, including better understanding by the participants of the issue, clarification of the mapping conclusions and, where relevant, gaps and needs to align national system to international standards. The workshop was held in English and Russian, with interpretation.

4. Summary of the Workshop

Mr. Dz. Khalilov, Head EIA Division Committee of Environment Protection under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan opened the meeting. He emphasized the role of environmental assessment procedures for enhancing environmental and health protection in Tajikistan, and – on behalf of the Committee expressed his gratitude to the UNECE secretariat to the Espoo Convention for such valuable support provided.

Ms Zarina Nazarzoda, Deputy Chairman of the Committee on Environmental Protection under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan, welcomed the UNECE international experts and shared information on status and the structural schemes of draft Law on EIA. She stressed out

that the Government of Tajikistan tries to establish the national legislative framework on SEA and thanked the UNECE for its support in developing a modern SEA system in Tajikistan.

Mr. Jerzy Jendrośka, UNECE international key legal expert, addressed the participants with a welcoming speech. He presented the concept of Strategic Environmental Assessment System (SEA). He introduced the Protocol on SEA and other international standards and explained role of the review of the national environmental impact assessment system vis-à-vis the provisions of the Protocol on SEA. Then he presented the main elements of the SEA scheme, highlighted the importance of the SEA Report and role of national authorities in that process.

Mr. Andriy Andrushevych, UNECE international legal consultant, provided examples of best practices of pilot SEA in other countries.

Mr. Timur Nazarov, representative of the Committee for Environmental Protection under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan, thanked international experts for reviewing national legal framework of Tajikistan vis-à-vis the Protocol on SEA. He noted the importance of complying with international standards, including the requirements established by the Protocol on SEA, as well as the importance of implementing a modern SEA system in the country. He thanked the UNECE international experts for their presentations and noted the importance of the recommendations provided.

Each presentation was followed by opened interactive discussion, facilitated by Mr. Jerzy Jendrośka, international key legal expert and Mr. Andriy Andrushevych, international legal consultant. As a result, the discussions generated much interest and encouraged the exchange of views among the participants, including between governmental representatives, environmental and planning authorities. During the discussions the participants were very active and showed their interest in presentations of Mr. Jerzy Jendrośka, many questions were asked about the best practice examples on SEA from other countries.

The second part of the event was dedicated to the discussion on further priorities for developing SEA schemes in the country. Especially, participants expressed their interest to discuss the main existing challenges for developing modern SEA in Tajikistan and the ways to overcome them.

In conclusion, Mr. Dz. Khalilov thanked to all participants for their active work, and noted that national legislative framework on SEA needs to be improved and further support and capacity building activities in Tajikistan of high priority for the Committee on Environmental Protection under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan.

5. Workshop conclusions

The workshop was carried out as it had been planned and, following the prepared agenda, it fulfilled its objectives. Thus, as a result of the workshop, the participants have:

(a) learned about the best practice examples of SEA application in the countries of Eastern Europe and the Caucasus in accordance with UNECE Protocol on SEA;

(b) increased awareness of environmental and planning authorities of Tajikistan on benefits and application of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA);

(c) shared their practical experiences of the EIA and SEA-related framework and discussed them vis-à-vis international standards via facilitated discussions by international experts

(d) identified existing challenges related to the application of SEA in Tajikistan and actions needed to address these challenges.

(e) gained good understanding of the national SEA system as compared to the provisions of the Protocol on SEA and other international standards.

(f) identified the main priorities for further development of SEA systems in the country.

During the workshop necessary and diverse information was gathered about current legislative and administrative framework on SEA and EIA in the Republic of Tajikistan, most of which is not available in public domain.