



Benefits of introducing modern environmental impact assessment and strategic environmental assessment systems in Georgia

High level round-table

11 December 2015

Hotel Ambadori, Kakheti, Kachreti 1510, Georgia

The aim of the round-table is to promote benefits of efficient application of strategic environmental assessment (SEA and environmental impact assessment (EIA)) in order to support establishment of EIA and SEA systems in Georgia in line with the requirements the UNECE Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo Convention), its Protocol on SEA and the provisions of EU Directives on EIA and SEA (2011/92/EU as amended by 2014/52/EU and 2001/42/EC) as stipulated by the Association Agreement between Georgia and the European Union, 2014-2017.

Main principles of a good SEA and EIA practice will be introduced to the participants of the event to highlight the role of SEA and EIA procedures as tools for improving sectoral planning, project development and promoting sustainable development principles. The examples of successful SEA and EIA cases in various economic sectors in different countries will be presented to support theoretical background. Presentation of EIA and SEA benefits should initiate the discussion on the roles of different sectoral ministries and authorities in the SEA and EIA procedures. The participants will be invited to consider the requirements of the draft ‘Environmental assessment code’ of Georgia and suggest the first priority measures to create a national EIA and SEA system in the country. The experts from Estonia, Netherlands, UNECE and EBRD will share their experiences in practical application of SEA and in the development of national environmental assessment legislation.

The event will host the representatives from the Parliament of Georgia, high-level officials from sectoral authorities that are responsible for economic and industrial development, energy, transport, agriculture, tourism, mining, forestry, and health, as well as the representatives and specialists from civil society organizations, international financial institutions and environmental authorities.

The high-level round-table is organized by the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources of Georgia, together with the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) within the framework of the European Union (EU) funded Programme “Greening Economies in the Eastern Neighbourhood” (EaP GREEN) and the Netherlands Commission on Environmental Assessment.

The EaP GREEN programme is funded by the European Union and other donors, and is jointly implemented by the four partner organisations: OECD, UNEP, UNECE and UNIDO.





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AGENDA

Moderator: *Ms. Maia Bitadze, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection of Georgia*

09:00-10:30 **Welcome breakfast and registration of the participants**

10:30- 11:00 **Welcome addresses**

Mr. Gigla Agulashvili, Minister, Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection of Georgia

Ms. Maia Bitadze, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection of Georgia

Ms. Elena Santer, Secretariat to the UNECE Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo Convention) and its Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment (Protocol on SEA)

Ms. Muriel Lambert de Rouvroit, Programme Manager of the EU Delegation to Georgia

11:00 – 11:50 **Introduction of the participants**

11:10 - 11: 50 **Session 1: Strategic environmental assessment (SEA) and environmental impact assessment (EIA) as systematic and anticipatory tools to assist national governments in safeguarding sustainable socio-economic development of their countries**

Presentations and video (25 minutes):

History and justification for establishing national EIA and SEA systems

International commitments: the Espoo Convention and its Protocol on SEA

Costs of inaction

Ms. Elena Santer, UNECE Secretariat to the Espoo Convention and Protocol on SEA

Ms. Olena Borysova, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)

Questions and Answers (15 minutes)



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<p>11.50 – 12:30</p>	<p>Session II: Practical application of the EIA and SEA in various countries EU: benefits and cost</p> <p>Presentation (15 minutes) SEAs for land use plans in Macedonia, the Netherlands and Georgia <i>Mr. Arend Kolhoff, the Netherlands Commission on Environmental Assessments</i></p> <p>Presentation (15 minutes) Application of SEA for the National Development Plan of the Energy Sector in Estonia <i>Ms. Ljubov Gornaja, UNECE expert, Estonia</i></p> <p><i>Questions and Answers (10 minutes)</i></p>
<p>12:30 – 13:00</p>	<p>Coffee Break</p>
<p>13:00 – 13:40</p>	<p>Session II: Practical application of the EIA and SEA in various countries EU: benefits and cost (continued)</p> <p>Presentation (20 minutes) Application of the EIA and SEA by EBRD as a tool for facilitating investments into the renewable energy sector (20 minutes) <i>Ms. Olena Borysova, EBRD</i></p> <p>Discussion (20 minutes): <i>What are the benefits and costs of application of SEA and EIA in Georgia?</i></p>
<p>13:40 – 14:30</p>	<p>Session III: Roles of sectoral authorities in environmental assessments</p> <p>Presentation (10 minutes) SEA as a tool to prevents inter-sectoral conflicts <i>Ms. Olena Borysova, EBRD</i></p> <p>Presentation (10 minutes): SEA as a governmental tool for assessment of cumulative effects (example in the water sector) <i>Mr. Arend Kolhoff, the Netherlands Commission on Environmental Assessments</i></p> <p>Discussion (25 minutes)</p>
<p>14:30 – 15:30</p>	<p>Lunch</p>



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<p>15:30 – 17:00</p>	<p>Session III: Environmental assessment system in Georgia: challenges and justification for legal and institutional reforms</p> <p>Presentation (30 minutes) Key requirements of the draft Environmental Assessment Code <i>Ms. Maia Bitadze, Deputy Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, Georgia</i></p> <p>Presentation (20 minutes) Institutional Reform of Environmental Assessment <i>Mr. Koba Bakhturidze, Deputy Head, Environmental Impact Permits Department</i></p> <p><i>Discussion (30 minutes)</i></p>
<p>17:00 – 17:30</p>	<p>Session IV: Way forward for establishing a national EIA and SEA systems in Georgia according to the requirements of the Espoo Convention, the Protocol on SEA and the Relevant EU Directives</p> <p>Discussion (15 minutes): Key challenges and ways to overcome them</p> <p>Presentation (5 minutes): Establishment of the national environmental assessment system in Estonia according to the EU EIA and SEA Directives: process, challenges and lessons learnt <i>Ms. Ljubov Gornaja, UNECE expert, Estonia</i></p> <p>Concluding discussion (10 minutes)</p>
<p>17:30</p>	<p>Conclusions of the day</p>