

Action plan to introduce and develop a national SEA system in Uzbekistan

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Action plan – introduction

- Purpose of the action plan is to stipulate
 - The priorities and specific actions necessary to introduce and develop a national SEA system in Uzbekistan
 - The key target groups for the specific actions
- It should represent a basis for coordination and implementation of necessary actions
- It may also serve for negotiation with the international donors regarding support to SEA-related activities
- The needs assessment report preliminary identifies priorities, which can be taken as a starting point for further discussion on the action plan

Finalizing and adopting SEA legislation

- Top priority: Without the national legislative framework for SEA i.e. the Law on SEA, followed by the by-laws, the SEA application remain at a pilot or voluntary basis
- The action plan should define activities needed to support the finalization and adoption of the draft Law on SEA to fully transpose the requirements of the Protocol on SEA.
- Additional measures will be required to support the adoption of the SEA legal framework. This may include
 - high-level awareness raising events for the key decision-makers,
 - promotional materials, etc., which in turn is linked with the awareness raising and capacity building via, inter alia,
 - pilot SEA applications (see further).

Organising trainings and awareness raising events

- Main target groups
 - Environmental and health authorities,
 - Planning authorities
 - Decision-makers,
 - environmental experts and practitioners (both individual and from consulting companies),
 - CSOs and the public.
- The action plan should define
 - Specific topics for the training and awareness raising events, and
 - Types of institutions and organisations and other participants to be invited to specific events.
- A possibility to establish a permanent training scheme/training centre on environmental assessment can be elaborated.

Practical application of SEA – pilot SEA(s)

- The action plan should identify sectors and optimally the specific plans and programmes to be a subject of the pilot SEAs (industry, energy, agriculture or water management sectors were indicated as sector with a high potential to cause significant environmental effects).
- Determining and agreeing the actual pilot SEA candidate may require an extensive communication between many actors, from the relevant planning agencies to the environmental and health authorities, in particular regarding
 - The readiness of the responsible planning authority to integrate SEA suggestions in the strategic document and to adopt and/or implement them.
- The action plan can also outline main conditions/principles to be applied when selecting a strategic document for the SEA pilot and designing the SEA approach.

Establishing institutional structure for EA

- Application of SEA in the scope stipulated by the Protocol on SEA and the draft SEA provisions will represent a significant workload, in particular at the sub-national levels.
- Therefore, the action plan can elaborate options on how the institutional structure should be arranged to manage the expected number of SEA procedures and ensure effective communication between the main actors.
- This may also include a possibility to establish an inter-sectoral working group on SEA inviting relevant governmental agencies and optimally also representatives of academic sector and CSOs.

National networking and information sharing system on SEA and EIA

- The action plan should specify dedicated activities to support the national-level networking on environmental assessment – this may e.g. include regular national workshops on SEA and EIA.
- Regarding the information sharing system it can be recommended that this system should be established as the centralised register for SEA and EIA documents and other relevant information (e.g. information about the public consultation meetings, etc.), as proposed by the draft Law on SEA.
- Suitable examples from other countries (the Czech Republic, the UK, Ukraine, Georgia, etc.) can be used as a basis.

Guiding documents on SEA

- Action plan should identify specific topics to be addressed by the guiding documents on SEA
- Such guidelines can focus either on
 - Specific SEA steps – screening, scoping, public participation, etc, – or
 - Specific sectors – agriculture, energy, etc. or
 - Specific issues – consideration of climate change, health or biodiversity in SEA across various economy sectors of Uzbekistan.

Financial and budgetary aspects

- SEA application beyond the pilot stage will have to be financed from the national budget.
- Therefore, it is important to ensure the necessary funds are available when the SEA will be required by the national legislation.
- As allocation of finances may be a relatively long process, it would be important to launch an initial discussion together with or soon after the adoption of the Law on SEA.
- The action plan can define activities needed such as
 - Dedicated high-level events for the key decision makers,
 - Establishing an expert group on SEA across governmental institutions,
 - Preparation of precise SEA-related cost estimates,
 - Presentation of examples from other countries regarding SEA-related costs

Capacities for transboundary consultations

- The action plan should – reflecting the relevant provisions of the draft Law on SEA – outline activities to ensure there are sufficient capacities of relevant governmental agencies to carry out transboundary consultations and to consider their outcomes in SEA procedures.

Thank you for your attention!

