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EU4Environment
Green Economy in Eastern Partner Countries

**Kick-off event: Pilot Strategic Environmental Assessment
of the draft Master Plan for the City of Ganja, Azerbaijan**

MEETING REPORT

25 July 2022, 11:00 – 13:00 Baku time / 9:00 – 11:00 CEST

Baku, Azerbaijan

Action implemented by:



**Kick-off event: Pilot Strategic Environmental Assessment
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1. Kick-off event objectives

The event has introduced the pilot SEA project for the master plan for the City of Ganja. It briefed on the status of and milestones for the development of this master plan while outlining the benefits and potential main constraints related to the implementation of the pilot SEA project.

The following outputs/strategic benefits have also been pursued:

- the event positioned the pilot project as the reference case example it is intended to be for the application of SEA to urban planning in Azerbaijan;
- it also provided visibility to the leadership of the national stakeholders in the implementation of the pilot.

2. Summary of the online kick-off event

The event was conducted online on 25 July 2022 with the participation of the country's State Committee on Urban Planning and Architecture (SCUPA) and the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources (including its regional branch in the city of Ganja), UNECE, international and national experts, Atkins engineering and design company in charge of the preparation of the EBRD's Green City Action Plan for Ganja, environmental NGOs.

The event was opened by the **Mr. Faig Mutallimov**, Head of the Ministry's Environmental Policy Division. He outlined legislative developments and progress of Azerbaijan towards aligning its environmental assessment legislation to international standards. He further underlined the value of technical and capacity-building assistance provided under the EU4Environment in the area of environment assessment, including the practical value of the pilot SEA project for stakeholders and expressed gratitude to the European Union and UNECE. The importance of close collaboration between the national and international experts and all the relevant stakeholders was further noted.

Then **Mr. Rainer Freund**, Program Manager, Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Azerbaijan, took the floor with his opening remarks. He noted the choice of the draft Master Plan of Ganja is very consistent with the European Union's commitment to support the development of a Green City Action Plan for Ganja under the auspices of EBRD (the EU is committing some 5 million EUR, under the E5P, to this action plan development). He noted the importance of adequate coordination between the draft master plan development process and the Green City Action Plan development. Both SEA and EIA had

proven their worth in the EU. He also called for Azerbaijan's finalization of the two draft regulations on SEA and on EIA developed under the EU4Environment in 2020. He also referred to the European Union's Economic and Investment Plan launched in 2021, including its flagship area on green cities.

EU4Environment Project Manager at UNECE, **Mr. Leonid Kalashnyk**, in his subsequent remarks highlighted the importance of the EU4Environment funded pilot SEA in Azerbaijan in terms of hands-on learning for the effective practical application of SEA-related provisions of national legislation. Applying SEA to urban planning helps bring nature back to cities, green investments and make infrastructure sustainable. He further noted the fact that several experts involved in the Green City Action Plan development were taking part in the kick-off event and that it will be important to seek synergies and areas of potential cooperation as the draft master plan continues to be developed, and its SEA is conducted with the organisations in charge of the Green City Action Plan.

The event today had two main substantive parts. After the opening, the first part focused on a presentation by **Ms. Shahnaz Badalova**, Deputy Head of Urban Planning and Spatial Development Department, SCUPA who spoke of the master plan being developed for the city of Ganja and the current status of this work. She also showed a projected zoning for the year 2041, explaining its elements to the audience and highlighting environmentally stressful areas. This was followed by a Q&A session including on the current situation of the city's transportation/traffic, waste and sewerage management in the context of the new master plan under preparation.

The second and final part of the event was dedicated to the presentation of the rationale for SEA in urban planning, and the pilot SEA project for the Ganja Master Plan. This included an overview of relevant international legal frameworks (EU's Directive on SEA and UNECE Protocol on SEA) and benefits in the application of SEA to urban plans presented by **Mr. Michal Musil**, international SEA consultant to UNECE. He particularly amplified on the benefits of applying SEA in urban planning given the following aspects of spatial/urban planning: environmental issues without clear spatial dimensions tending to be neglected; spatial planning tending to take into account only formal spatial limits/regulations; environmental data being often outdated; unavailability of specific expertise (e.g. biodiversity, air quality, hydrology); planning process taking too long/being complicated for non-specialists to participate with SEA being able to simplify and single out the key concerns and to communicate them to relevant stakeholders.

Following that, a focus zoomed in on the approach to conducting the SEA of the master plan for Ganja, as outlined by **Mr. Amin Mammadov**, national SEA consultant to UNECE. The presentation also included an introduction to the country's national legal framework for SEA, examples of the practical application of SEA and related challenges.

This part was also followed by an opportunity for questions and answers and some follow-on discussion. SCUPA pointed out the importance of the pilot SEA for shaping a new culture for

urban planning/master plan development including for spatial plans in liberated areas; the importance of aligning the timeframes of the master plan and the SEA. Experts to the Green City Action Plan for Ganja invited opportunities for further coordination and cooperation.

3. Conclusions

The kick-off event successfully introduced the pilot SEA project for the master plan of Ganja. It briefed on the status of and milestones for the master plan development and outlined the benefits and potential main constraints related to the pilot SEA project.



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Annex I

Kick-off event: Pilot Strategic Environmental Assessment of the draft Master Plan for the City of Ganja, Azerbaijan

AGENDA

25 July 2022, 11:00 – 13:00 Baku time / 9:00 – 11:00 CEST

Baku, Azerbaijan

This kick-off event will be delivered as a virtual event via Zoom. All registered participants will receive connection details to access the platform.

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25 July 2022

11:00 – 13:00 Baku time / 9:00 – 11:00 CEST

Within the framework of the European Union-funded “European Union for Environment” (EU4Environment) programme (2019 – 2022¹), UNECE is assisting Azerbaijan in strengthening its SEA system in line with the requirements of the Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) to the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context and of the European Union’s Directive on SEA (2001/42/EC).

Since April 2022, to further enhance capacities for practical application of SEA in Azerbaijan, at the request of the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources (MENR) and the State Committee on Urban Planning and Architecture (SCUPA), UNECE has supported the preparation of a pilot SEA project for the draft master plan under development for the City of Ganja. The pilot SEA will be implemented in parallel with the development of the master plan.

The pilot SEA will provide hands-on learning for applying SEA in urban planning (involving analytical and consultative tasks and, as needed, methodological coaching on the preparation and quality control of SEA related reports). It will further build national capacities on SEA procedures and raise the awareness of the SEA in urban planning while demonstrating its sector-specific benefits. This kick-off event will introduce the pilot to stakeholders and the public in Azerbaijan and beyond.

Meeting objectives, expected outputs and outcomes

- to introduce the pilot SEA project for the master plan for the City of Ganja;
- to brief on the status of and milestones for the development of this master plan;
- to outline the benefits and potential main constraints related to the implementation of the pilot SEA project.

The following outputs/strategic benefits will also be achieved:

- the event will position the pilot project as the reference case example it is intended to be for the application of SEA to urban planning in Azerbaijan;
- it will provide visibility to the leadership of the national stakeholders in the implementation of the pilot.

Participants

The meeting will gather up to 30 participants from MENR, SCUPA, a planning team tasked with the development of the master plan of the City of Ganja, Ganja city authorities, environmental NGOs as well as representatives of EBRD Green Cities.

¹ Currently, the programme is in the process of being extended until December 2023.

Practical Information

The kick-off event will be organized as a virtual event via Zoom. All registered participants will receive connection details to access the platform. Simultaneous interpretation in English and Azerbaijani 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, UNEP, UNIDO and the World Bank based on a budget of some EUR 20 million. The Action implementation period is 2019-2022.

For more information, please visit our website: www.eu4environment.org or contact: EU4Environment@oecd.org

For further information specifically on activities on SEA and transboundary EIA implemented by UNECE, please contact: Leonid.Kalashnyk@un.org

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AGENDA

Time (Baku)	Item
10:50 – 11:00	Connection testing
11:00 – 11:25	<p>Opening and welcome remarks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Faig Mutallimov, Head of the Environmental Policy Division, Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of the Republic of Azerbaijan (MENR) • Mr. Rainer Freund, Program Manager, Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Azerbaijan • Mr. Leonid Kalashnyk, EU4Environment Project Manager at the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)
11:25 – 12:10	<p>Introduction</p> <p>The master plan under development for the City of Ganja – Ms. Shahnaz Badalova, Deputy Head of Urban Planning and Spatial Development Department, State Committee on Urban Planning and Architecture of the Republic of Azerbaijan</p> <p>Q&A</p>
12:10 – 12:50	<p>Presentation of the pilot SEA project</p> <p>Rationale for application of SEA to urban planning documents – Mr. Michal Musil, International SEA Expert to UNECE</p> <p>Approach to conducting the SEA of the Master Plan for the City of Ganja – Mr. Amin Mammadov, National SEA Expert to UNECE</p> <p>Q&A followed by a discussion on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What added value is the pilot SEA expected to bring? - What are potential constraints and challenges to the application of SEA in this case?
12:50	Closure of the event



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Annex II

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LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Total participants: 26

Female participants: 9

#	Name	Job title	Email
1.	Mr Faig Mutallimov	Head of the Environmental Policy Division, Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of the Republic of Azerbaijan (MENR)	faig.mutallimov@eco.gov.az
2.	Ms Leyla Aliyeva	Head of the subdivision, Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of the Republic of Azerbaijan (MENR)	leyla.aliyeva87@gmail.com
3.	Ms Aynur Mutallimova	Head advisor of the Environmental Policy Division, Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of the Republic of Azerbaijan (MENR)	
4.	Mr Anar Almammadov	Head of the subdivision, Law and Human Resources Department, , Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of the Republic of Azerbaijan (MENR)	
5.	Ms Konul Ahmadsoy	Lead specialist, State Ecological Expertise Agency	konulahmadsoy@gmail.com
6.	Mr Natig Bayramov	Leading advisor of the Regional Ecology and Natural Resources Department No. 10 (Ganja)	
7.	Mr Eldar Salahov	Head of International Cooperation and Protocol Department, State Committee on Urban Planning and Architecture (SCUPA)	eldar.salahov@arxkom.gov.az
8.	Ms Shahnaz Badalova	Head of spatial planning sector, State Committee on Urban Planning and Architecture (SCUPA)	shahnaz.badalova@arxkom.gov.az
9.	Mr Tural Guliyev	State Committee on Urban Planning and Architecture (SCUPA)	
10.	Mr Rafiq Mirzeyev	Azerbaijan state main project institute	
11.	Mr Gilles Sabbaros	Architect	
12.	Mr Natig Fhead	Regional branch of Ministry of Ecology responsible for Ganja	

13.	Mr Tural N	Regional branch of Ministry of Ecology responsible for Ganja	
14.	Ms Leyli Mustafayeva	Vasconi representative	
15.	Ms Catalina Gallego Lopez	Project Manager and urban planner of Ganja Green City Action Plan	Catalina.GallegoLopez@atkinsglobal.com
16.	Mr John Barber	consultant working on the development of the Ganja Green City Action Plan	John.barber@atkinsacuity.com
17.	Mr Yashar Karimov	working on the Ganja Green City Action Plan	yashar.karimov@rec-caucasus.org
18.	Mr Aslan Shikhaliyev	Regional Environment Center for Caucasus Baku office staff	
19.	Ms Kubra Alekberova	Tamas, NGO	
20.	Ms Sudaba Mammadova	Tamas, NGO	
21.	Mr Rainer Freund	Program Manager, Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Azerbaijan	Rainer.FREUND@eeas.europa.eu
22.	Mr Leonid Kalashnyk	EU4Environment Project Manager, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)	leonid.kalashnyk@un.org
23.	Ms Elena Kashina	EU4Environment Project Management Assistant, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)	elena.kashina@un.org
24.	Mr Michal Musil	International SEA consultant, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)	michal.musil@integracons.com
25.	Mr Amin Mammadov	National SEA expert, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)	amigo.ihp@gmail.com
26.	Mr Turan Aliev	Conference interpreter (English/Azerbaijani)	turan.ali@interpreter.az