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Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context and the Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment

United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

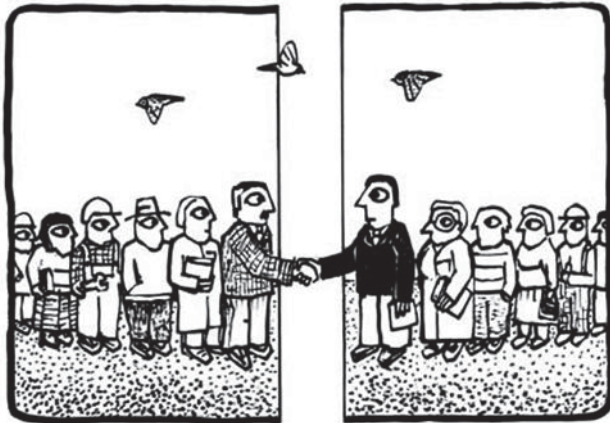
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Espoo Convention vs. Protocol

- Espoo Convention (EIA) – transboundary impacts of projects



- SEA Protocol – strategic level, assessment of plans & programmes within a state, with consideration of transboundary effects being secondary





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Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context

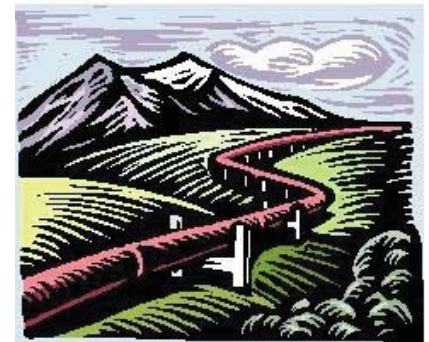




Espoo Convention

Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context

- Adopted and signed in Espoo (Finland) in 1991
- Came into force in 1997
- Now has 45 Parties
 - 1st amendment (opening the Convention beyond UNECE region) entered into force in 2014 (24 parties)
 - 2nd amendment (list of activities, assistance-oriented review of compliance, etc.) 24 Parties (not in force)





Objectives (implied)

- To enhance **international co-operation** in assessing environmental impact, particularly in a transboundary context.
- To give explicit **consideration** to environmental factors at an early stage **in the decision-making** process by applying environmental impact assessment.
- To improve **quality of information** presented to decision makers so that environmentally sound **decisions** can be made, **minimizing significant adverse impact** particularly in a transboundary context.





Procedure 1/2

- Requires Party to notify & consult on planned activity likely to have significant environmental impact across borders.
- Requires preparation and sharing of assessment of environmental impacts.
- Allows affected Parties (authorities & public) to comment on planned activities and on assessment of environmental impacts.
- Provides for bilateral consultations between concerned Parties.





Procedure 2/2

- Party of origin makes final decision, taking into due account:
 - comments received (authorities & public of affected Party)
 - outcome of environmental impact assessment
 - outcome of bilateral consultations
- Final decision is sent to affected Party.
- Post-project analysis if requested by a concerned Party





Benefits

- Provides framework for discussing planned developments with neighbouring States
- Gives the parties the right to notification and consultation on projects, which could have an adverse effect on the environment of your country
- Project design can be improved
- Better environmental protection, with impacts avoided or reduced by revising project design
- Better informed decision-making





Costs of EIA



- Generally EIA costs less than 0.5 % of overall capital cost (with 60-90% for preparing EIA documentation)
- Absolute costs of EIA tend to rise with capital cost of project, but percentage declines (rarely exceeds 1%)





For example...

Nord Stream natural gas pipeline project

- Cuts across the Baltic Sea from the Russian Federation to Germany, within the territorial waters and/or the exclusive economic zones of five countries of origin (Russia, Finland, Sweden, Denmark, and Germany)
- Each country of origin was at the same time affected country by parts of the project outside its territorial control
- The project also affected Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland.
- All concerned countries were Parties to the Convention, except the Russian Federation, which nevertheless agreed to apply the transboundary procedures under the Convention.





For more information

- **Visit our website:**
www.unece.org/env/eia

- **Or email:**
eia.conv@unece.org

