



KYRGYZSTAN

ACTION PLAN

TO DEVELOP A NATIONAL STRATEGIC
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (SEA)
SYSTEM

The Action Plan developed in the framework of the project “Strengthening national and regional capacities and co-operation on strategic environmental assessment (SEA) in Central Asia, including as a response to climate change” implemented by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) in cooperation with the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE).

This version of the Action Plan considers the results of the discussion that took place during the Final Regional Conference on Strategic Environmental Assessment in Central Asia (November 10, 2021), <https://unece.org/info/events/event/359548>.

November 2021

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CSO	Civil Society Organization
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment (OVOS)
MoE	Ministry of Natural Resources, Environment and Technical Supervision of the Kyrgyz Republic
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
SAEPF	State Agency for Environmental Protection and Forestry under the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SEE	State Environmental Expertise
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

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EFFECTIVE SEA SYSTEM AND BENEFITS OF ITS IMPLEMENTATION FOR KYRGYZSTAN

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is internationally recognized as the key instrument for integrating environmental and health considerations into strategic planning and decision-making to prevent and mitigate possible damage from economic and regional development. It sets out the obligatory consultation of environmental and health authorities and the public to provide decision-makers early warning of unsustainable options and contributes to the reduction and management of health risks. It promotes sustainable development goals and principles, supports efforts towards the transition to a green economy, and increases the legitimacy of planning and decision-making processes and their outcomes. Moreover, it may allow countries to consider health risks and mitigation measures for pandemics as part of their planning processes, promoting healthy lifestyles, enhancing socioeconomic conditions to enable people to thrive and improving access to good quality health and social care.

The introduction and implementation of the effective SEA system in line with the Protocol on SEA for Kyrgyzstan will contribute to achieving the goals of strategic documents of the Kyrgyz Republic and provides the following main benefits:

- ✓ **Kyrgyzstan National Development Strategy 2018-2040**
- ✓ **Green Economy Development Programme of the Kyrgyz Republic for 2019-2023**



- ✓ **1999 Law on Environmental Expertise (updated in 2015)**
 - ✓ **Draft Environmental Assessment Law**
- ✓ **Kyrgyzstan's commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**

- ✓ **2015 Methodology for strategic planning of sustainable development**



EXISTING CHALLENGES FOR INTRODUCTION AND EFFECTIVE APPLICATION OF SEA IN KYRGYZSTAN

Based on the Needs Assessment carried out in 2020 the following challenges for effective application of SEA in Kyrgyzstan were identified:

- The lack of the national legal framework for SEA developed in line with the Protocol on SEA (including laws and by-laws)
- Low awareness of environmental, health and other relevant authorities, including those responsible for preparation of the plans and programmes, on SEA-related responsibilities and the lack of capacities to perform these tasks
- Limited knowledge of how to carry out SEA among experts
- Limited knowledge of the public on the opportunities to participate in SEA processes
- Limited awareness of the decision-makers of SEA benefits for greening the economy and strengthening the regional cooperation
- Lack of mechanism/platform enabling information sharing on SEA processes
- No clarity about financing SEAs

CURRENT SEA SYSTEM IN KYRGYZSTAN

VIS – A – VIS THE PROTOCOL ON SEA

The aim of this section is to demonstrate the main elements of effectively developed SEA system in line with the Protocol on SEA compared to the current SEA system in Kyrgyzstan (based on conclusions from the Feasibility and Opportunity Assessment Report). The main elements of modern SEA system developed in line with the Protocol on SEA represent the objectives to be achieved by implementing the Action Plan.

THE MAIN ELEMENTS OF MODERN SEA SYSTEM DEVELOPED IN LINE WITH THE PROTOCOL ON SEA

STATE OF DEVELOPMENT OF SEA IN KYRGYZSTAN

LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK on SEA is in force and aligned with the Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment

NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK ON SEA

The 1999 Law on Environmental Expertise requires 'EIA for strategic documents', however this provision is not implemented in the absence of lower-level legislative acts. A framework law on environment assessment covering both EIA and SEA ('the draft EA Law') was prepared in 2015, but not adopted. Then a draft Environmental Code was developed, which passed the necessary approvals and was submitted for consideration to the Government. However, its adoption was suspended due to its overlap with a large number of other regulations. In the process of government approval of the draft Code, the rather detailed initial provisions on SEA, carried over from the draft EA Law, were reduced to one short paragraph. There is an intention to finalise the draft Environmental Code. It is unknown when the new SEA legislation will be developed and adopted. As the draft EA Law was developed with the support of the UNECE, the overall proposed SEA process is largely set out in line with the Protocol on SEA. However, an in-depth legal analysis was not intended to be carried out as part of the Feasibility and Opportunity Assessment Report.

PROCEDURAL STEPS of SEA, including consultations with environmental and health authorities, public participation and transboundary consultations, are well established and followed in practice

PROCEDURAL STEPS

The stages outlined in the draft SEA provisions of the draft EA Law and initial version of the draft Environmental Code generally reflect the main stages of SEA as per the Protocol on SEA and good practice in the countries with the State Environmental Expertise (SEE) and EIA components. The survey also pointed out that arranging a SEA process in parallel with the planning process – as a precondition for an efficient SEA application – might be challenging in Kyrgyzstan without some adjustments of its current planning practice. Therefore, detailed by-laws and methodological guidelines will be needed to ensure effective application of the SEA procedure in the country. The basis for these could be the 'draft SEA Guidelines for the Kyrgyz Republic' and 'draft Regulation on the Order for Conducting SEA in the Kyrgyz Republic' developed in 2014.

APPROPRIATE FINANCIAL MEANS for carrying out SEAs are allocated by the governmental budget;

ALLOCATION OF APPROPRIATE FINANCIAL MEANS FOR CARRYING OUT SEA

According to the survey, the budgetary aspects have not yet been considered, and there is low awareness about the SEA-related costs. Thus, dedicated discussions will be necessary to address budgetary implications for carrying

out SEA for governmental strategic documents, including with regard to involving 'in-house' expertise (i.e., governmental staff), sub-contracting practitioners and consulting companies¹, organizing efficient public participation, collecting environmental and health data, and conducting relevant analyses.

AUTHORITIES RESPONSIBLE FOR PREPARATION OF THE PLANS AND PROGRAMMES are aware of their SEA-related responsibilities and tasks and have sufficient capacities to perform these tasks

AWARENESS OF AUTHORITIES RESPONSIBLE FOR PREPARING THE PLANS AND PROGRAMMES ABOUT SEA-RELATED RESPONSIBILITIES AND TASKS AND CAPACITIES TO PERFORM THESE TASKS

Awareness about SEA and its benefits, and capacities within governmental authorities to initiate, coordinate and supervise the SEA procedures is identified via the survey as limited. Despite the SEA awareness raising efforts supported by international donors between 2011 and 2017, including the drafting of legislative and guidance documents and the training, due to a high turnover of the governmental staff, additional and continuous efforts are still needed to reach and sustain the results achieved at the time. The Feasibility and Opportunity Assessment Report estimated that, at the existing planning rate for the next 4-5 years, to carry out the necessary SEA-related tasks, each planning authority might need approximately 40 – 60 person-days for one SEA process (including the preparation of the SEA report). The body responsible for SEA expertise (previously the State Agency for Environmental Protection and Forestry (SAEPF²) SEE) will need 10 to 15 person-days per an SEE procedure.

ENVIRONMENTAL AUTHORITIES are aware of their SEA - related tasks and responsibilities have sufficient capacities to perform these tasks

AWARENESS OF ENVIRONMENTAL AUTHORITIES ON THEIR SEA-RELATED RESPONSIBILITIES AND TASKS AND CAPACITIES TO PERFORM THESE TASKS

The SAEPF of Kyrgyzstan was the lead environmental authority at the time of the survey, and the survey concluded that a number of the SAEPF's staff were aware of their SEA-related tasks and able to perform them. The information is yet available about the staffing of the recently created Ministry of Natural Resources, Environment and Technical Supervision (MoE). However, it can be assumed that when the SEA legislation is adopted, the MoE's capacity to coordinate SEA processes, undertake SEE of SEA documents, participate

¹ As per the survey, outsourcing SEA, i.e., sub-contracting groups of environmental experts or consulting companies (that can also combine their competencies with strategic planning experts) to carry our SEA, could be the option preferred by the governmental planning agencies.

² In autumn 2021, on the basis of the SAEPF, the Ministry of Natural Resources, Environment and Technical Supervision of the Kyrgyz Republic (MoE) was established.

in consultations and so on may appear insufficient, also partly due to regular staff rotation. The workloads may increase as well. For instance, according to the existing Law on Environmental Expertise and draft EA Law the Master plans/ territorial development programmes of administrative-territorial units can be subject to SEA, and there are 1821³ such units in Kyrgyzstan. The survey results also revealed that a role of regional and district authorities in SEA should additionally be examined, with a focus on the regional Territorial Environmental Protection Departments of the MoE (if such are sustained during the ongoing governmental reform) or equivalent regional environmental bodies might need to enhance their skills when tasked with coordinating non-national level SEAs.

HEALTH AUTHORITIES are aware of their SEA-related responsibilities and tasks and have sufficient capacities to perform these tasks

AWARENESS OF HEALTH AUTHORITIES ON THEIR SEA-RELATED RESPONSIBILITIES AND TASKS AND CAPACITIES TO PERFORM THESE TASKS

According to the draft EA Law, health authorities should be involved in the SEA process – to provide their opinion in the screening and scoping. It is not clear if the health authorities are approached specifically with the full SEA report or whether they are just one of the ‘interested authorities’ that shall be identified by the state program developer for the purpose of consultations (Article 11.2). The health authorities are not required to publish any SEA information on their websites. The Feasibility and Opportunity Assessment Report estimated that approximately 5-10 person-days might be needed for one SEA process for the respective health authority (Ministry of Health) to carry out their SEA-related tasks.

The responses of the health authorities to the questionnaire demonstrate that the relevant and tailored SEA training for health authorities is one of capacity building priorities. In fact, the experience from other regions, e.g., from the EU Eastern Partnership countries⁴, shows that health authorities should specific attention and training to perform their functions within the SEA systems.

³ According to the "Program of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic for the development of master plans for settlements of the Kyrgyz Republic for 2018-2025", approved by the Resolution of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic dated August 17, 2017 No. 490.

⁴ <https://www.euneighbours.eu/en/policy/eastern-partnership>

THE PUBLIC IS AWARE of the opportunities to participate in SEA processes

THE DECISION-MAKERS ARE AWARE of their SEA-related responsibilities and tasks and have sufficient capacities to perform these tasks

THERE ARE PRACTITIONERS/EXPERTS ABLE TO CONDUCT SEA

AWARENESS OF THE PUBLIC ON THE OPPORTUNITIES TO PARTICIPATE IN SEA PROCESSES

The draft SEA provisions envision the opportunities for public discussions and feedback during the SEA steps. However, given the SEA legislation is still to be adopted and in the absence of pilot projects, the public awareness regarding public participation opportunities within the SEA procedure is considered to be limited, in particular at the regional and local level. The donor-funded capacity building activities on SEA in Kyrgyzstan have mainly invited governmental officials from planning agencies and environmental and health authorities, some EIA practitioners and very few representatives of NGOs and educational institutions.

AWARENESS OF THE DECISION-MAKERS ON THEIR SEA-RELATED RESPONSIBILITIES AND TASKS AND CAPACITIES TO PERFORM THESE TASKS

There have been only limited opportunities for decision-makers so far to get familiar with SEA (e.g. the events organized within the legislative and guidance drafting in 2013 – 2017 and during the ADB-supported project). Only few representatives of the Governmental Apparatus attended these events. Therefore, considering also the previously mentioned high turnover of governmental staff, their level of awareness on SEA and capacities to perform relevant tasks can be seen as limited. This is also supported by the survey's findings identifying awareness raising events for decision-makers as a priority. In addition, local authorities (aimaks, ayil okmotu) are listed by the respondents as a specific group requiring training and awareness raising on SEA.

CAPACITIES AND ABILITIES OF THE PRACTITIONERS/EXPERTS TO CONDUCT SEA

The survey results suggest that Kyrgyzstan has limited expert potential to carry out SEAs on a regular basis. The experts can likely be recruited from EIA/OVOS practitioners of consulting companies performing EIAs. As in many other countries, such approach may result in the first SEAs being influenced by EIA methodologies, however this is still a good starting point for developing SEA capacities. Several organisations that can potentially provide their services in the SEA field were identified by the survey⁵.

⁵ such as the National Academy of Sciences, NGO "Independent Environmental Expertise" (which was mentioned by the respondents), the Regional Environmental Centre of Central Asia – national branch, Eco-Partner and others.

RELEVANT METHODS AND TECHNIQUES are known and used/can be used in SEA by environmental assessment practitioners

A SEA QUALITY CONTROL SYSTEM is established and performed

MECHANISM/PLATFORM enabling information sharing on SEA processes is in place

KNOWLEDGE ON RELEVANT METHODS AND TECHNIQUES TO BE USED IN SEA

The respondents of the survey are unaware of the existing guiding documents on SEA. Capacity building on methods and techniques to be used in SEA thus will be required, potentially as part of the pilot projects. Then, further national SEA practice, including examination of data availability, will help identify and develop SEA methods and techniques most suitable for the planning practice and the content of the plans and programmes developed by the governmental authorities of Kyrgyzstan.

A QUALITY CONTROL SYSTEM IN SEA

The draft SEA provisions mention a specific procedure of approval and SEE of the SEAs and their subjects. The SEE can be perceived as an element of quality control system. In addition, there is a provision in the draft EA Law for an optional Public Environmental Expertise which can be considered as an element of an SEA quality control system. One more element of it is the consultation with the relevant authorities and public participation. Performance of the quality control outlined in the draft SEA provisions should be evaluated after the SEA practice starts.

MECHANISM/PLATFORM ENABLING INFORMATION SHARING ON SEA PROCESSES

The draft EA Law mentions that 'the authorized state environmental protection body maintains a database (register) on SEA, including reports on SEA, SEE conclusions, and other documents obtained in the SEA process' (Article 13.4). This links back to the point about establishing an accessible SEA database - that received a high rating during the survey. As experience from other countries show, developing and launching similar system or register is a challenging process. Therefore, initiation of the debate about the design, functions and technical features of the register in parallel with the adoption process of the SEA legislation is recommended.

PRIORITIES FOR DEVELOPING AN EFFECTIVE SEA SYSTEM IN KYRGYZSTAN IN LINE WITH THE PROTOCOL ON SEA

PREPARED BASED ON THE RESULTS OF THE FEASIBILITY AND OPPORTUNITY ASSESSMENT REPORT

The aim of this strategy is to enhance the current state of development of SEA in Kyrgyzstan in line with the Protocol on SEA

P1

Development and adoption of a legislative framework for SEA: The drafts of the EA Law and initial Environmental Code containing the SEA provisions as well as the draft of some secondary legislation on SEA were developed in 2014-2015, but will need to be revised / updated and adopted.



P2

Preparation of guiding documents on SEA to facilitate application of SEA: launching SEA practice (after adopting the SEA legislation) is often challenging due to a lack of understanding on how the legal provisions should be practically carried out; therefore it is necessary to provide detailed guidance on SEA procedure as well as on the specific SEA-related topics



P3

Delivery of trainings and awareness raising for environmental and health authorities, decision-makers, environmental assessment practitioners, and CSOs.



P4

Support to practical application of SEA: conducting pilot SEAs has proven to be the most efficient capacity building as it provides 'hands-on' opportunity for the relevant stakeholders to participate in the SEA, and can be effectively combined with training and awareness raising activities.



P5

Determining the financial resources needed to support the application of SEA at various levels of program-making.



P6

Supporting networking and information sharing to enable exchange of experience and distribution of information on SEA, which is very important for enhancing the SEA practice as well as for efficient public participation and consultations.



P7

Establishing an institutional structure for SEA: The application of SEA will represent a significant workload, in particular for the MoE and the Ministry of Health. Thus, the options on how the institutional structure should be arranged to manage expected number of SEA procedures should be elaborated – in particular for non-national SEAs.



P8

Developing capacities for transboundary consultations among relevant governmental agencies to carry out transboundary SEA procedures



LIST OF SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES TO INTRODUCE AND DEVELOP THE SEA SYSTEM IN KYRGYZSTAN

The table below lists specific activities to introduce and develop SEA in the country together with their prioritisation, which follows the priorities formulated above. Each specific activity is tentatively assigned a 'high', 'medium', or 'low' priority, using the following ranking:

- High priority (H): A specific activity should be implemented by the end of 2022;
- Medium priority (M): A specific activity should be implemented in 2023 – 2024 (assuming that the SEA provisions will be adopted by 2025);
- Low priority (L): A specific action can be implemented after the SEA provisions are adopted.

Activity	Tentative Priority Ranking	Description	Target group
Priority 1: Development of legislative framework for SEA			
1.1 Developing and adopting SEA legislation	H (initiation)	The draft EA Law / Environmental Code should be revised, or another piece of legislation on SEA be developed, and adopted. Optimally, the conclusions of the detailed legal analysis against the Protocol on SEA should be considered.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High level decision-makers • Environmental authorities
1.2 Preparing and adopting secondary legislation	M	The law dealing with SEA should be supported by due by-laws. In fact, the draft EA Law refers to the <i>Order for Conducting SEA in the Kyrgyz Republic</i> ⁶ . Optimally, the secondary legislation would reflect experience with application of SEA procedure from the SEA pilots as well as consider conclusions of the detailed legal analysis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High level decision-makers • Environmental authorities
1.3 Carrying out detailed legal analysis of the draft SEA provisions vis-à-vis the Protocol on SEA	H	If the decision is made to revise the draft EA Law, an in-depth legal analysis will need to be carried out against the Protocol on SEA. The result should be considered in revising the draft EA law, or in drafting an equivalent piece of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High level decision-makers • Environmental authorities

⁶ Порядок проведения СЭО.

legislation on SEA, as well as considered in the secondary legislation.

Priority 2: Preparation of guiding documents on SEA

2.1 Preparing general guidelines on SEA	M	<p>The general guidelines on SEA should provide details on procedural steps outlined in the draft SEA provisions and to explain how to perform relevant tasks and responsibilities assigned to the key actors.</p> <p>It should also outline the opportunities for the public to participate in the SEA and describe how to proceed with transboundary consultations.</p> <p>An overview of the usual methods and tools used in SEA for evaluation of the likely effects should be included in the guidelines as well.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authorities responsible for preparation of the plans and programmes • Environmental authorities • Health authorities • Environmental assessment practitioners • CSOs/the public
2.2 Preparing the quality control checklist	M/L	<p>A quality control checklist should be primarily used by the environmental and health authorities when conducting the quality control of the SEAs. However, it can also help other key actors to get better understating what kind of quality criteria a good SEA should meet.</p> <p>It should cover both procedural and substance-related aspects of an SEA (in particular the content and information to be provided in the SEA report). The criteria should follow requirements of the SEA provisions and the principles of a good SEA practice.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authorities responsible for preparation of plans and programmes • Environmental authorities • Health authorities • Environmental assessment practitioners • CSOs / the public
2.3 Preparing SEA guidelines on specific topics	L	<p>Preparation of specific guidelines is recommended – on methods and tools for evaluating the impacts, quality control, how to consider climate change, biodiversity or else in SEA, etc. The topics may be determined after the secondary legislation on SEA is developed (which may cover a wide range of aspects).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental authorities • Health authorities • Environmental assessment practitioners

Priority 3: Training and awareness raising

3.1 Preparing an information leaflet on the benefits of SEA	H	<p>A leaflet will describe the importance and expected benefits of SEA for Kyrgyzstan. It can be built on promotional materials produced e.g., by the UNECE.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High level decision-makers • NGOs • General public
3.2 Organizing awareness raising	H	<p>High-level events would promote an importance of implementation of SEA in</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High level decision-makers

<p>events on SEA for the high-management (ministers and deputy-ministers) of sectoral ministries, and relevant parliamentary committees.</p>		<p>general and cover the draft SEA provisions and may also serve to discuss the preparation of the primary and secondary SEA legislation. Importance of SEA should be supported by presentation of examples of the good SEA practice illustrating its benefits. The budgetary aspects (i.e., allocation of appropriate finances from the national budget) should also be discussed at the events.</p> <p>The agenda of the events should not exceed 2 hours, participation of representatives of international organisation (including UN agencies), EU member states, and/or international SEA experts is desirable.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
<p>3.3 Organizing awareness raising events on SEA for planning authorities</p>	<p>H</p>	<p>Several awareness raising events should be organized to explain the procedural SEA steps and the task and responsibilities to be performed by the planning authorities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authorities responsible for preparation of plans and programmes (including local executive bodies of administrative territorial units)
<p>3.4 Organizing awareness raising events on SEA for the public</p>	<p>M</p>	<p>Several awareness raising events should be organized to explain the procedural SEA steps and how to use the opportunities the SEA provides to participate.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The public
<p>3.5 Organizing training workshops on methods and tools in SEA</p>	<p>M</p>	<p>A series of the workshops should be organized to present and discuss the methods and tools to be used in SEA.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental authorities • Health authorities • Environmental assessment practitioners
<p>3.6 Organizing workshop on quality control in SEA</p>	<p>L</p>	<p>A dedicated workshop for the staff of environmental authorities and health authorities involved in managing the SEA processes should be based on the quality control checklist (activity 2.2) and introduce the quality control criteria and their application.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental authorities • Health authorities
<p>3.7 Developing a comprehensive training course on SEA</p>	<p>L</p>	<p>A training course on SEA can be developed in cooperation with international agencies and academic sector. Opening such course for the participants from other Central Asian countries may also be considered.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental authorities • Health authorities • Environmental assessment practitioners

Priority 4: Support to practical application of SEA

4.1 Identification of sectors / specific plans and programmes to be a subject to pilot SEAs.	H	<p>At the initial stages of introducing SEA system, efforts on application of SEA should be focused on plans and programmes in the sectors of mining, energy, waste management, industry, agriculture, and urban, rural and land-use planning (i.e. sectors with high potential to cause significant environmental and health effects as resulted from the survey). Optimally the SEA pilot should be conducted for one of the state programmes in the above sectors to test the SEA procedures before the SEA provisions are in force.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authorities responsible for preparation of the plans and programmes • Environmental authorities
4.2. Organizing a workshop on SEA for the sectoral ministries in the selected sectors	H	<p>The purpose of the workshop would be to explain the key principles of SEA and to discuss preliminary selection of the plans and programmes to be a subject to the pilot SEA.</p> <p>The two main criteria to be considered when selecting the strategic documents are as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Timing of the planning process: The SEA pilot – in order to demonstrate benefits of SEA – has to be carried out in parallel to the preparation of a plan and programme. 2. Readiness to consider the SEA inputs: The aim of SEA is to integrate environmental and health considerations in the plan or programme. Therefore, the planning authority and the team should be ready and open for the discussion on recommendations formulated by the pilot SEA and – if agreed – to integrate them in the draft strategic document. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authorities responsible for preparation of the plans and programmes • Environmental authorities • Health authorities
4.3 Conducting pilot SEAs	H ⁷	<p>In order to effectively utilize the learning opportunities provided by the SEA pilot application, it is essential to include capacity-building activities in the SEA pilots (i.e. training and awareness raising</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decision-makers • Authorities responsible for preparation of the

⁷ Obviously, the entire pilot SEA(s) cannot be carried out by the end of 2022. However, high priority indicates a necessity to initiate the SEA pilot(s) as soon as possible.

events) and open them to a wide range of stakeholders including health authorities, CSOs, and the public.

Linking the SEA pilots to the training and awareness raising activities (see activities 3.1 – 3.3 above) can be recommended.

- plans and programmes
- Environmental authorities
- Health authorities
- Public
- Practitioners/experts

Priority 5: Determining the financial resources

5.1	Conducting financial analysis regarding costs of SEA	H-M	Precise SEA-related cost estimates should be made for the sectors covered by the draft SEA provisions as a basis for allocating appropriate financial means for SEA application in the national budget (and/or in the budgets of respective sectoral ministries).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decision-makers • Authorities responsible for preparation of the plans and programmes • Environmental authorities • Health authorities
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Priority 6: Networking and information sharing

6.1	Developing the technical description of the SEA (and EIA) online information system	M	<p>The Information system on SEA (and EIA) 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.), which should be publicly available. The MoE should be responsible for managing the system – uploading the documents, publishing the information on ongoing SEA processes etc. However, providing an access to the system and the rights to make changes regarding specific SEA processes to the planning authorities could be considered in future.</p> <p>In principle, the structure of the information/documents to be provided for an individual SEA process should reflect the steps outlined in the draft SEA provisions (or SEA legislation to be adopted).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental authorities • Authorities responsible for preparation of plans and programmes⁸
6.2	Establishing the SEA (and EIA) online information system	L	Based on the technical outline (activity 6.1) a full system should be developed and established.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authorities responsible for preparation of

⁸ The role of the planning authorities regarding the SEA online information system will depend on the design of the system – its management can be solely ensured by the MoE, but it also may allow the planning authorities to upload documents and information to the system, which relate to the SEA applied for the strategic documents under the responsibility of a given planning authority.

6.3 Organizing regular annual coordination meetings	L	<p>After establishing the SEA practice, regular meetings, inviting all main actors in SEA, would provide an opportunity to discuss existing challenges of SEA application, and steps and activities to further enhance the SEA system in the country.</p> <p>These meetings should be organized by the MoE and should invite the representatives of planning authorities, health authorities, practitioners, as well as CSOs/the public active in the field of SEA.</p>	<p>plans and programmes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental authorities • Authorities responsible for preparation of the plans and programmes • Environmental authorities • Health authorities • Environmental assessment practitioners • CSOs/the public
6.4 Organizing the national SEA/EIA conference	L	<p>Several years of SEA application should provide sufficient experience to be discussed at the national level. As there are many common features and linkages between SEA and EIA, organizing the first national conference jointly for SEA and EIA can be recommended.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decision-makers • Authorities responsible for preparation of plans and programmes • Environmental authorities • Health authorities • Environmental assessment practitioners • CSOs/ the public
6.5 Establishing a training centre on environmental assessment	M	<p>The training centre on environmental assessment should ensure sufficient national expert capacity to carry out SEAs in Kyrgyzstan, and it can also serve as a regional training ‘hub’ for experts from all Central Asian countries, which would – among other aspects – significantly contribute to effectively addressing transboundary SEA consultations. Considering many common features of SEA and EIA, the Centre may provide capacity building on EIA as well.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental authorities • Health authorities • Environmental assessment practitioners • CSOs/ the public • Central Asian countries

Priority 7: Establishing an institutional structure for SEA

7.1 Organizing workshop on institutional arrangements for SEA	M	<p>As estimated in the needs assessment report, the application of SEA in the scope stipulated by the Protocol on SEA will represent a significant workload, in particular for the MoE and the Ministry of Health. Therefore, the event could introduce institutional arrangements for SEA in the selected countries as a basis</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental authorities • Health authorities
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for further discussion on how to manage the expected number of SEAs in Kyrgyzstan.

Experience from SEA pilots can also be used (in particular, it should enable to better estimate the workload connected with an individual SEA for the environmental and health authorities).

7.2 Preparing outline of institutional arrangements for SEA M

Based on the discussion at the workshops, institutional arrangements should be outlined to ensure effective coordination of the SEA processes both at the national and sub-national levels.

- Environmental authorities
- Health authorities

Priority 8: Developing capacities for transboundary consultations

8.1 Organizing workshop on transboundary consultations in SEA L

A workshop should introduce and explain the tasks related to transboundary consultations in SEA and it should illustrate a good practice in accordance with the Protocol on SEA using practical examples. Such event should ensure that the planning and environmental authorities have sufficient capacities to carry out transboundary consultations and to consider their outcomes in SEAs.

- Authorities responsible for preparation of plans and programmes
- Environmental authorities

HOW TO IMPLEMENT THE ACTION PLAN

The draft EA Law and initial Environmental Code assign the major role to coordinate the national SEA system to the national environmental authority (currently – the MoE), however for effective implementation of the Action Plan it is essential to involve also other key stakeholders, in particular the Ministry of Health and planning authorities. For this purpose, it is recommended to establish an inter-sectoral working group on SEA to be managed by the ‘coordinator’ representing the MoE. Besides governmental agencies the working group on SEA should also invite representatives of academic sector and CSOs.

The initial task of the working group is to prepare an implementation plan with specific steps and time-schedule to implement the activities proposed by the Action Plan (a possible format for the implementation plan is provided in Annex).

The working group shall be responsible for coordinating and supervising the implementation of the Action Plan. Working group meetings should be organized on a regular basis (e.g., every three months). Short annual monitoring reports should be prepared by the working group (see a proposed template in Annex).

ANNEX

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The implementation of the Action Plan should be managed by the inter-sectoral working group on SEA, which shall coordinate the implementation of the activities with the relevant partners. To streamline implementation of the Action Plan, it is recommended to prepare an implementation plan following a format proposed below:

Activity	Implementing period	Main responsibility for implementation	Potential partners for implementation	Comments
1.1 Organizing several high-level awareness raising events on SEA for the high-management (ministers and deputy-ministers) of sectoral ministries, and relevant parliamentary committees.	November 2021 – November 2022	MoE	UNECE, OSCE	
1.2 Preparing an information leaflet on the benefits of SEA	March – August 2022	MoE	UNECE, OSCE	The leaflet should be distributed to the participants of the events to be organized under 1.1
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MONITORING

In order to ensure monitoring of the Action Plan implementation, the inter-sectoral working group on SEA should prepare short annual monitoring reports. The monitoring report can follow the format proposed below and shall serve for the discussions with the relevant partners on necessary adjustments of the Action Plan.

Activity	Status of implementation	Proposed adjustments to the activity	Comments
1.1 Organizing several high-level awareness raising events on SEA for the high-management (ministers and deputy-ministers) of sectoral ministries, and relevant parliamentary committees.	One event was organized in 2021, next two are planned for the second half of 2022.	Extension of implementing period until December 2022.	
1.2 Preparing an information leaflet on the benefits of SEA	Leaflet prepared in July 2022		The activity has been fully completed and can be excluded from the Action plan.
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