



**EU4Environment**  
Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Republic of Moldova, Ukraine



European Union Water Initiative Plus for the Eastern Partnership

EU4Environment

STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (SEA)

for the draft National Strategy of Water Resources  
Management in the context of Climate Change for the  
period until 2030

REPORT

on

Training workshop for national experts on SEA scoping for the draft national  
Strategy of Water Resources Management in the context of the Climate Change  
for the period until 2030 Minsk, Belarus

12 July 2019

August 2019



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## 1. BACKGROUND

Under the EU's Greening Economies in the European Union's Eastern Neighbourhood (EaP GREEN) project (2013 – 2018), UNECE assisted Belarus in making very significant progress towards adopting national legislation and institutional frameworks in compliance with the requirements of the Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), and the EU SEA and EIA Directives.

In particular, a new law on State Ecological Expertise, Strategic Environmental Assessment and Environmental Impact Assessment was adopted in 2016, and secondary legislation - in January 2017, with some inconsistencies still remaining with respect to the requirements of the Protocol on SEA, Espoo Convention, and the EU SEA and EIA Directives. Belarus has also some SEA practice (including based on training delivered under the EaP GREEN and on previous UNDP pilot projects), which the country seeks to further develop.

Recognizing SEA as an efficient tool for the comprehensive integration of environmental and health concerns into a wide range of development activities, plans and programmes, in all economic sectors, including water, and considering the possibility of joining the Protocol on SEA in the future, the Government of Belarus (in particular, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Belarus) requested UNECE to provide support in pilot application of SEA for the draft *Strategy of Water Resources Management in the context of Climate Change for the period until 2030* (hereinafter – the Water Strategy-2030).

The development of the draft Water Strategy-2030 was facilitated by OECD in 2017-2018 within the European Union Water Initiative plus (EUWI+I). It is a 4-year regional program that started in 2016 for the Eastern partnership where Belarus is one of the target countries. A first national EUWI+ Interagency Steering Committee meeting was held at the end of 2018 in Minsk. The overarching objective of the EUWI+ Programme in the countries of Eastern Europe and the Caucasus is to improve the management of water resources, in particular of transboundary rivers. The EUWI+ is funded by the European Union. It builds on the results of previous EU-funded regional projects in the field of water including a previous phase of the EU Water Initiative.



## 2. MEETING OBJECTIVES AND ORGANIZATION

The workshop was organised for the national experts who were engaged to conduct the SEA of the draft Water Strategy-2030. The objective of the event was to build capacities on practical application of SEA in the water management sector with a specific focus on the scoping phase in SEA.

This training workshop built upon the kick-off event held on the previous day (11 July 2019) in Minsk within the framework of the pilot application of SEA for the draft Water Strategy-2030 and targeted at the wider audience of those state bodies and academia whose activities related to the Water Strategy-2030 development and/or implementation.

The training workshop for the national SEA experts was organized by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Belarus (the Ministry) in cooperation with UNECE. It was attended by 12 participants including the national SEA experts and a representative of the Water Strategy-2030 developers. Contributions of the latter were deemed necessary in terms of provision of clarifications and reasoning for the rationale behind the design of the Water Strategy-2030. Logistical support was provided by UNDP Belarus.



The workshop was supported by the UNECE secretariat to the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) with funding from the *European Union Water Initiative Plus programme for the Eastern Partnership Countries* (EUWI+). Additional support was provided by the UNECE secretariat to the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo Convention) and its Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment (Protocol on SEA) within the *EU4Environment* action.

The agenda of the event is found in Annex 1, and the list of the participants is presented in Annex 2 of this report.

### 3. SUMMARY OF THE EVENT

#### **Morning presentations and discussions**

Mr. Leonid Kalashnyk, EU4 Environment Project Manager in UNECE, Elena Kashina, UNECE consultant, and Dr. Maia Gachechiladze-Bozhesku, UNECE International Consultant on SEA, welcomed the experts and outlined the objectives of the workshop.

After a short tour de table, including a summary of previous participation in SEAs, Dr. Gachechiladze-Bozhesku described the agenda and explained that following the workshop the experts would be expected to prepare special inputs into the SEA scoping report.



Later, Dr. Gachechiladze-Bozhesku delivered a presentation on the baseline analysis in SEA covering the environmental, public health and social areas and set the definition of the scoping per se. She also presented the purpose and guidelines of the baseline analysis and introduced the methods and tools, as well as reference materials that could be used in the baseline analysis. Dr. Gachechiladze-Bozhesku pointed out to a health expert that there was a separate guide for the health component of the SEA and shared a source document. She asked experts to provide references to the sources used while preparing the SEA scoping report. For the SEA pilot project, Dr. Gachechiladze-Bozhesku suggested to conduct the baseline analysis using the trend analysis and to identify the potential effects using the checklists, matrices, and possibly a decision tree (at the discretion of experts), extrapolation of trends (at the stage of baseline analysis and impact assessment), and collective expert judgment. The experts discussed the applicability of various methods, as well as if the tight deadlines would allow to use other methods, mentioned by UNECE international consultant on SEA, such as overlay layers / GIS (possibly at the stage of analysis) and a multicriteria analysis. She provided further practical advice on conducting the scoping phase in SEA.

In her next presentation, Dr. Gachechiladze-Bozhesku turned to the issue of analyzing the strategic context and defining relationships (vertical, horizontal and diagonal connections) with other strategic documents, plans and programme. The experts discussed various existing strategic documents of

Belarus in the area of the environment, health, and social, as well as water-related plans and programmes, that may relate to the draft Water Strategy-2030. The relationships between the draft Water Strategy-2030 and these plans/programmes would be analyzed in the pilot SEA. It was decided to present the analysis of the strategic context in a tabular form, each expert describing the existing strategies as per his/her expertise. Ms. Zakharko (national SEA Team Leader) with support of Ms. Dubenok (the representative of the developers, Deputy Director for Research, Central Research Institute for Complex Use of Water Resources) committed to preparing a minimum list of programmes for the strategic context analysis that the experts would supplement.



The next training slot was devoted to the objective-led analysis. After Dr. Gachechiladze-Bozhesku explained the essence and logic of this analysis, the experts discussed which plans or programmes can be used for deriving the environmental, climate change, public health, and social objectives. Maia advised drawing the relevant goals from the approved state programme, plans, concepts and strategies or, if not available, from the international conventions ratified by Belarus. Each expert should formulate the key goals according to his/her area of expertise, then the resulting list should be discussed internally. Initially, Dr. Gachechiladze-Bozhesku planned to conduct an objective-led analysis in two stages: the preparatory stage – during the scoping, and the analytical stage – during the SEA assessment work. However, due to the time constraints, it was decided to move this analysis to the SEA assessment stage upon agreement with the Ministry.

Afterwards, the experts touched upon the analysis of alternatives and discussed that the draft Water Strategy-2030 did not describe any scenarios. Dr. Gachechiladze-Bozhesku explained that a zero scenario could be formed by analyzing existing trends based on assumptions about the existing driving forces behind the trends. In addition to the zero alternative and the proposed strategy, the experts discussed various scenario options, such as adjustments to the proposed strategy scenario, the worst-case scenario, the partial strategy implementation scenario, the worst climate change scenario, and shifts of delivery schedules. It was decided that the zero alternative and the proposed strategy should be assessed as a must, whereas none of the options considered options were seen as ‘feasible’ and ‘relevant’ and thus justified for inclusion in the SEA analysis. The existing issues with planning in the field of water transport were also briefly discussed, including the construction of the E40

waterway that appeared to be one of the sensitive issues raised during the public discussions of the draft Water Strategy-2030.



Two national experts (Mr. Novitsky and Mr. Bobko) who already participated in the SEAs in Belarus, including the preparation of the environmental reports, shared their experience with the other workshop participants. They reflected on the methodology, use of cartographic materials and layering, composition of the expert teams, timelines, public participation and consultations, etc.

### **Afternoon presentations and discussions**

In the afternoon session, Dr. Gachechiladze-Bozhesku presented a proposed structure of the SEA scoping report and invited the experts to review it and to share their views. The participants discussed the structure and content of the scoping report and made some suggestions. Mr. Bobko, for instance, noted that it would necessary to justify the need for the report on SEA and write this in the introduction to the report. Dr. Gachechiladze-Bozhesku noted that the SEA report should satisfy both the national law and international requirements (EU Directive on SEA and the Protocol on SEA), it would be useful to conduct their brief comparative analysis and point out the differences (as it was known already at that moment, some differences included aspects related to consultations during the scoping stage and transboundary consultations). The SEA Team Leader was suggested to write down the key differences in the SEA scoping report.

The approximate length and content of the chapters of the scoping report were discussed, as well as an expected contribution by each expert. Dr. Gachechiladze-Bozhesku noted that within the framework of SEA it was important to be as objective as possible and to reflect the relevant problems that the expert group identified and to make suggestions for addressing them. The task of the expert group is to bring their opinion to the attention of the stakeholders.

Following the above, the experts individually worked on filling out the scoping matrix and then discussed the results of their work in the group, including such areas as air quality, water, land and soil, biodiversity, public health, socio-economic, cultural heritage, and climate change. Then, the issue of transboundary consultations was discussed. It was pointed out that the expert group needed to identify if there was a potential for transboundary effects, and, if so, whether the transboundary

effects could be significant. These were deemed the prerequisites for launching the transboundary consultations procedure as set out, inter alia, in the Protocol on SEA.

Afterwards, the participants discussed the modalities of public consultations and discussions. As the draft Water Strategy-2030 extends throughout the country, applications for holding a public hearing could come from any settlement. If so, as per the national law, it would be necessary to travel to the town/region that requested the hearing. It was proposed to discuss with the Ministry a possibility of holding one public hearing in Minsk.

Mr. Kalashnyk and Ms. Gachechiladze-Bozhesku summed up the key messages of the workshop and thanked all the attendees for their active participation in the discussions.



#### 4. CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

The participants discussed various procedural and substantive aspects of conducting the scoping and preparing the SEA scoping report. Members of the SEA team further examined tentative timelines, including their feasibility, for completing the pilot SEA. Need for further cross-checking the timelines with the Ministry and with UNECE was highlighted

The next workshop planned under the pilot SEA project is intended to be organised in Minsk after the SEA scoping report is disclosed and shared with the key stakeholders, so that the stakeholders and the wider public can get familiarised with it. Back-to-back with it, a second workshop is planned to be held for the SEA Team to cover such topics as effect assessment, mitigation and monitoring in SEA.

The participants noted that the workshop was very useful and provided a lot of information for consideration and application to actual cases.



## Annex 1. Agenda



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European Union Water Initiative Plus for the Eastern Partnership

# STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (SEA) for the draft *National Strategy of Water Resources Management in the context of Climate Change for the period until 2030*

**Minsk, Belarus**

**12 July 2019**



**Venue:** Hotel Belarus (Minsk, ul. Storozhovskaya, 15), meeting room, 9<sup>th</sup> floor

**The objective** of the event is to build capacities on practical application of SEA in the water management sector (with a focus on a scoping phase).

## AGENDA

**Training session for national experts on SEA scoping for the draft national Strategy of Water Resources Management in the context of the Climate Change for the period until 2030**

**Moderated by Ms. Maia Gachechiladze-Bozhesku, international consultant on SEA, UNECE**

9:00 – 9:15	OPENING, Introduction of the meeting participants
9:15–11:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Baseline analysis - Purpose of baseline analysis and expected outputs; Approaches and methods; Case example <i>Ms Maia Gachechiladze-Bozhesku, international SEA consultant, UNECE</i></li><li>• Q&amp;A followed by discussion</li></ul>
11:00–11:30	<b>Coffee break</b>
11:30–12:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Policy-led analysis: introduction <i>Ms Maia Gachechiladze-Bozhesku, international SEA consultant, UNECE</i></li><li>• Q&amp;A followed by discussion</li></ul>
12:30–14:00	<b>Lunch break</b>
14:50–15:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Brain storming on SEA scoping for the draft national Strategy of Water Resources Management in the context of the Climate Change for the period until 2030 (scoping matrix)</li><li>• Q&amp;A followed by discussion</li></ul>

15:30–16:00	<b>Coffee break</b>
16:00–17:45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Further steps and practical arrangements, including agreement on the workplan for entire pilot, expected inputs and deadlines by the national experts to scoping and baseline analysis</li><li>• Q&amp;A followed by discussion on the different key points</li></ul>
17:45 - 18:00	SUMMARY OF THE DISCUSSION

## Annex 2. List of Participants

	Имя, фамилия	Должность, организация	Контактная информация Contact information	First name, surname	Job title
1	Дубенок Снежана Анатольевна	Заместитель директора по научной работе Республиканское унитарное предприятие "Центральный научно-исследовательский институт комплексного использования водных ресурсов" (ЦНИИКИВР)	olsnega@list.ru +375 29 620-64-69	Snezhana Dubenok	Deputy Director for Research, Republican Unitary Enterprise "Central Research Institute for Complex Use of Water Resources" (CRICUWR)
2	Захарко Полина Николаевна	Начальник отдела нормирования воздействия на окружающую среду Республиканское унитарное предприятие "Центральный научно-исследовательский институт комплексного использования водных ресурсов" (ЦНИИКИВР)	polina.k.85@mail.ru + 375 17 267-40-52 + 375 29 869-84-94	Polina Zakharko	Head of the Department of Rationing Impact on the Environment Republican Unitary Enterprise "Central Research Institute for Complex Use of Water Resources" (CRICUWR)
3	Булак Иван Александрович	Старший научный сотрудник Республиканское унитарное предприятие "Центральный научно-исследовательский институт комплексного использования водных ресурсов" (ЦНИИКИВР)	i_bulak@tut.by +375 29 278-85-10	Ivan Bulak	Senior Researcher Republican Unitary Enterprise "Central Research Institute for Complex Use of Water Resources" (CRICUWR)
4	Черевач Елена Михайловна	Заместитель начальника отдела гидрогеологии и мониторинга подземных вод Филиал «Институт геологии» республиканского унитарного предприятия «Научно-производственный центр по геологии»	elen.02@tut.by +375 44 788-41-70	Elena Cherevach	Deputy Head of the Department of Hydrogeology and Groundwater Monitoring Branch "Institute of Geology" of the Republican Unitary Enterprise "Scientific and Production Center for Geology"

	Имя, фамилия	Должность, организация	Контактная информация Contact information	First name, surname	Job title
5	Новицкий Руслан Викторович	Заведующий сектором экологической оценки преобразований окружающей среды ГНПО "НПЦ НАН Беларуси по биоресурсам"	<a href="mailto:nramphi@mail.ru">nramphi@mail.ru</a> +375 29 611-23-68	Ruslan Novitsky	Head of Sector of Environmental Assessment of Environmental Changes SSPA "SPC NAS of Belarus for Bioresources"
6	Богодяж Елена Петровна	Начальник службы экологической информации Белгидромет	81278@mail.ru 373-11-40	Alena Bahadziash	Head of the Environmental Information Service State institution "Republican Center for Hydrometeorology, Control of Radioactive Contamination and Environmental Monitoring"
7	Бобко Алексей Валентинович	Старший научный сотрудник НИЛ экологии ландшафтов Белорусский государственный университет	alexeibobko@gmail.com +375 29 548-23-84	Aliaksei Babko	Senior Researcher Laboratory of Landscape Ecology Belarusian State University
8	Дроздова Елена Валентиновна	Заместитель директора по научной работе РУП "Научно-практический центр гигиены" Министерства здравоохранения Республики Беларусь	drozdovaev@mail.ru 292-50-15	Alena Drazdova	Deputy Director for Science, Republican Unitary Enterprise "Scientific Practical Center of Hygiene" of the Ministry of Health of Republic of Belarus
9	Титов Олег Валентинович	Главный специалист Проектное республиканское унитарное предприятие «Белкоммунпроект»	titov_oleg@mail.ru +375 29 667-45-72	Oleg Titov	Chief specialist Republican unitary enterprise "Belcommunproject"
10	Майя Гачечиладзе- Божеску	Международный консультант ЕЭК ООН по СЭО	mgachechiladze@ecoline-int.org +380 951100727	Maia Gachechiladze Bozhesku	UNECE Consultant on SEA Ecoline International Ltd.
11	Калашник Леонид Васильевич	Сотрудник отдела окружающей среды, менеджер проекта EU4Environment, ЕЭК ООН	leonid.kalashnyk@un.org	Leonid Kalashnyk	Environmental Affairs Officer, UNECE
12	Елена Кашина	Консультант ЕЭК ООН	elena.kashina@un.org +41 (0) 22 917 3071	Elena Kashina	Consultant Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo Convention) Environment Division United Nations Economic Commission for Europe