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Strategic Environmental Assessment for the Ganja Masterplan: Key findings of the draft SEA Report

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What is SEA?

SEA is a systematic & anticipatory process, undertaken to analyze environmental effects of proposed plans, programmes & other strategic actions and to integrate findings into decision-making

Key principles:

Undertaken by the authority responsible for the given Plan/Programme (e.g. sectorial, spatial)

Applied as early as possible in decision-making process

Focused on key issues

Evaluates reasonable range of alternatives

Provides appropriate opportunities for involvement of key stakeholders & the public

Carried out with appropriate, cost-effective methods & techniques of analysis

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International Legal Framework

- EU SEA Directive
- SEA Protocol to the Espoo Convention (Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context)

National legal Framework

National legal framework includes international conventions to which Azerbaijan has joined (Espoo and other relevant conventions)

- The Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan on Environmental Impact Assessment (with relevant amendments on SEA in 2019)
- Approval by the Cabinet of Ministers of the Regulation for Conducting Strategic Environmental Assessment in 2022

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Typical / Generic SEA Steps



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0. Screening: to determine if SEA is required for the specific plan or programme (P/P)

1. Scoping / Baseline Analysis

Determination of key issues that should be considered within the SEA process

Analysis of key issues i.e. past evolution, current situation and likely future evolution if the plan or programme is not implemented

2. Assessment of effects of the plan or programme on the key issues and development of mitigation measures (including monitoring scheme)

3. Compilation of the SEA Report and its submission for consultations with environmental and health authorities and the public

4. Consultations

5. Taking information generated in SEA into due account in planning and decision-making and explaining decision in publicly accountable manner

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SEA: What does it take?

- SEA runs in parallel with Planning (drafting of the Plan or Programme)
- SEA team of environmental specialists looks into the draft Plan/Programme and provide comments to planning (drafting) team about:
 - Potential impacts(risks) from the proposed actions to the environment, and
 - Measures to prevent, mitigate, and minimize identified risks
 - Measures to enhance likely positive effects
- SEA team put together Environmental Report summarizing its findings and recommendations
- Planning institution takes the SEA findings (Environmental Report) into consideration when finalizing and approving the draft Plan or Programme

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Pilot SEA project: milestones

- The pilot SEA was preceded by two SEA trainings for urban planners and other stakeholders in 2021
- Kicked-off in July 2022
- New significant changes to the draft master plan under development made by Azerbaijan in fall 2022
- SEA team: a group of national experts and one international expert established in October 2022

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Pilot SEA project: milestones (cont'd)

- Draft and final Scoping Report prepared in 2023 incl. inputs from the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources
- The pilot SEA is in its concluding phase: a draft SEA report is currently being finalized by a team of national experts and guidance from the international expert; to be followed by public hearing and finalization of the SEA Report before the end of 2023.

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SEA for the Ganja Masterplan

SEA team

Amin Mammadov –
Project Coordinator



Rashad Gasimov –
Engineering infrastructure (CIS)



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SEA for the Ganja Masterplan

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Environmental situation



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SEA for the Ganja Masterplan

SEA team

Shukran Jumayeva –
Public health



Gular Adigozalzada –
Social and economic development

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SEA for the Ganja Masterplan

The scoping report was initially prepared based on the current situation report prepared by Azerbaijan State Design Institute by the request of the State Urban Planning and Architecture Committee (SAC). The scoping report analyzes the previous master plan of Ganja prepared by Azerbaijan State Design Institute and data on the current situation of the city, including reviewing of its ecological aspects by experts. The scoping report served as a reference for the preparation of the next major SEA report.

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Environmental situation

Climate, air quality, soil resources, natural and anthropogenic landscape were analyzed by an environmental expert. Based on the analysis, the risks of the future activities covered in the Master Plan for the environment and natural resources were assessed by the expert. As a result, the following recommendations are made:

- Rational use of resources, taking into account climate processes occurring in the country as a whole, as well as anthropogenic factors and urban development.
- Also, taking into account the factors that may affect the air quality due to the increase in the number of vehicles due to the urban development, the industrial development, the responsibilities of the local office of MENR on air quality management as well as the local executive authorities have been defined.

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Environmental situation (cont'd)

- Proposals for the rational use of water resources, taking into account the reduction of water resources as a result of climate change and other anthropogenic factors and the effects on water quality, have been presented. In order to prevent decades-old problems in the water supply system from causing water losses, it has been proposed that the agencies responsible for water supply take necessary measures to prevent these losses.
- The current situation of land resources has been analyzed and the potential opportunities related to greening of the city further have been assessed. Areas suitable for greening were analyzed.
- Natural and anthropogenic landscape - in parallel with the proposal of future development areas for the city in the plan, the effects on the landscape were analyzed and risks were taken into account.

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Biodiversity

Biodiversity resources were also analyzed by the biodiversity specialist, both in the urban administrative area of Ganja and in the regional context. Based on this, the following suggestions were made:

- Draft development strategies of Goygol State Reserve and other protected areas around the city at the national and local levels
- Taking measures at the local level to prevent the negative effects of urban development on biodiversity

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Environmental management

An expert on environmental management evaluated the current situation on environmental and natural resource management and prepared proposals accordingly.

- Future actions on solid waste management related to the urban development were analyzed in line with the directions of the strategies adopted by the government at the national level.
- Taking into account the growth of the population, relevant recommendations on the use of household waste, including its reuse, have been made.
- The historical and cultural heritage of the city was also analyzed. The proposals on the approaches required for the protection of cultural heritage and the potential contribution of historical-cultural heritage to the development of tourism potential of the city are presented.

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Social and economic issues

Macro-economic parameters of Ganja were analyzed by an expert on socio-economic issues. For this, Ganja's historically developed industrial and other economic sectors and their role in the urban development were assessed. As a result, the following suggestions were made:

- Development of areas related to services, tourism, high technologies in the socio-economic development of the city.
- Also researching and evaluating the investment potential and developing relevant concepts for attracting investors.
- In this regard, the environmental aspects of the economic development of the city were assessed. Measures for the development of areas arising from the "green economy" concept, which is widely used globally, were considered here.

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Engineering infrastructure

The infrastructure specialist analyzed the current situation of the engineering infrastructure in the city and provided appropriate recommendations for future infrastructure development using GIS maps.

- Water, gas, electricity supply and communication lines, which play an important role in the urban development, as well as the development of the road-transport network and the potential effects on the environment as a result of this development have been assessed. As a result, mitigation measures were recommended along with other experts.

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Public health

- Improving access to healthy food is needed to promote healthy nutrition
- Works on increasing awareness of healthy nutrition should be carried out
- In order to improve the mobility of the population, large parks and green areas should be expanded
- By increasing the number of medical institutions, access to health services for persons with physical disabilities and vulnerable groups of the population should be improved

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Urban heat island



Yanvar 2021

Fevral 2021

Mart 2021



April 2021

May 2021

İlyun 2021



İyul 2021

Avqust 2021

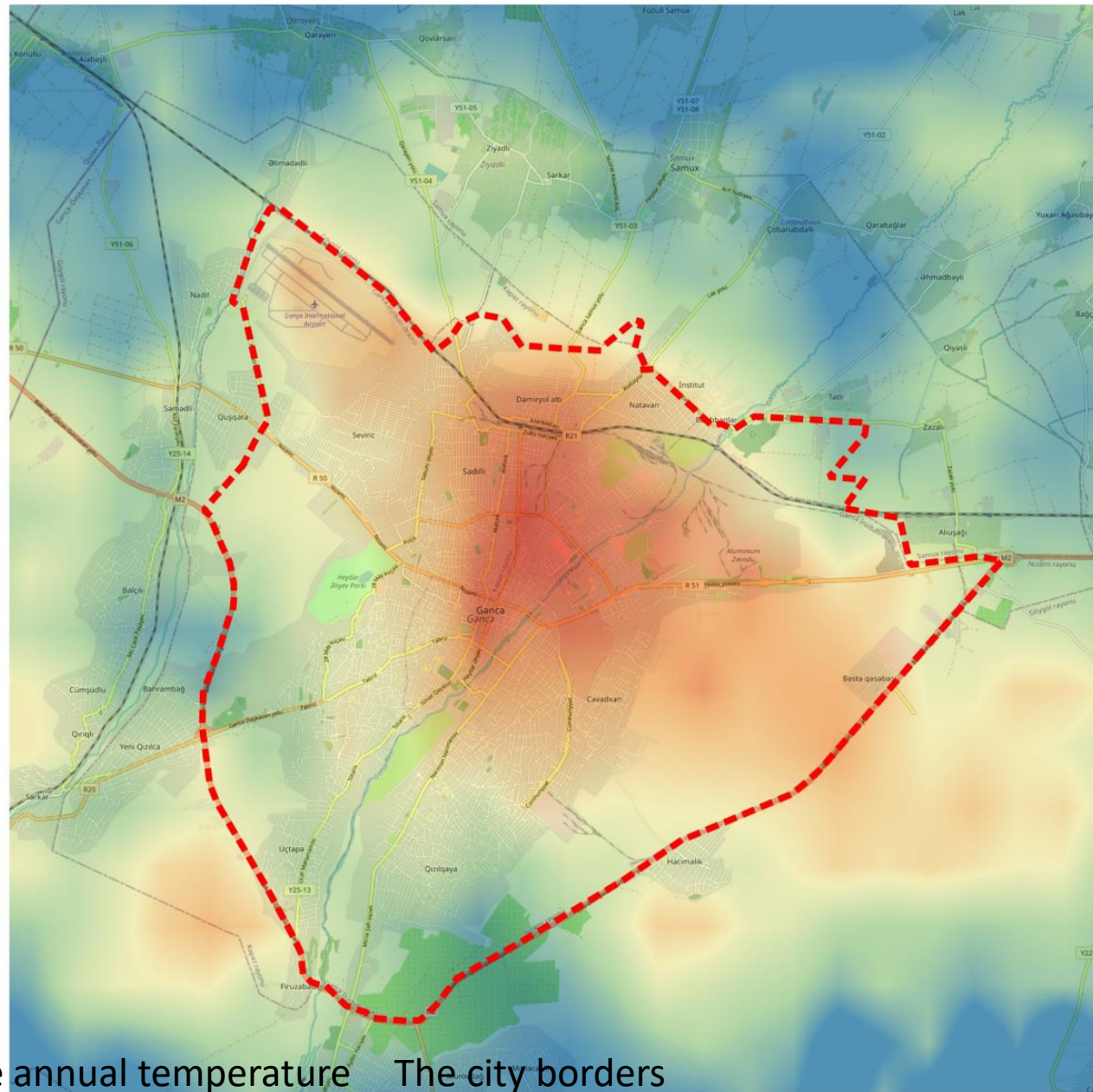
Sentyabr 2021



Oktyabr 2021

Noyabr 2021

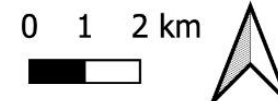
Dekabr 2021



Average annual temperature The city borders



Şəhərin sərhədi





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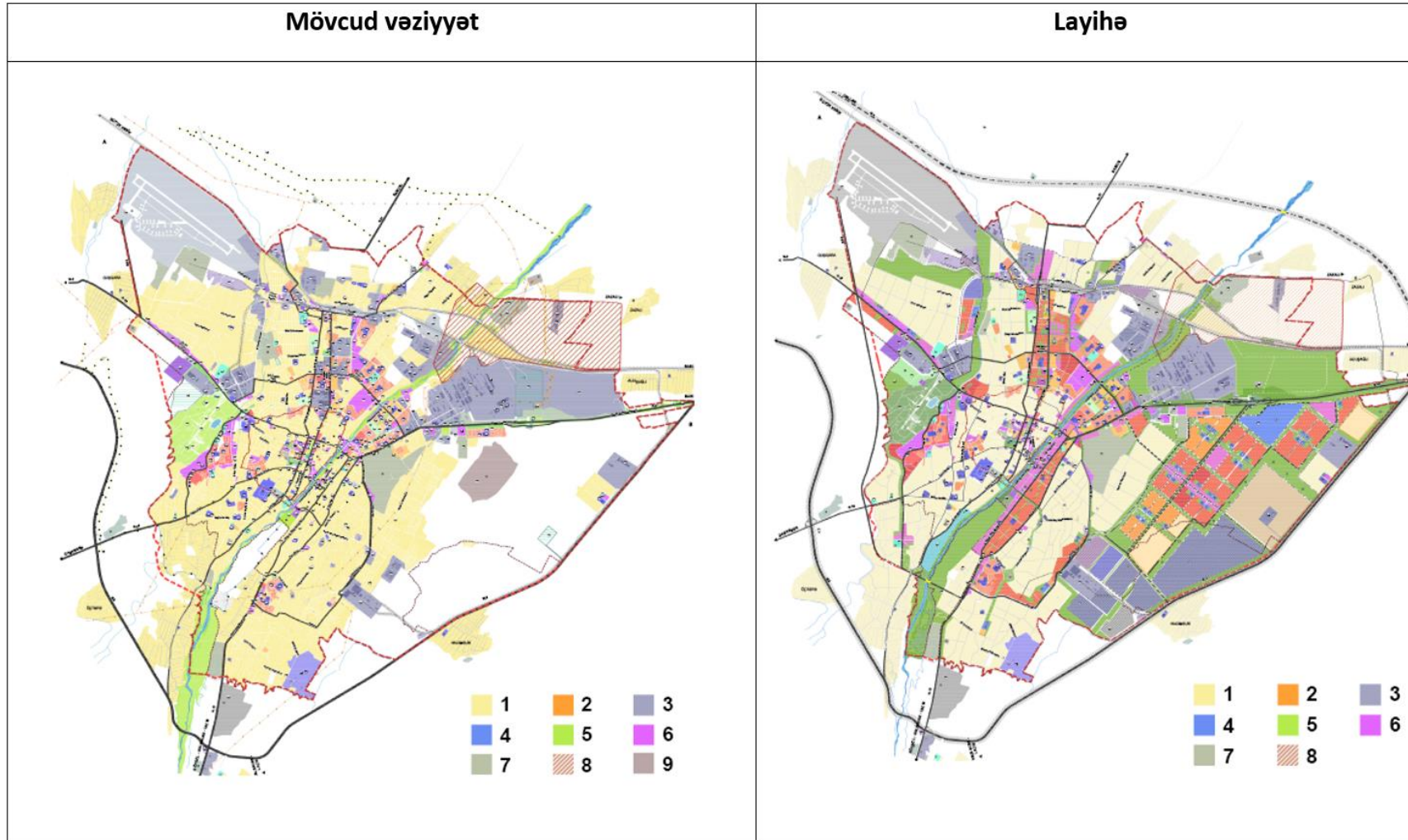
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Current situation

Project



1- Private houses with courtyards, 2- multi-apartment residential buildings, 3- Industrial enterprises, 4- Educational institutions, 5- Gardens, parks and alleys, 6- Public-business zones, 7- Military and other regime zones, 8- State Historical-Cultural Reserve, 9- The area of landfills where household waste is collected