



Action funded by
the European Union

EU4Environment

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

Awareness Raising Workshop Strategic Environmental Assessment Application in the Republic of Moldova

Chisinau, Republic of Moldova, 1 November 2019

Workshop Report

Action implemented by:



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1. Background

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) effectively promotes sustainable development by mainstreaming environment into economic development at a national and local level. SEA is a well-established, practical and efficient planning and environmental governance tool/system set out in the UNECE Protocol on SEA to the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) in a Transboundary Context (Espoo Convention) and in the European Union's Directive on SEA (2001/42/EC). It ensures that development plans in key sectors such as energy, water and waste management with likely significant adverse environmental impacts are efficiently developed while taking into account environmental and health considerations. SEA will allow identification of the most sustainable and cost-effective strategic development alternatives in the Republic of Moldova for attracting new investments and for improving its environment. SEA also helps strengthen the country's environmental governance through fostering transparency and consultation with relevant stakeholders and the public prior to the approval of plans and programmes. SEA in a transboundary context can also greatly facilitate regional cooperation on environmental matters.

Since 2004 the UNECE secretariat has provided technical assistance and capacity building support to foster ratification of, and accession to, the Espoo Convention and its Protocol on SEA in the countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia. In 2013-2018 UNECE within the EU funded programme Greening Economies in the Eastern Neighborhood (EaP GREEN) supported Moldova in the development and adoption of the EIA Law (adoption 2014; entry into force 2015) and the SEA Law (adoption 2017; entry into force 2018). The legislative and institutional framework development process was further assisted through a number of capacity building and awareness activities under the EaP GREEN, including two SEA pilot projects. The EIA Law and SEA Law are the most apparent landmarks of the progress towards the functional system for the SEA and EIA application meeting the requirements of the Espoo Convention, SEA Protocol and relevant EU legislation.

The application of SEA in practice remains very limited in the Republic of Moldova as the overall institutional capacities for SEA require significantly more strengthening to be fully fit for purpose. This includes the high turn-over of SEA-related staff in the environmental authorities and associated institutional memory challenges. There is still a clear need to support environmental, health and sectoral planning authorities through awareness-raising and capacity-building activities addressing, inter alia, the benefits of SEA, relevant procedures and challenges as well as respective roles of different authorities in the implementation of SEA procedures.

Within the framework of the EU-funded "European Union for Environment" (EU4Environment) programme (2019 – 2022), UNECE is assisting Moldova in building adequate capacities for the effective and systematic application of SEA and transboundary EIA. Furthermore, Moldova will be supported in fully aligning its national legislation with the relevant EU Directives, the Protocol on SEA and the Espoo Convention. This workshop is the first event organized by UNECE in Moldova under the SEA and transboundary EIA component of EU4Environment to promote the application of SEA in accordance with the national legislation.

2. Workshop objectives

The Workshop was designed as a combined SEA training and awareness raising event with a focus on the implementation of the SEA procedure in Moldova. Therefore, the agenda included the following objectives:

- promote the application of SEA in the Republic of Moldova in line with the requirements of the UNECE Protocol on SEA, EU SEA Directive and national legislation on SEA;
- support relevant national authorities by raising awareness about benefits of SEA, relevant procedures and roles and responsibilities in the implementation of SEA procedures;
- follow up on the SEA related outcomes of the EaP GREEN.

3. Approach and methodology

In line with the above objectives, the Workshop was organized based on the following approach. Its participants were selected with the intention of raising awareness among key stakeholders of the SEA, i.e. line ministries and agencies likely to be involved in the preparation of plans and programs subject to SEA is applicable, as well as representatives of environmental authorities responsible for the SEA process and likely to be involved in SEA-related consultations, and other potential stakeholders.

The design of the workshop program included the following key components in line with the event's objectives described above:

- Introduction of the SEA concept and the rationale for implementing SEA in the context of Moldova, including information on the international legal framework and Moldova's commitments under the SEA Protocol and the EU-Moldova Association Agreement.
- Presentation of the existing national legal framework for SEA, and experience with SEA in Moldova acquired under the EaP GREEN program, including an overview of the pilot SEA for the Orhei municipality master plan.
- Presentation of SEA cases/good practice examples from several countries in Central and Eastern Europe, including EU Member States.
- Discussion of the practical aspects and challenges related to the SEA implementation and the replication of other countries' good practice examples in Moldova.
- Presentation of the EU4Environment Programme and Q&A on its available support to promote the systematic and effective application of SEA within the period of 2019 – 2022.

4. Summary of the Workshop outcomes

The Workshop took place on the 1st of November in JollyAllon Hotel, Chisinau, Republic of Moldova.

A total of 41 participants, from various institutions and organization (Ministry of Agriculture, Regional Development and Environment, EU Delegation, Urbanproiect Institute, MoldSilva Agency, Environmental Agency, EcoContact, Ministry of Economy and Infrastructure, Ecology and Geography Institute, ODIMM, EUHLPAM, National Agency of Public Health, National Environmental Center and Medical University) took part in the event.

The UNECE SEA consultants actively engaged with the participants namely through a discussion of the practical aspects of the SEA application, and existing barriers and challenges hindering the SEA practice development.



Following key topics were addressed and discussed:

The event was opened by State Secretary (Ministry of Agriculture, Regional Development and Environment) Ms. Iuliana Cantaragiu. She highlighted the importance of environmental protection through two important instruments/procedures, SEA and EIA. The application of these instruments in Moldova needs to be strengthened for the authorities to apply them effectively, and for the proponents and initiators to use them competently when planning and implementing a specific activity that fall under the both laws.

Deputy Head the EU Delegation to the Republic of Moldova, Mr. Gintautas Baranauskas, and EU4Environment Project Manager at UNECE, Mr. Leonid Kalashnyk, in their subsequent statements highlighted the importance of the EU-funded EU4Environment Programme to address needs identified by Moldova for further capacity building for the effective SEA application and outlined activities to assist the country in this area.

In the opening session, national consultant Rodica Iordanov, PhD., together with international consultant Mr. Michal Musil introduced the objectives and agenda of the event, and provided a brief summary of the key outcomes of EaP GREEN. The consultants asked the participants about their expectations from the workshop and relevant experience /knowledge related to the SEA that they have, before proceeding further with the training and awareness raising program of the workshop. The subsequent sessions facilitated by the UNECE consultants produced a number of topics for further discussion (see a summary of key points/questions in the table below).

A presentation made by Mr. Leonid Kalashnyk, UNECE, briefly outlined the UNECE SEA Protocol and provided a summary of the EU4Environment Programme. This included all activities planned in the Republic of Moldova to support the effective and systematic application of SEA and transboundary EIA and further alignment of the legislation on SEA and EIA with the requirements of the UNECE treaties and the EU EIA and SEA Directives. In this context, the SEA-related needs in the Republic of Moldova previously identified by the UNECE in dialogue with the government and reflected in the EU4Environment Work Plan were further reconfirmed in discussion with the stakeholders participating in the workshop.

The vast majority of the participants were very active, posing a lot of questions related to the procedure and highlighting the main challenges in the application of SEA. Examples of the typical questions raised during the workshop are presented below:

Question/Comment	Answer/Remark
Who issues and develops the SEA notification? Environment Agency or Ministry of Agriculture, Regional Development and Environment ?	It is developed and issued by the authority where SEA has been applied. In the case of local authorities, then it goes to the Agency, and in the case of national programs then to the Ministry.
According to the SEA Law, the Ministry is developing policies, but they do not have control functions.	The SEA opinion is not a control act, neither a permitting procedure, it is a consultative and decision supporting process.
Who are the experts that develop SEA? Is there any list of experts that could be recommended by the Ministry?	<p>One of the activities of the current programme (EU4Environment) is to support creating a database of experts available to the public. Currently, there are some experts that are active in the framework of NGOs, Academy, Universities, Urban Proiect.</p> <p>There is no list that could be recommended by the Ministry. When performing SEA, the initiator is totally responsible for the work done by experts. First, it should be kept in mind that the SEA is not performed by one expert but by a group of experts that have meetings regularly and discuss issues and challenges related to the process. There is no certification for SEA in Moldova as well. It is important to think in the future about the mechanism that will allow certification of experts.</p>
What normative act obliges the initiator to accept what experts describe in the SEA report?	According to the Law on SEA (2017), the SEA is obligatory from the procedural point of view (i.e. the SEA process must take place wherever applicable), but expert opinions presented in the SEA Report cannot override the decision-making mandate of relevant authorities (e.g. a ministry preparing a plan or a programme).
The report developed by experts goes directly to the National Public Authority or to the Initiator?	Experts develop relevant analyses, which are then compiled in one SEA Report, which is eventually submitted by the initiator to the Ministry/or Agency for consideration.
How much does an SEA procedure cost? How long does it take to develop SEA?	There is no time limit for SEA. SEA needs to be performed together with the preparation of a respective planning document, so it depends on how fast the Plan is being elaborated, the SEA will follow suit.
Why is health not included?	SEA means the evaluation of the likely environmental, including health, effects. "Environmental, including health, effect" means any effect on the environment, including human

	health. The SEA analysis focuses on both about the environment and health, as they come hand in hand.
Are there any guidelines, or methodologies, on specific topics, for example in the case of tourism?	Generally, there are guidelines how a SEA should be developed. The Ministry of Agriculture and Regional Development approved Guidelines on SEA, which describe each step separately, as well as provide templates for reporting. Regarding tourism, there has been so far no strategies on tourism, but examples of relevant cases could be found online for further study by practitioners.

5. Conclusions

The Workshop succeeded in raising awareness of the participants about the SEA in general, and recent SEA-related obligations introduced into the legal framework in the Republic of Moldova, in particular. The workshop highlighted the pressing need of the relevant authorities to increase their capacities for the effective application of the SEA procedure. In that respect, the envisaged SEA-related activities to be further implemented by UNECE under the EU-funded EU4Environment Programme were noted as a substantial benefit to the Republic of Moldova in this area.



6. Acknowledgements

The workshop was jointly prepared by the UNECE Secretariat and the Ministry of Agriculture, Regional Development and Environment.

The Workshop was facilitated by Michal Musil (Integra Consulting Ltd.), and Iordanca-Rodica Iordanov (EcoContact /Aarhus Centre for Environmental Information and Consultation).

Annex 1: Workshop agenda



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**Awareness Raising Workshop
Strategic Environmental Assessment Application in the Republic of Moldova**

AGENDA

**1 November 2019
Chisinau, Republic of Moldova**

Action implemented by:



Awareness Raising Workshop
Strategic Environmental Assessment Application in the Republic of Moldova

1 November, 2019 (9:00 – 17:00)
Jolly Alon Hotel Chisinau (address: Maria Cibotari Street 37)
Large conference-room (the left wing) ground floor

Background

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) effectively promotes sustainable development by mainstreaming environment into economic development at a national and local level. SEA is a well-established, practical and efficient planning and environmental governance tool/system set out in the UNECE Protocol on SEA to the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) in a Transboundary Context (Espoo Convention) and in the European Union's Directive on SEA (2001/42/EC). It ensures that development plans in key sectors such as energy, water and waste management with likely significant adverse environmental impacts are efficiently developed taking into account environmental and health considerations. SEA, in particular, will allow identification of the most sustainable and cost-effective strategic development alternatives in the Republic of Moldova for attracting new investments and for improving its environment. SEA also helps strengthen the country's environmental governance through fostering transparency and consultation with relevant stakeholders and the public prior to the approval of plans and programmes. SEA in a transboundary context can also greatly facilitate regional cooperation on environmental matters.

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The application of SEA in practice remains very limited in the country as the overall institutional capacities for SEA require significantly more strengthening to be fully fit for purpose. This includes the high turn-over of SEA-related staff in the environmental authorities and associated institutional memory challenges. There is still a clear need to support environmental, health and sectoral planning authorities through awareness-raising and capacity-building activities addressing, inter alia, the benefits of SEA, relevant procedures and challenges as well as respective roles of different authorities in the implementation of SEA procedures.

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of EU4Environment to promote the application of SEA in accordance with the national legislation.

Meeting objectives, expected outputs and outcomes

- promote the application of SEA in the Republic of Moldova in line with the requirements of the UNECE Protocol on SEA, EU SEA Directive and national legislation on SEA;
- support relevant national authorities by raising awareness about benefits of SEA, relevant procedures and roles and responsibilities in the implementation of SEA procedures
- follow up on the SEA related outcomes of the EaP GREEN

Participants

Up to 32 staff members of the Ministry of Agriculture, Regional Development and Environment, Environment Agency, Ministry of Economy and Infrastructure, Ministry of Health, Labor and Social Protection/Agency for Public Health, Ministry of Finance, State Chancellery with a number of participants from environmental NGOs active in this area.

Practical Information

Simultaneous interpretation in English and Romanian will be provided.

About EU4Environment

The “European Union for Environment” (**EU4Environment**) aims to help the six partner countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Republic of Moldova, Ukraine preserve their natural capital and increase people's environmental well-being, by supporting environment-related action, demonstrating and unlocking opportunities for greener growth, and setting mechanisms to better manage environmental risks and impacts.

The Action is funded by the European Union and implemented by five Partner organisations: OECD, UNECE, UN Environment, UNIDO and the World Bank based on a budget of some EUR 20 million. The Action implementation period is 2019-2022.

For further information contact: EU4Environment@oecd.org

AGENDA

1 NOVEMBER 2019, Friday
Jolly Alon Hotel Chisinau, Large conference-room (the left wing) ground floor
address: Maria Cibotari Street 37

Time	Item
08:30 – 9:00	Registration of participants, welcome coffee
9:00 - 9:20	Opening remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Iuliana Cantaragiu, State Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, Regional Development and Environment • Mr. Gintautas Baranauskas, Deputy Head of Operations Section, EU Delegation to the Republic of Moldova • Mr. Leonid Kalashnyk, Environmental Affairs Officer, EU4Environment Project Manager in UNECE
9:20 - 9:45	Introduction to the workshop <i>Facilitated by consultants to Michal Musil and Rodica Iordanov, consultants to UNECE</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objectives and agenda • Brief summary of the outcomes of EaP GREEN • Participants' expectations from the training
9:45 - 10:00	UNECE Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment <i>Presentation by Leonid Kalashnyk, UNECE</i>
10:00 - 10:45	SEA process: Steps in accordance with the UNECE Protocol on SEA, EU SEA Directive and the SEA National Legislation <i>Presentation by Michal Musil and Rodica Iordanov, consultants to UNECE</i> Questions and answers
10:45 - 11:15	Coffee break
11:15 - 12:30	SEA application for the state plans/programmes: principles, benefits, roles of involved actors, interaction with the planning process <i>Presentation by Michal Musil and Rodica Iordanov, consultants to UNECE</i> Questions and answers
12:30 - 13:30	Lunch
13:30 - 14:30	SEA application: practical aspects, challenges, typical problems <i>Presentation by Michal Musil and Rodica Iordanov, consultants to UNECE</i> Questions and answers
14:30 – 15:00	UNECE technical assistance on enhancing capacities for SEA in the Republic of Moldova in line with the EU SEA Directive and UNECE Protocol on SEA within the EU-funded EU4Environment Programme <i>Presented by Mr. Leonid Kalashnyk, UNECE</i>
15:00 – 15:30	Coffee break
15:30 – 16:45	Discussion of SEA-related needs in the Republic of Moldova <i>Facilitated by Michal Musil and Rodica Iordanov, consultants to UNECE</i>
16:45 – 17:00	Closing: Summary and further steps

Annex 2: List of Participants



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Awareness Raising Workshop on the Application of Strategic Environmental Assessment in the Republic of Moldova

1 November 2019 (9:00 – 17:00)

Jolly Alon Hotel (address: No.37, Maria Cibotari Street)

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Total number of participants: 41

Female participants: 21

No.	First Name, Last Name:	Name of Institution / Organization / Enterprise, Position:	Contact Data:
1.	Ms. Iuliana Cantaragiu	State Secretary for Environment Protection and Natural Resources, Ministry of Agriculture, Regional Development, and Environment	Email: iuliana.cantaragiu@madrm.gov.md Tel.: (+373 22) 204 504
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