



Session I: Strategic environmental assessment (SEA) as a systematic and anticipatory tool to assist national governments in safeguarding sustainable socio-economic development of their countries

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Introduction to SEA and UNECE Protocol on SEA

Mr. Martin Smutny,
Consultant, Secretariat to the Espoo Convention
Dr. Maia Gachechiladze-Bozhesku,
UNECE International Consultants on SEA



GREENING ECONOMIES IN THE EASTERN NEIGHBOURHOOD (EAP GREEN) PROGRAMME

- A large regional programme implemented in 2013-2016 by the UNECE, OECD, UN Environment, and UNIDO to assist the six European Union's Eastern Partnership countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, in their transition to green economy.
- Is financed by the European Commission, the four implementing organisations and other donors.
- One of the aims is support the participating countries in developing and applying SEA legislation and systems in accordance with the Protocol on SEA (and the EU SEA Directive).

WHAT IS SEA?

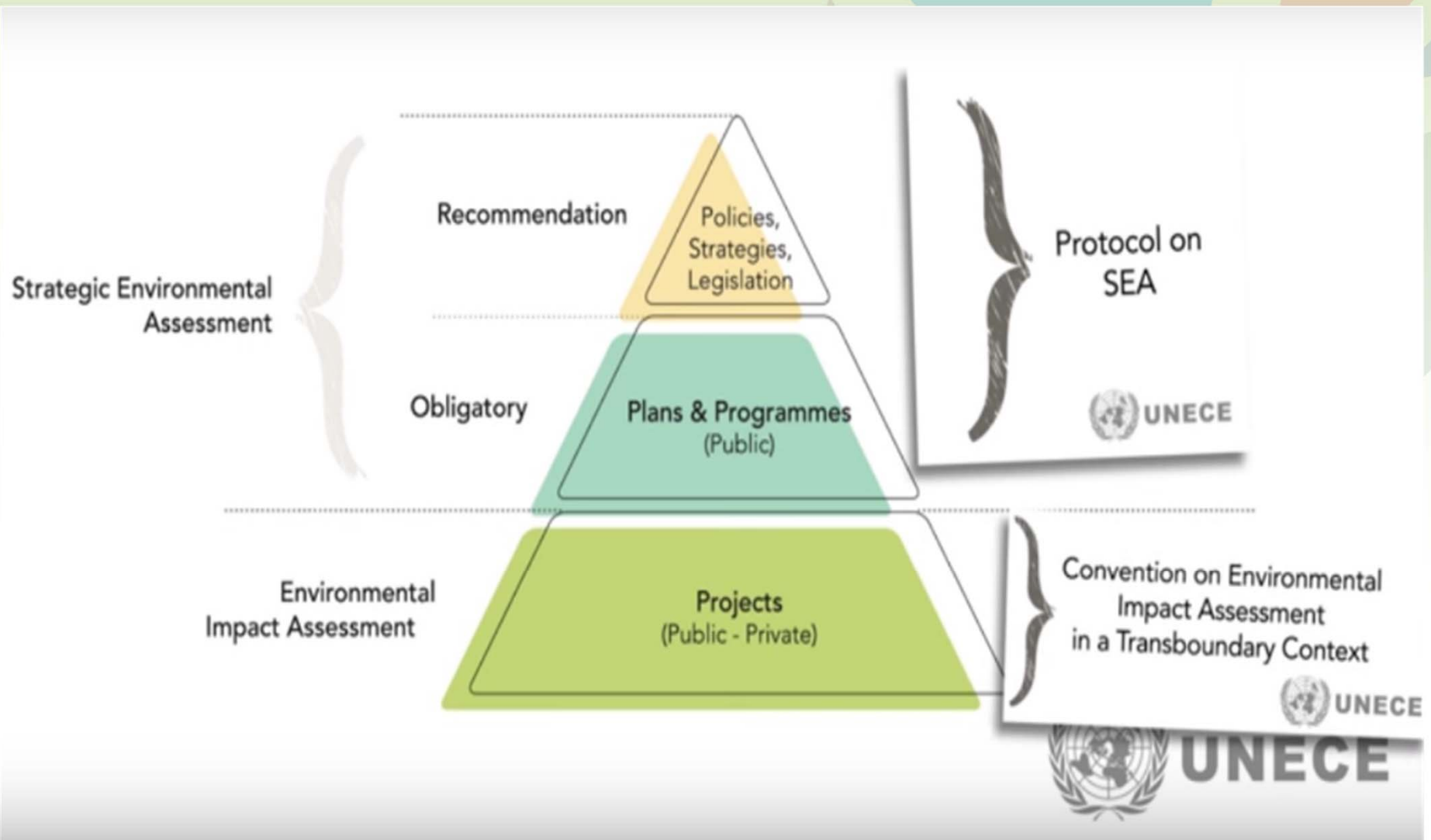
A tool to integrate environmental and health considerations into plans, programmes as well as to policies and legislation alongside the economic and social considerations

A systematic & anticipatory process of:

- evaluating environmental (social & health) effects of proposed plans, programmes & other strategic actions,
- engaging and consulting the public and relevant authorities (stakeholders), and
- integrating findings into decision-making.

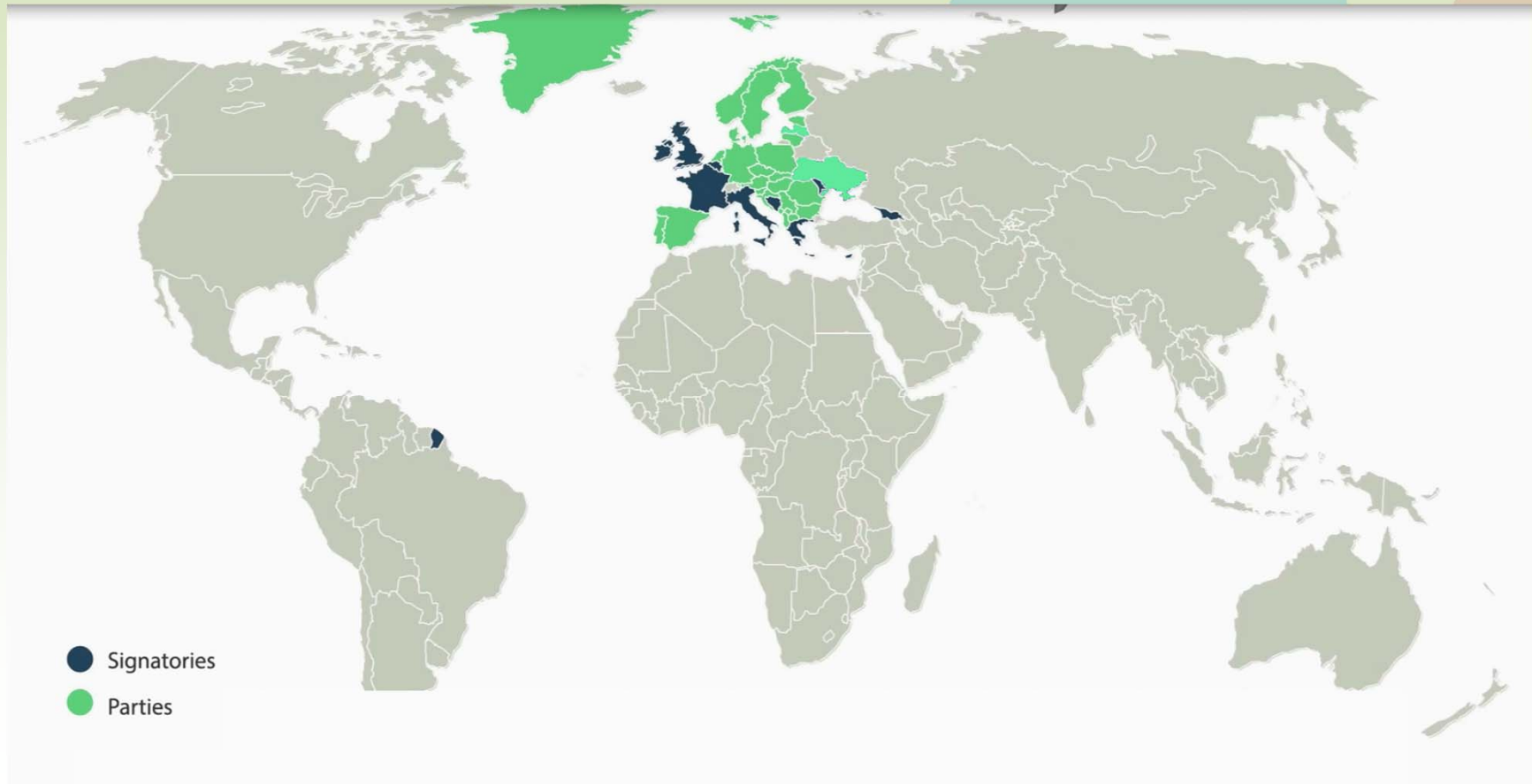
PROTOCOL ON STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

to the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo Convention)



PROTOCOL ON SEA

Global instrument



- Common standards
- Network of the Parties
- Experience exchange
- Technical assistance
- Implementation Committee

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BENEFITS OF SEA

- Provides for a higher level of **environmental & health protection**
- Has a large **coverage** and long **time horizon**
- Improves **quality of policy, plan & programme** making
- Facilitates identification of development **alternatives**
- Helps **prevent costly mistakes** (saves time & money)
- **Reinforces** project level EIA (cumulative impacts)

PRINCIPLES OF EFFICIENT SEA PRACTICE

- Undertaken **by the authority responsible for planning**
- Applied **as early as possible** in decision-making process
- **Focused** on key issues
- Evaluates **reasonable range of alternatives**
- Provides appropriate **opportunities for involvement** of key stakeholders & the public
- Carried out with **appropriate, cost-effective methods & techniques** of analysis
- Individual **SEA is adjusted to the plan/programme assessed**, considering its focus, planning process, structure of the document, governmental agencies and other stakeholders involved etc.

SEA AND PLANNING

Planning analyses and proposes development interventions

SEA examines individual outputs of the planning process and it may propose any necessary amendments

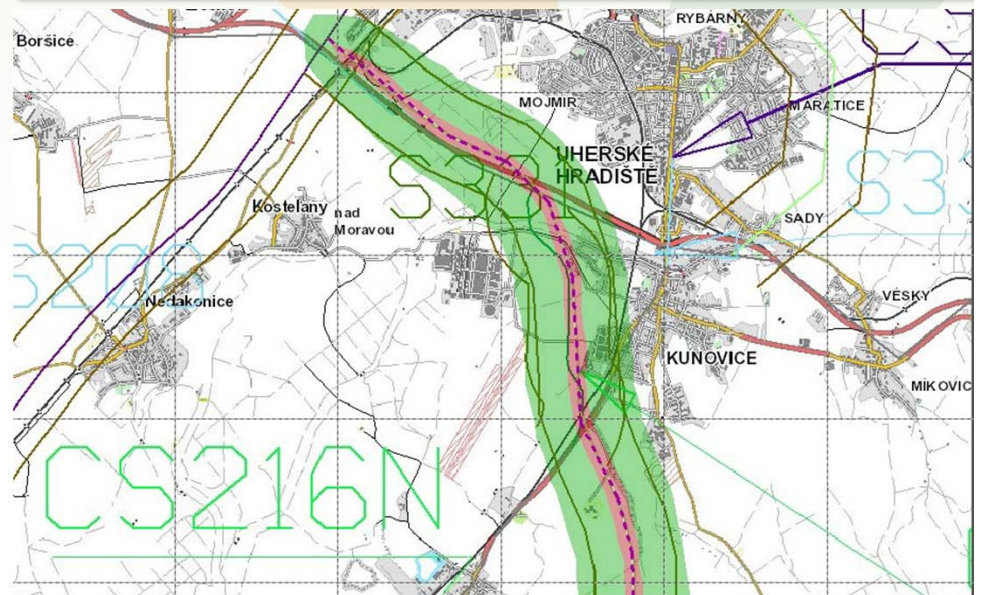
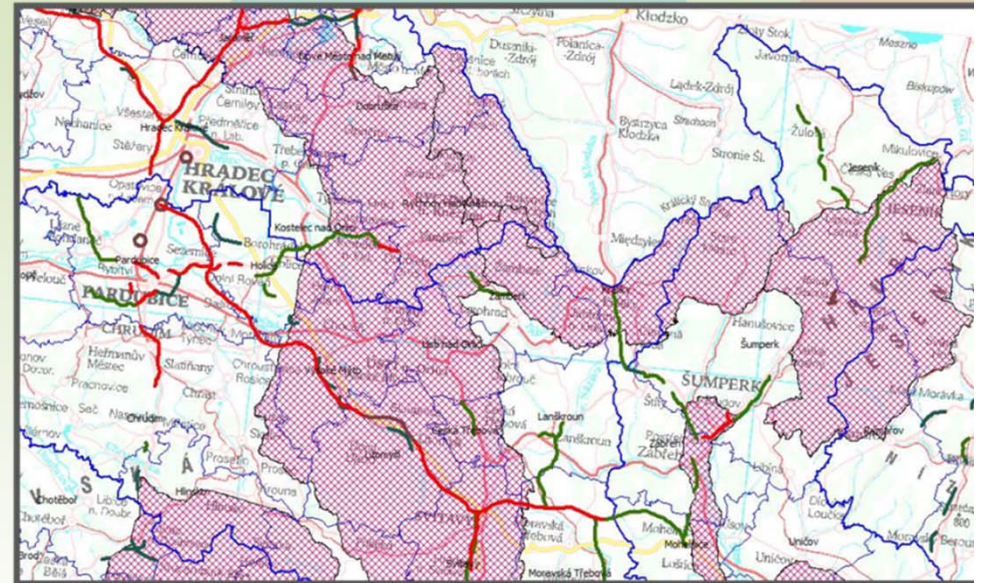
Optimally, SEA should be carried out in parallel with planning, when

- The lead process is the planning process, and
- SEA fits into the logic and steps of the planning process

Thus, both processes can be seen as mutually reinforcing tools within **one robust planning system for more sustainable development**

SEA AND EIA

- SEA is not a mega-EIA, it should not duplicate EIAs
- SEA ideally covers strategic issues of concern that cannot be effectively addressed through project-level decision-making
- SEA can facilitate EIA by providing 'guidance' for the project level development



MAIN ACTORS IN SEA

- **Planning agencies** (sectoral ministries, regional and local authorities)
- **Environmental and health authorities**
- **The public** (natural or legal persons, civil society, non-governmental organizations, etc.)
- Other governmental institutions
- Consultants and experts

ROLE OF SECTORAL AUTHORITIES

- Sectoral authorities = **planning agencies** i.e. responsible for preparation of the plans and programmes
- **Planning agency is also responsible for SEA to be conducted (if needed) for the plan or programme**
- SEA should be considered as a part of plan/programme
- Without SEA, plan or programme should not be submitted for approval

GENERAL TASKS FOR SECTORAL AUTHORITIES

- Ensure SEA application
- Ensure timely and effective opportunities for public participation within SEA
- Take into account the SEA report and the results of public consultations
- Carry out monitoring of environmental and health effects during plan or programme implementation
- Take measures to eliminate adverse effects on the environment, including human health, caused by the plan or programme

ROLE OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND HEALTH AUTHORITIES

- Should be consulted at screening and scoping stages, as well as on the draft SEA report and plan/programme
- Could conduct formal 'quality control'
- Can provide baseline information
- Provide expert advice to the planning authorities at any stage of the SEA
- Can issue a 'SEA scoping opinion' or 'SEA opinion'
- If the conditions of a 'SEA opinion' are binding, can monitor the implementation of these conditions
- Should be provided with the SEA monitoring materials

ROLE OF THE PUBLIC (CONCERNED)

- Are provided opportunity for participation in screening and scoping
- Has access to the screening decision
- Are informed about the arrangements for consulting and informing the public
- Has opportunity to express its opinion on the draft SEA and plan/programme
- Receive information about how public comments are accounted for in the final plan/ programme and about the adoption decision
- Should have access to the SEA monitoring materials

Questions or comments?

Thank you for your attention

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