



European Union Water Initiative Plus for Eastern Partnership Countries (EUWI+)

MEETING NOTES

The Webinar for National Experts on the SEA Methodology

Tbilisi, Georgia
April 2020



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A. ORGANIZATION OF THE MEETING

1. The Webinar for National Experts on the SEA Methodology took place on 6 April 2020. In a view the ban on international travel and gatherings posed due to COVID 19 pandemic, the UNECE and GEO in consultations with the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture (MEPA) decided to organize a meeting with national experts engaged in the preparation of the SEA Report for the Alazani-Iori River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) through an online video conferencing platform “Zoom”. The face to face training on the SEA methodology for the staff of MEPA will be organized once the ban on travel and gatherings will be lifted up.

2. The Webinar was held in the framework of the pilot project of the UNECE *Application of a strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for the draft Alazani-Iori River Basin Management Plan*. The pilot project is part of the broader programme of the *EU Water Initiative Plus*.

1. Objectives of the Meeting

3. The Webinar aimed at introducing the guidelines and instructions for the preparation of the SEA Report and agreeing on the set of rules for communication and exchange in the process of preparation of the SEA report under the conditions of the COVID 19 pandemic.

2. Attendance

4. The webinar was attended by the representatives of the UNECE and GEO, as well as international and national experts (the agenda of the Webinar and the List of Participants are attached as annex 1 and 2, respectively).

3. Opening of the Meeting

5. Mr. Alexander Belokurov, UNECE, opened the Webinar and welcomed participants. He underlined the importance of the project for expanding the scope of the SEA application in Georgia. He stressed the importance to follow internationally established procedures and rules for the SEA, as well as the requirements of the national legislation. The project will also facilitate soliciting new ideas and building expertise in the SEA that can be replicated in the country. He expressed his gratitude to the European Union that provided financial means for the project, as well as to the MEPA and partners of the EU Water Initiative Plus that implement the project.

B. PROCEEDINGS

4. The agenda of the webinar was presented by Ms. Irma Melikishvili, Team Leader of national experts. She highlighted objectives of the webinar and stressed the need to discuss the format of communication in the process of preparation of the SEA report and deadlines.

5. Mr. Martin Sumtny, International Expert, made a presentation on the impact analysis and mitigation measures to be reflected in the SEA Report. He outlined the key elements of impact assessment that envisage evaluation of risks and opportunities associated with the strategic documents; assessment of alternatives and how implementation of strategic document will affect the baseline trends; He also stressed the importance of assessing the cumulative impact of proposed measures of the RBMP, as well as their indirect impacts. He also spoke about mitigation measures that need to be identified to avoid, minimize or compensate likely adverse impacts on the river basin and to maximize likely positive effects. Mr. Sumtny explained the steps experts need to undertake for the preparation of the report.

6. Ms. Irma Melikishvili presented guidance documents developed by international expert and team leader.

7. Participants discussed the GIS maps to be included in the SEA report and data needs for preparation of respective parts of the report. Discussions also touched upon the geographic scope of mitigation measures, as well as alternative locations. International and national experts agreed on the procedure of the SEA preparation and deadlines for delivery of different parts of the SEA report.

C. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

12. It was decided that:

- i. National experts will closely review the instructions for the SEA Report preparation and identify the list of GIS maps/GIS data they might be required for the analysis - deadline by 7 April.
- ii. The GIS Expert will identify data gaps and GEO will officially requests from the respective state institutions and the EUWI Plus project team required data/information.
- iii. National experts will deliver 3 inputs for the SEA Report (detailed information on inputs is provided in the Instructions) by 22 April.
- iv. Inputs of national experts will be reviewed by international expert and team leader and feedback will be provided as needed. National experts will consult the Team Leader and International Expert on individual basis via skype or e-mail. Experts can request a separate conference call in groups if such need arises.
- v. The project team will deliver the first consolidated SEA Report by 30 May.
- vi. The project folder on the Google Drive will be updated – additional material will be uploaded.



European Union Water Initiative Plus for the Eastern Partnership

SEA OF THE ALAZANI-IORI RIVER BASIN MANAGEMENT PLAN: WEBINAR ON IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND MITIGATION MEASURES

6 April 2020

The objectives of the webinar are as follows:

- To introduce to the national SEA guidelines for the first phase of preparation of the SEA report.
- To agree on further way of cooperation and communication considering the recent limitations resulting from the Coronavirus pandemic.

12:00 – 12:10	Introduction to the meeting – objectives and agenda Martin Smutny, International Consultant,
12:10 – 12:50	A brief introduction to impact assessment and mitigation measures <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Presentation by Martin Smutny, International Consultant• Question-answers
12:50 – 14:00	Guidelines to the SEA team on providing inputs to the SEA report <ul style="list-style-type: none">• General introduction by Irma Melikishvili, National Consultant• QA session on each input (facilitated by Martin Smutny) i.e. (i) further elaboration of baseline analysis, (ii) screening of the RBMP measures, (iii) detailed evaluation of likely impacts and formulation of mitigation measures.
14:00 – 14:30	Practical issues <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Way of communication between the team members, national and international consultants – emails, regular (bilateral) Skype meetings, next joint meeting• Timeline for providing inputs Discussion facilitated by Irma Melikishvili, National Consultant



Annex 2: List of Participants

WEBINAR ON THE APPLICATION OF STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (SEA) FOR ALAZANI-IORI RIVER BASIN MANAGEMENT PLAN (RBMP): PREPARATION OF THE SEA REPORT

Date: 6 April 2020

Experts

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