



**Practical application of the Draft Law of the Republic of Moldova on Strategic
Environmental Assessment to urban plans and programmes: Training
Workshop on practical SEA application**

Chisinau, Republic of Moldova, 16 December 2014

Workshop report

December 2014



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1. Background

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) effectively promotes sustainable development by mainstreaming environment into economic development at a national and local level. SEA is a well-established, practical and efficient planning and environmental governance tool/system set out in the UNECE Protocol on SEA to the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) in a Transboundary Context. It ensures that development plans in key sectors such as energy, water and waste management with likely significant adverse environmental impacts are efficiently developed taking into account environmental (and health) considerations. SEA, in particular, will allow identification of the most sustainable and cost-effective strategic development alternatives in Moldova for attracting new investments and for improving its environment. 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.

Since 2004 the UNECE secretariat has provided technical assistance and capacity building support to foster ratification of, and accession to, the Espoo Convention and its Protocol on SEA in the countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia. The secretariat has a broad experience in assisting the countries in improving their legislative and institutional frameworks for the implementation of both treaties. The tailor made training and pilot projects provided by the UNECE have proven to be efficient in building the necessary institutional and human capacities in countries for the effective application of EIA and SEA to their development projects, plans and programmes.

At the six Meeting of the Parties to the Espoo Convention, in June 2014 in Geneva, the Government of the Republic of Moldova (RM) requested the secretariat to assist the country in development of national SEA systems and practices and to raise awareness and understanding of the benefits of SEA among various stakeholders. Based on this request the work-plan of the two treaties for 2014–2017 includes several relevant activities such as: (a) finalising drafting of national legislation on SEA; (b) a pilot application of the SEA procedure to a draft Government plan or programme. The funding for the activities is secured through the EU funded programme Greening Economies in the Eastern Neighbourhood (EaP GREEN).

The UNDP Office in Moldova is offering support to UNECE in project implementation.

Project description

The overall aims of the project is to further develop legislation on SEA, build capacities in application of SEA procedures at a national level and to raise awareness of SEA benefits among various national stakeholders.

Specific objectives include:

- provide support in the development of the draft law on SEA
- testing and demonstrating opportunities of practical application of the draft law on SEA based on the implementation of a pilot project
- providing recommendations for environmental optimisation and modifications of the selected plan/programme, and



- developing recommendations for further improvement of national legislative and institutional frameworks on SEA in a country.

The Government of Moldova selected the Master Plan of Orhei Town as a strategic document for a pilot application of SEA procedure. The development of the plan extends from the end of June to the end of October 2014.

2. Workshop objectives

The Workshop was designed a SEA training and awareness rising event related to the Pilot SEA process in Moldova (SEA for the Master Plan of the City of Orhei). The training was organized as a back-to-back event to the Public SEA Scoping Workshop in Orhei (i.e. the consultation meeting to inform local stakeholders about the Orhei Town Master Plan preparation process and the preliminary results of the strategic environmental assessment (scoping phase). In line with the general objectives of the Project, the workshop combined more theoretical SEA training components and real SEA steps relevant to the Pilot SEA application in Moldova. Therefore the agenda was intended to serve two main objectives:

1. Introduction of the SEA concept and its procedural aspects and introduction of the Pilot SEA for the Master Plan of the Municipality of Orhei to the national stakeholders (with respect to the participants who did not take part in the 1st SEA Workshop in July 2014)
2. Facilitate generation of inputs to the Scoping phase of SEA, based on knowledge of relevant stakeholders
3. To present and discuss possible approaches and environmental assessment methods applicable in the context of the pilot SEA on the Master Plan of the City of Orhei

3. Approach and methodology

In line with the two above indicated objectives of the Workshop, following approach was introduced to 1) facilitate training effect for the participants interested in general SEA application, and to 2) generate inputs to the real pilot SEA for the Master plan of Orhei municipality. The presentations of expert provided examples of SEA approaches in different contexts in general were followed by interactive sessions, where participants were asked to formulate their opinions on applicability in the Orhei Master plan evaluation context.

In addition, a comprehensive information on key preliminary findings regarding the identification of key environmental and health issues relevant to the Orhei municipality and relevant components of the Master plan under preparation, was delivered by the national experts (members of the pilot SEA team members) in order to establish context for a focused debate.

In this way the Training workshop also served to a purpose of preparation for the public SEA Scoping Workshop in Orhei organized for the following day.



Furthermore, the participants were informed about further planned Pilot SEA steps, including indicative time-frame, and encouraged towards further involvement in the Pilot SEA project activities.

4. Summary of the Workshop outcomes

The Training Workshop was devoted to the development of the capacity of the concerned stakeholders to participate actively in the pilot SEA process, and their understanding to the SEA in general. As a continuation of the 1st Training in July 2014, this 2nd Workshop focused on more practical and methodological aspects of the SEA application, aiming at further improvement of the capacity for the future application of the SEA in the Republic of Moldova.

The Workshop took place on 16.12.2014, in Flowers Hotel, Chisinau.

31 people took part in the program. Representatives of the State Chancellery, Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Environment (and its subdivisions), Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Regional Development and Constructions, other governmental agencies and NGOs (copy of the list of participants, Annex nr. 1) were among the participants.

Moderator: Ms Rodica Iordanov, Pilot SEA Team Leader

Secretary of the meeting: Ms Natalia Guranda, Project Coordinator

Following key topics were addressed and discussed:

Ms. Tatiana Plesco, consultant, Ministry of Environment, introduced the draft SEA Law, developed in 2014, which transposed the provisions of the SEA Protocol and EU Directive.

International Consultant Mr. Michal Musil delivered training sessions and facilitated related discussions.

Mr Andrei Isac on behalf of the SEA team presented the draft Scoping report and underlined the major environmental problems identified in all domains: water resources, atmospheric air, soil resources, biodiversity, wastes etc. Conclusions and major recommendations were introduced.

The major presentations were followed by debates, questions and answers session and the following major issues of concern were mentioned by the participants:

Mr. Petru Bacal, ASEM, stressed the problem of open mining in the city.

Ms. Olga Kazantseva, Institute of Zoology, indicated, that she participated in the environmental component preparation of the Master Plan for the Chisinau city and indicated, that the team of MP development have to take into consideration all existing legislative requirements. It is important to identify opportunities for SEA to be of added value in the Master Planning context that is already taking environmental issues into consideration.



Mr. Michal Musil responded with explanations and presented examples from Czech Republic on development of SEA in similar situations.

Mr. Alexandru Taranu, Chief Architect of the Orhei city informed, that also considerations regarding migration and economic development options for the development of the city are part of the planning effort.

As a final conclusion, Mr. Michal Musil, international consultant of the project, expressed thanks to all participants, on behalf of the UN ECE, mentioned, that all preliminary recommendations and conclusions of the SEA Scoping Report will be passed to Orhei Master plan developers, as well as to beneficiary authorities and decision makers concerned with the Orhei Master Plan preparation process.

5. Conclusions

The Scoping and Baseline Workshop was carried out as planned and following the prepared agenda it fulfill its objectives (as reflected also in evaluation by the participants – see section 6).

Namely, due to composition of participants, reflecting wide variety of stakeholders both from the town of Orhei concerned with the Pilot SEA application, and from national institutions concerned with the preparation and implementation of the new SEA legislation in general, the Workshop succeed in raising awareness among wide spectrum of relevant actors.

It also assisted to the SEA team to finalize preparations for the subsequent public SEA Scoping Workshop organized in Orhei.

Following the results of the Workshop, key tasks were defined in order to progress with the Pilot SEA implementation:

- To finalize and send to all participants the draft Scoping report both in Romanian and English, with the inclusion of maps (and their description) and references.
- To send to all participants copies of PP and SEA recommendations.
- To investigate possibility for establishment of a working group (inter-ministerial) on SEA promotion
- To carry out subsequent consultation between the SEA team and the Orhei Master Plan development team in order to follow up on how the preliminary SEA recommendations can be taken into consideration in subsequent stages of the Orhei Master Plan development.



6. Workshop evaluation

Workshop participants have been provided with evaluation forms to present their feedback to the organizers. In total **xxx questionnaires** have been recovered and analyzed. The summary of the results is presented below (for the complete overview of results see Appendix 2).

The overall participants' evaluation was very positive, the participants reported that:

- The topic was very important (the average grade was **xxx** from 3 as maximum);
- The delivery of information totally clear (the average grade was **xxx** from 3 as maximum);

Please develop as in the Report from July

For further details please see Appendix 2.

7. Acknowledgements

The workshop was jointly prepared by UNECE Secretariat, Ministry of Environment of Moldova.

The Scoping Workshop was facilitated by Michal Musil (Integra Consulting Ltd.), and Iordanca-Rodica Iordanov (EcoContact /Aarhus Centre for Environmental Information and Consultation).



Annex 1: Workshop agenda

16. December: Second Training Workshop on practical SEA application

The Workshop is a continuation of the First Training Workshop on SEA, held in Chisinaou in August 2015, aiming at raising awareness and clarifying roles of various stakeholders in the SEA process, and assisting the implementation of the Pilot SEA on Master plan of the City of Orhei. In addition to procedural aspects of SEA, the workshop will focus namely on methods of environmental assessment applicable at the level of strategic planning, and approaches to preparation of the SEA Report. The event will gather up to 30 participants from sectoral ministries and local authorities, in particular those responsible for economics, industry, agriculture and health, as well as civil society representatives, practitioners, planners and environmental authorities (e.g. stakeholders important for the SEA development in Moldova in general but not necessary involved in the pilot SEA in Orhei). The presentations will be delivered namely by the international consultants in order to support the ongoing Pilot SEA process and facilitate open discussion among participants.

Indicative timing	Topic	Presenter
9:30	Introduction to the Seminar: Follow up on 1st SEA training workshop held in August <i>Introduction of broader context and UNECE activities</i> <i>Introduction of the UNECE pilot SEA project: SEA for Orhei Town Master Plan</i>	National SEA Leader
10:15	SEA process: Key elements and actors <i>(recapitulation of SEA process and the key elements and their linkages)</i>	International consultant Michal Musil
11:00	SEA methods I <i>Typical methods and examples from different contexts</i>	International consultant Michal Musil
12:00-13:00	Lunch break	
13:00	SEA methods II <i>Applicable approaches to the Orhei Master Plan SEA</i> <i>Facilitated discussion</i>	Interactive session facilitated International consultant Michal Musil
15:00-	Analyzing alternatives in SEA	International consultant



15:45	<i>Problems, possible approaches</i>	Michal Musil
16:00	Mitigation measures and Monitoring <i>Preparation of effective inputs to decision making process</i>	International consultant Michal Musil
17:15-17:30	Conclusion and closure	



Annex 2: Workshop evaluation

Example from July WOrkshop

The results obtained from the participants through the questionnaires are presented below in a structure following the format of the evaluation questionnaires. In total 21 evaluation forms (out of 25 distributed) was recovered and analyzed. Figures indicate number of participants giving particular specific answers.

1. Please, indicate how important and relevant was the workshop topic for you?

1 (not important) - 0 2 (somewhat important) - 1 3 (very important) - 20

2. Please, indicate how clear and understandable was the delivery of information for you (mark :)

1 – (absolutely not clear) 0; 2 (clear) 2 3 (absolutely clear) 19

3. What, in your view, was the most useful at the training workshop?

#	Statement	No of participants
1	SEA case studies in different countries/ Practical examples/ combines theory and practice	15
2	Presentation of existing problems	3
3	Identification of interested public	2
4	Group exercises	3
5	Illustrations, training materials, case studies, ideal models, stages etc.	1

4. Which topics you believe it is essential to conduct additional training for you and your colleagues on (please, underline as appropriate)?

Please put a number of participants which indicated that the topic is essential against each of the topics. For example,

- Strategic planning (4 participants);
- Practical application of SEA (10 participants);
- Public Health (3 participants);
- Legislation (5 participants);
- Stakeholder engagement in the strategic planning/SEA process (5 participants)
- Other



5. What forms of support are required for implementation of EIA and SEA?

The following suggestions came from participants:

- 1) Training of specialists in the field, 7 participants mentioned this point;
- 2) Exchange of experience, mentioned by 5 participants;
- 3) Local capacity building, disseminating knowledge and information about SEA, technical support, trainings, discussion of international experience have been mentioned by three participants;
- 4) Also, it has been suggested to create a methodological guide for implementation and technical assistance, etc;

Translated transcripts of the original suggestions made by participants:

Advisory assistance
Assistance in interpretation of data
Technical assistance
Intersectional assistance
Supervising and monitoring assistance of process of collection and interpreting of data
Testing SEA based on strategy of sectorial and /or national level
Exchange of opinions and experience;
Visiting a country who has experience in the field;
Exchange of experience with neighbouring countries
Training of specialists in the field;
Elaboration of methodological guide for implementation;
Guiding during the process of SEA
Staff training in SEA conducting
Consultations from EU experts
Practical training of specialists

6. What are your proposals to improve delivery of similar workshops?

As options for improvement for the further workshop, participants mentioned:

- More practical exercises for better understanding and assimilation of information; splitting the specialist based on their experience; elaboration and distribution of more materials with relevant information (methodologies, exercises, useful information, contacts);
- A real SEA study for the interested participants

Translated transcripts of the original suggestions made by participants:

Preparation and distribution of useful materials (methodologies, exercises, contacts)
More information about SEA practice in the EU countries
More detailed training of specialist during the initial phase
Training workshops for specialists to learn more about the practical application of SEA instruments



Annex 3: List of Participants

Please add