



# TRAINING WORKSHOP ON PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (SEA)

## WORKSHOP REPORT



27 APRIL 2017  
TBILISI, GEORGIA



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## 1. Background

Strategic environmental assessment (SEA) is seen as an essential planning tool for an environmentally sustainable economic development, and can thus concretely support country's efforts in greening its economy. It is a step-by-step procedure to integrate green economy targets and other sustainability issues into strategic planning and decision-making to ensure that environmental and health implications of decisions are taken into account before they are made. A SEA is applied to governmental plans, programmes, or policy documents in accordance with requirements of the UNECE Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment to the Espoo Convention (Protocol on SEA) and the EU SEA Directive. Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) contributes to environmentally-sound and sustainable development at the level of specific projects. EIA has been developed as a tool for enhancing positive environmental and health effects of development proposals while preventing, reducing or offsetting the adverse ones of a project such as for transport infrastructure (e.g. highways, airports, industrial facilities, energy plants). As in other countries in the region, necessary investments in many economic sectors in Georgia are expected to result in a number of specific developments. However, it is important to ensure that these project activities are implemented in a way which does not present any major risks to the environment and human health. Only then can it be considered as a way towards green economy.

Introducing and establishing SEA and EIA systems shall enable to use these tools to ensure sound economic development choices that benefit human health and the environment alike.

The "Greening Economies in the European Union's Eastern Neighbourhood" (EaP GREEN) project assists six countries of the European Union Eastern Neighbourhood Partnership including Georgia in progressing faster towards a green economy framework.<sup>1</sup> SEA and EIA have been promoted within the EaP GREEN as tools to integrate green economy targets and other sustainability issues into strategic and project-related decision-making to ensure that environmental and health implications of decisions are taken into account before they are made.

Since 2013, the UNECE within the EaP GREEN framework has been assisting Georgia in developing the national SEA and EIA system. The assistance has been focusing on following issues:

- Improving the national legislative and institutional framework for SEA and EIA to fully comply with the Convention, the Protocol, and the EU SEA and EIA Directives;
- Defining roles and responsibilities of various authorities in the EIA and SEA processes;
- Building capacities for SEA and EIA application, including implementation of SEA pilot and developing the national guidelines on application of SEA and EIA procedures;
- Raising awareness and common understanding of the EIA and SEA benefits at national and local levels and in different sectors, including the benefits of public participation and the consultation of relevant authorities.

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<sup>1</sup> The EaP GREEN programme is implemented with the financial support of the European Union and other donors, and is jointly implemented by the four partner organisations: OECD, UN Environment, UNECE and UNIDO. More information can be found at <http://www.green-economies-eap.org/>.



## 2. Objectives and approach

The aim of the event was to support practical application of the SEA procedure as stipulated by the draft Environmental Assessment Code of Georgia. The objectives of the workshop were defined as follows:

- To raise awareness among the participants about the recent development of the national legislation on SEA;
- To introduce main benefits of SEA, key stages of SEA process, and roles and responsibilities of main actors involved in SEA;
- To facilitate debate about practical steps and arrangements for application of SEA in Georgia after adoption of the Environmental Assessment Code.

The workshop was organized by the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection of Georgia (Ministry) in cooperation with the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and ‘Georgia’s Environmental Outlook’ (GEO) in the framework of the EaP GREEN.

The workshop invited representatives of planning authorities/sectorial ministries, Tbilisi City Hall and municipalities of Rustavi and Mtskheta, as well as consulting companies.

Following discussions with the Ministry before the event, an extensive space within the workshop was dedicated to presenting of the practical case examples (mainly from the EU countries) to illustrate possible approaches to SEA procedural and analytical steps.

### 3. Minutes of the event

The event was opened by Ms. Tamar Sharashidze, Head of Environmental Impact Permits Department, Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection of Georgia, who welcomed participants and introduced the agenda.

Mr. Martin Smutny, EaP GREEN coordinator, UNECE consultant, provided a brief overview of the UNECE technical assistance within EaP GREEN. He explained main topics and priorities addressed within the EaP GREEN regarding SEA and EIA in Georgia and summarized national training and capacity building events. He mentioned also sub-regional events – the study tour to the Czech Republic (2014), and the sub-regional conference organised in Georgia (Kakheti) in November 2015.

In following presentation, Mr. Matthew Cashmore, Senior Lecturer, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Uppsala, introduced SEA and its benefits. He explained several key principles of efficient SEA application, including:

- Proportionality;
- Appropriate application of scoping;
- Linking SEA and planning procedures;
- Effective quality control;

He also emphasized important of proper understanding of differences between SEA and EIA and described the roles and responsibilities of main actors in SEA – competent or responsible authorities, consultation authorities, and other governmental bodies, the public, likely affected countries, consultants/experts, and judiciary bodies.

Next four sessions were dedicated to selected SEA stages and steps – scope of SEA application and screening, scoping, assessment of likely effects and formulation of mitigation measures, and quality control. Each topic was introduced by explanation of the purpose and objectives of a given steps, followed by the main guiding principles for its efficient application illustrated by the case examples. The plenary discussions then provided a platform for questions, mainly relating the application of SEA in Georgian context.

The last part of the workshop was focused on the practical aspects related to SEA application – how to ensure SEA is linked to planning process, what are the options for contracting the SEA practitioners and preparing the ToR, what are the costs typically associated with SEA, etc.

At the end of the event, Ms. Tamar Sharashidze, Head of Environmental Impact Permits Department, Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection of Georgia, and Mr. Martin Smutny, thanked the participants for their active involvement.



#### 4. Conclusions

As it can be concluded from the discussions within the workshop, successful implementation of the SEA procedure stipulated by the draft Environmental Assessment Code will require continuation of capacity building to coordinate and carry out SEA procedures – environmental and health authorities, planning agencies, as well as experts and practitioners can be considered as the key target groups. Awareness raising on SEA benefits and the importance of public participation among decision-makers and the public, respectively, is also needed. For this, as confirmed by the participants, further pilot SEAs may provide opportunity for hands-on experience for relevant stakeholders and can be efficiently combined with trainings and workshops.

Obviously, the issue of the budget needed for SEA, was of a high interest of the participants. Therefore, it is important that the Ministry further communicates with the planning agencies at the national and the local level to ensure that appropriate amounts are allocated in respective budgetary documents for further application of SEA.

Also, introducing the training scheme on SEA (and EIA) for environmental and health authorities and the practitioners (possibly linked to licensing /certification system for SEA/EIA practitioners) was seen as important steps towards enhancing the quality of SEA/EIA in the country. Similarly, establishing electronic database enabling to record all SEA and EIA cases was considered as very beneficial for efficiency of SEA application.



## 5. Public visibility of the event

In order to ensure wide pre- and postevent promotion the following activities were implemented:

- Branded folders were developed, printed and disseminated among all participants;
- Press release was developed and disseminated;
- Post event release was developed in English and Georgian languages and disseminated via CENN network (more than 20 000 subscribers)
- Information about the event distributed in social media:
  - Facebook page of GEO (Georgia's Environmental Outlook):  
[https://www.facebook.com/pg/GEO-1127131397300965/photos/?tab=album&album\\_id=1644170388930394](https://www.facebook.com/pg/GEO-1127131397300965/photos/?tab=album&album_id=1644170388930394)



## Annexes

### Annex I: Agenda

09.30 – 10.00	<b>Registration of participants, and welcome coffee</b>
10.00 – 10.15	<b>Opening of the workshop and welcome of the participants</b> <i>Ms. Tamar Sharashidze, Head of Environmental Impacts Permits Department, Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection</i>
10.15 – 10.30	<b>Introduction to the UNECE Protocol on SEA (SEA) and technical assistance within EU funded EaP GREEN Programme</b> <i>Presentation by Mr. Martin Smutny, EaP GREEN Project Coordinator, Consultant to UNECE</i> <i>Questions and answers</i>
10.30 – 11.10	<b>Introduction to SEA – principles of efficient application, main stages and key actors, case examples from EU countries</b> <i>Presentation by Mr. Matthew Cashmore, Senior Lecturer, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Uppsala</i> <i>Questions and answers</i>
11.10 – 11.45	<b>Legal requirements on SEA stipulated by the draft Environmental Assessment Code</b> <i>Presentation by Ms. Tamar Sharashidze, Head of Environmental Impacts Permits Department, Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection</i> <i>Questions and answers</i>
11.45 – 12.15	<b>Coffee break</b>
12.15 – 13.00	<b>Scope of SEA application and screening</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Introduction to the topic and case examples from EU countries</b> <i>Presentations by Mr. Matthew Cashmore and Mr. Martin Smutny (25m)</i></li> <li>• <b>Georgian practice</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>Exercise and discussion on how to identify plans and programmes which may require SEA, facilitated by Ms. Tamar Sharashidze, Mr. Matthew Cashmore, and Mr. Martin Smutny (20 min)</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
13.00 – 13.45	<b>Linking SEA and planning</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Introduction to the topic and case examples from EU countries</b> <i>Presentations by Mr. Matthew Cashmore and Mr. Martin Smutny (25 min)</i></li> <li>• <b>Georgian practice</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>Exercise and discussion on how to identify linkages between urban plan preparation and SEA, facilitated by Ms. Tamar Sharashidze, Mr.</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>





	<i>Matthew Cashmore, and Mr. Martin Smutny (20 min)</i>
<b>13.45 – 14.30</b>	<b>Lunch break</b>
<b>14.30 – 15.15</b>	<p><b>Scoping</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Introduction to the topic and case examples from EU countries</b> <i>Presentations by Mr. Matthew Cashmore and Mr. Martin Smutny (25 min)</i></li> <li>• <b>Georgian practice</b> <i>Exercise and discussion on how to carry out scoping, facilitated by Ms. Tamar Sharashidze, Mr. Matthew Cashmore, and Mr. Martin Smutny (20 min)</i></li> </ul>
<b>15.15 – 15.45</b>	<b>Coffee break</b>
<b>15.45 – 16.15</b>	<p><b>Impact assessment and mitigation measures</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Introduction to the topic and case examples from EU countries</b> <i>Presentations by Mr. Matthew Cashmore and Mr. Martin Smutny (15 min)</i></li> <li>• <b>Georgian practice</b> <i>Exercise and discussion on what methods and tools can be used in Georgia, facilitated by Ms. Tamar Sharashidze, Mr. Matthew Cashmore, and Mr. Martin Smutny (15 min)</i></li> </ul>
<b>16.15 – 17.00</b>	<p><b>Practical consideration for conducting SEA</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Linking SEA and planning, ToR for SEA, alternatives in SEA, implementation of SEA measures, financial issues etc.</b> <i>Introductory presentation and case examples by Mr. Matthew Cashmore and Mr. Martin Smutny (30 min)</i> <i>Questions and answers (15 min)</i></li> </ul>
<b>17.00</b>	<b>End of workshop</b>



## Annex II: List of participants

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### Training Workshop on Practical Application of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

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Start Day: April 27, 2017

Participants: 14

Female participants: 9

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