

Training workshop on practical application of strategic environmental assessment (SEA) in Belarus

19 December 2017

Hotel Beijing

Minsk, Belarus

Event Report

December 2017

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1. Background information

Strategic environmental assessment (SEA) is seen as an essential planning tool for an environmentally sustainable economic development, which can 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. In June 2011, at the fifth Meeting of the Parties to the Espoo Convention which served as the first Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on SEA, Belarus expressed its wish for technical assistance on the improvement of legislation, which would enable an accession to the Protocol.

The “Greening Economies in the Eastern Neighborhood” (EaP GREEN) project was launched in 2013 to support the six European Union's Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries – Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, and Ukraine – to progress faster towards a green economy through better management of natural capital supporting a higher economic productivity and competitiveness. The above listed EaP GREEN countries made their commitments related to the transition towards a green economy in the 2011 and 2013 Declarations of the EU Eastern Partnership Summits and on other international fora.

The EaP GREEN has supported countries in developing methodological, legal, and conceptual material based on international good practice adapted to the country conditions and needs. In-country pilot projects have also been implemented to demonstrate how relevant policies and tools can be applied in practice. The EaP GREEN has been jointly implemented by four international organizations: the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), the United Nations Environment Programme (UN Environment), and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO). The project has been funded by the European Union, implementing organisations, and supported by several EU and OECD countries.

Since 2013, the UNECE secretariat to the Espoo Convention has been providing assistance to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Belarus in preparation of the legislation framework and in building capacities for application of SEA in order to support the country in developing its SEA system in line with requirements stipulated by the Protocol on SEA.

2. Objectives of the event and approach

A training workshop on practical application of SEA was jointly organized by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of Belarus and UNECE secretariat to the Espoo Convention within the framework of the EaP GREEN). The logistical support was provided by the UNDP office in Belarus.

The objectives of the workshop were as follows:

- To raise awareness and build capacities on the SEA process under the Protocol on SEA;
- To support implementation of the national legislation on SEA.

One-day event gathered altogether 41 participants (see Annex 1 to this report) from the representatives of the central authorities (ministries) responsible for sectoral planning, and other relevant governmental agencies (e.g. environmental and health authorities).

The agenda of the event (see Annex 2 to this report) combined lectures providing a basic theoretical background and information on the requirements stipulated by the Protocol on SEA and the national legislative framework with group work sessions focusing on practical aspects.

The workshop was jointly delivered by the experts from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of Belarus and the international consultants to the UNECE.

3. Minutes of the event

The meeting was opened by Ms. Ia Malkina, First Deputy Minister of Natural Resources and Environment Protection of the Republic of Belarus, who stressed out an importance of SEA and its role in greening national economy. Ms. Nadezhda Zdanevich, Consultant, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection, introduced objectives of the workshop, its agenda, and facilitated introduction of the participants and a short discussion on their expectations from the training

After opening session, Dr. Marina Khotuleva, consultant to UNECE, presented purpose and main benefits of SEA, the key principles of efficient application of SEA, and main requirements of the UNECE Protocol on SEA. She emphasized importance of proper understanding of differences between SEA and EIA and described expected 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.

Ministry of Public Health raised the question about the role of the Ministry in the SEA process, is it about health impacts of the pollution and how the issue could be incorporated into the SEA process?

Marina Khotuleva explained that all existing issues (including the health effects of the existing pollutions should be discussed as a baseline conditions; the impacts of the implementation of the strategic initiative could be assessed – if any. At the same time, in the context of the environmental assessment the broader view on the public health should be considered. The WHO definition of the health¹ should be used. Ms. Nadezhda Zdanevich, Consultant, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection, then explained main steps in SEA procedure in accordance with the national legislation, and how this procedure should be linked to the planning processes. For this topic, a plenary discussion was organized.

The session on the scope of SEA application and screening was jointly facilitated by Mr. Andrey Shakhemirov, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection, and Ms. Marina Khotuleva, consultant to UNECE. After introducing legislative requirements and criteria to determine a need of SEA, the group work on how to determine if SEA should be applied to the strategic document was organized (see Annex 4 to this report).

The issues related to the management and coordination of SEA procedure i.e. main actors in SEA and their roles and responsibilities, and specific tasks of planning agencies in specific SEA steps, were presented by Ms. Nadezhda Zdanevich, consultant, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection, and Mr. Martin Smutny, consultant to UNECE.

The question was raised about the assessment methods to be used in SEA. Marina Khotuleva provided the brief information.

In following session on initiation of SEA procedure, Ms. Marina Khotuleva, consultant to UNECE, explained what decisions should be taken during the SEA procedure, what issues should be included in the

¹ Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.

ToR for SEA. She also addressed budgetary issues and importance of environmental and health authorities in SEA procedure.

After concluding session, Mr. Andrey Shakhemirov, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection, thanked the participants for their active involvement.



4. Conclusions

Following conclusions can be summarized from the discussions within the event:

Further development of the SEA system in Belarus 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, 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 was seen as important steps towards enhancing the quality of SEA/EIA in the country.

5. Annexes

5.1 Annex 1: List of participants

№	Name	Institution
1	Evdasyova, T.	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Belarus and subordinate organizations
2	Lagatskaya, E.M.	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Belarus and subordinate organizations
3	Zdanevitch, Nadezhda.E.	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Belarus and subordinate organizations
4	Shakhemirov, Andrey.R.	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Belarus and subordinate organizations
5	Kovalenko, V.V.	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Belarus and subordinate organizations
6	Sak, I.V.	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Belarus and subordinate organizations
7	Kurashova, E.G.	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Belarus and subordinate organizations
8	Galich, M.E.	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Belarus and subordinate organizations
9	Skovorodko, V.V.	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Belarus and subordinate organizations
10	Prokopovitch, T.S.	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Belarus and subordinate organizations
11	Gerasimovitch, N.S.	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Belarus and subordinate organizations
12	Bulay, A.	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Belarus and subordinate organizations
13	Rachevsky, A.N.	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Belarus and subordinate organizations
14	Sinilo, A.N.	Ministry of Economy the Republic of Belarus
15	Gavrilenko, T.V.	Ministry of Architecture and Construction of the Republic of Belarus
16	Gulik, M.S..	Ministry of Public Health of the Republic of Belarus
17	Zen'kovitch, A.L.	Ministry of Public Health of the Republic of Belarus
18	Revtovitch, E.A.	Ministry of Public Health of the Republic of Belarus
19	Sazonov, S.P.	Ministry of Forestry of the Republic of Belarus
20	Krasovvsky, D.V.	Ministry of Forestry of the Republic of Belarus
21	Kuchinskaya, I.I.	Ministry of Agriculture and Food Production of the Republic of Belarus
22	Chebotarevitch, O.M.	Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Belarus



23	Mal'tseva, N.M.	Ministry of Energy of the Republic of Belarus
24	Listopad, Yu. V.	Ministry of Energy of the Republic of Belarus
25	Dmitriev, S.N.	Ministry of Energy of the Republic of Belarus
26	Ryshkevitch, E.V.	Ministry of Energy of the Republic of Belarus
27	Meleshko, L.Z.	Ministry of Sports and tourism of the Republic of Belarus
28	Samusevitch, A.N.	Belarus state concern of oil and chemistry
29	Grabenya, O.Ya.	Belarus state concern of food production
30	Ryabova, T.M.	Belarus state concern of light industry
31	Bel'kova, T.V.	Belarus state concern
32	Chroshevitch, E.A.	Unitary Enterprise (UE) "BELNIIPGRADOSTROITELSTVA"
33	Bobko, A.V.	UE "BELNIIPGRADOSTROITELSTVA"
34	Naumovitch, O.I.	UE "BELNIIPGRADOSTROITELSTVA"
35	Sazanchuk, V.A.	UE "MinskInzhProect"
36	Gavrilenko, I.A.	AO "Institute Mogilevgrazhdanproect"
37	Yapechenko, I.V.	UE "Vitebskgrazhdanproect"
38	Zhitnikova, E.A.	OAO "Institute Gomel'grazhdanproect"
39	Mazurkevitch	GPO "Belenergo"
40	Timifeev, A.V.	UE "Minskgrado"
41	Kakhno I.G.	OAO "Institute Minskgrazhdanproect"



5.2 Annex 2: Agenda

Training workshop on practical application of strategic environmental assessment (SEA) in Belarus

19 December 2017

Hotel Being, Minsk

Background

A training workshop on practical application of strategic environmental assessment (SEA) in Belarus is organized by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of Belarus in cooperation with the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) within the framework of the EU-funded Programme ‘Greening the Economies in the Eastern Neighborhood’ (EaP GREEN)². The logistical support is provided by the UNDP office in Belarus.

One-day event will gather up to 30 participants and is targeted at the representatives of the central authorities (ministries) responsible for sectoral planning, and other relevant governmental agencies (e.g. environmental and health authorities).

The objectives of the workshop are:

- To raise awareness and build capacities on the SEA process under the Protocol on SEA to the Convention of Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo Convention);
- To support implementation of the national legislation on SEA.

The workshop will be jointly delivered by the experts from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of Belarus and the international consultants to the UNECE.

² 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/>.



Agenda

Time	Activity
8.30 – 9.00	Registration of participants
9.00 – 9.45	<p>Opening the meeting and welcome of the participants <i>Ms. Ia Malkina, First Deputy Minister of Natural Resources and Environment Protection of the Republic of Belarus</i> <i>Mr. Martin Smutny, Consultant, Secretariat to the UNECE Espoo Convention and its Protocol on SEA</i></p> <p><i>Tour de table: Introduction of the participants and their expectations from the training</i></p> <p>Introduction to the workshop – objectives and agenda <i>Ms. Nadezhda Zdanevich, Consultant, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection</i></p>
9.45 – 10.30	<p>Introduction to SEA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose and main benefits • Key principles of efficient application • Requirements of the UNECE Protocol on SEA <p><i>Presentation by Ms. Marina Khotuleva, consultant to UNECE, followed by QA session</i></p>
10.30 – 11.00	Coffee break
11.00 – 12.30	<p>Main steps in SEA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SEA procedure in accordance with the national legislation • Linking SEA and planning <p><i>Ms. Nadezhda Zdanevich, Consultant, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection</i></p>
12.30 – 13.30	Lunch break
13.30 – 14.30	<p>Scope of SEA application and screening</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legislative requirements and criteria to determine a need of SEA • Group work – how to determine if SEA should be applied to the strategic document • Group presentations and discussion <p><i>Facilitated by Mr. Andrey Shakhemirov, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection, and Ms. Marina Khotuleva, consultant to UNECE</i></p>



<p>14.30 – 15.15</p>	<p>Management and coordination of SEA procedure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main actors in SEA and their roles and responsibilities • Tasks of planning agencies in specific SEA steps <p><i>Ms. Nadezhda Zdanevich, consultant, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection, and Mr. Martin Smutny, consultant to UNECE</i></p> <p><i>Presentations followed by QA session</i></p>
<p>15.15 – 15.45</p>	<p>Coffee break</p>
<p>15.45 – 16.30</p>	<p>Initiation of SEA procedure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decision on SEA procedure • ToR for SEA • Budgetary issues • Role of environmental authorities <p><i>Ms. Marina Khotuleva, and Mr. Martin Smutny, consultants to UNECE</i></p> <p><i>Presentations followed by QA session</i></p>
<p>16.30 – 17.00</p>	<p>Concluding session</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any remaining questions regarding SEA practice • Closure of the workshop <p><i>Facilitated by Mr. Andrey Shakhemirov, consultant, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection, and Mr. Martin Smutny, consultant to UNECE</i></p>



5.3 Annex 3: Group work assignment on the linkages between SEA and planning
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Group work on the linkages between SEA and planning

Assignment

Please link main SEA steps with the planning stages of any plan or programme that you are familiar with and discuss the following questions:

- How would you link your SEA and the plan or programme-making process and why?
- What kind of obstacles to integration you might encounter?

You may wish to follow the structure outlined in a handout below (with examples of information which can be presented) and present the results of your work on the flipchart.

Handout

Steps in the planning process	SEA stages or tasks	Comments on potential obstacles to integration
Initiation of planning (decision no. XYZ)		
Analysis of the development in previous period	Decision on application of SEA	
...		
....	Preparation of SEA report	It may be difficult to discuss proposals of SEA report with the planning team due to a very busy schedule of finalizing the strategic document
...		
Adoption of the strategic document by the Government		

5.4 Annex 4: Group work assignment on screening

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Group work on screening

Assignment

Determine if SEA/EIA is needed for below outlined strategic documents and justify your decision. Use criteria stipulated by your national legislation or by the UNECE Protocol on SEA. Answer also following questions:

- Is the information available sufficient for screening?
- If not, what additional information would you need?
- What screening criteria / questions did you use?

Case examples

Example 1: AMENDMENTS OF MUNICIPAL SPATIAL PLAN OF RED HILL MUNICIPALITY

The process of the amendments of Red Hill Municipality spatial plan has been initiated by the group of the land owners, who submitted the requested to the municipal council. The proposed amendment would change the functional use of altogether 15,000 m² of the land – from permanent grassland to the housing area. The land owners aim at building 10 family houses in the area for their own living.

The site borders with the urban area of the municipality from the south, with the agriculture land from east and west, and there is forest on the north side. The road connecting the houses with the main road and connecting the houses to the electricity network, sewage and water supply systems will be a part of the project.

Example 2: THE NATIONAL ENERGY STRATEGY

The Ministry of Energy is initiating preparation of the national energy strategy. The strategy will define the energy priorities in the country i.e. primarily the energy mix and the domestic energy demand by 2030. The strategy will address all energy sources, which can be realistically utilized in the country.

Example 3: AMENDMENTS OF THE PROVINCIAL SPATIAL PLAN

A Province has decided on amendments of the county spatial plan, which was adopted already in 2001 and amended two times previously. The suggested amendments include the following proposals:

- New tourist zone (on the coast), including aquapark and golf playground
- New sites for mariculture
- Two new economic zones (50 and 80 ha)



In order to meet the target on increasing the accommodation capacities for tourist, several municipalities are to be identified by the spatial plan where new hotels and pensions should be primarily developed.