May 2018

APPLICATION OF THE PROTOCOL ON STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT:
MANUAL FOR TRAINERS

DISCLAIMER

This document *Application of the Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment: Manual for Trainers* (the Manual) was prepared by consultants to the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) secretariat to the Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment to the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context in consultation with the secretariat and with funding from the European Union (EU) "Greening Economies in the Eastern Neighbourhood' (EaP GREEN)" project. The views expressed herein can in no way be taken to reflect the official opinion of the EU, UNECE or the other EaP GREEN implementing organisations.

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ABOUT THE EAP GREEN PROJECT

In the period 2013 – April 2018, the European Union (EU) "Greening Economies in the Eastern Neighbourhood" (EaP GREEN) project assisted six countries of the EU Eastern Neighbourhood Partnership - Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine - in progressing faster towards a green economy. The project promoted decoupling of economic growth from environmental degradation, with a view to attaining higher productivity and competitiveness, better natural capital management, enhanced environmental quality of life, and more resilient economies.

More specifically, the EaP GREEN project aimed to:

- Mainstream sustainable consumption and production into national development plans, legislation and regulatory frameworks with a view to providing a sound legal basis for future policy development in line with the regional and international agreements and processes and consistent with existing EU "acquis" in the relevant policy areas;
- Promote the use of strategic environmental assessment (SEA) and environmental impact assessment (EIA) as essential planning tools for environmentally sustainable economic development; and
- Achieve a shift to a green economy through the adoption of sustainable consumption and production practices in selected economic sectors (manufacturing, agriculture, construction, etc.).
- The EaP GREEN was structured around three components:

- Governance and financing tools;
- SEA and EIA; and
- Demonstration projects.

UNECE supported the participating countries in developing and applying national SEA legislation and systems in accordance with the provisions of the Protocol on SEA to the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo Convention) and the EU SEA Directive. The related activities were linked to the work-plans under the Convention and the Protocol, and contributed to promoting the ratification and implementation of the Protocol on SEA. The key focus of UNECE's assistance was on:

1. **Revision of the existing national regulatory and legislative frameworks**, including reviews of SEA and, as appropriate, of transboundary EIA legislation, drafting of SEA legislation; awareness raising events to support the adoption of the legislation; and sub-regional overview;

2. **Capacity building on SEA (and transboundary EIA) procedures**, including national and sub-national level training on SEA, development of national guidance documents, sub-regional events for coordination and experience-sharing, and pilot SEAs; and

3. **Strengthening of administrative capacities and clarifying the roles of different stakeholders in SEA and transboundary EIA.**

ABOUT THE UNECE PROTOCOL ON STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (SEA)

The Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) was negotiated under the 1991 UNECE Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (the Espoo Convention) to extend the principles and the scope of the Convention to plans and programmes, and, to the extent appropriate, to policies and legislation. The Protocol is, however, a legally distinct instrument[1]. The Protocol on SEA was signed in Kiev in 2003 and entered into force on 11 July 2010. The Protocol is an international agreement that provides for legal obligations and a procedural framework for the implementation of SEA to countries that are Parties to it[2] The Protocol on SEA is open to all member States of the United Nations.

The Protocol on SEA augments the Espoo Convention by ensuring that Parties integrate environmental, including health, considerations into their plans and programmes at early stages of planning, setting also a non-mandatory framework for the assessment of policies and legislation. The Protocol ensures that both environmental and health authorities are informed and consulted on the plan or programme. In addition, it provides for extensive public participation in the planning and decision-making processes. Unlike the Espoo Convention, which applies only to planned activities that are likely to cause significant adverse impact across the national frontiers, the Protocol applies mainly to domestic plans and programmes. Should transboundary effects be likely, however, the Protocol on SEA (Article 10) provides also for transboundary consultations with potentially affected Party or Parties.

The Protocol on SEA is considered by its Parties as a key tool for sustainable development: its implementation is expected to assist countries in achieving Sustainable Development Goals and their targets as set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development[3]. The Protocol has also proved to be useful for addressing climate change.

More information about the Protocol on SEA can be found on the UNECE website: https://www.unece.org/env/eia/sea_protocol.html.

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[1] This means that a country can join the Protocol on SEA without being a Party to the Espoo Convention.

[2] For up to date information on the state of ratification of the Protocol, please see: https://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=XXVII-4-b&chapter=27&clang=_en

[3] General Assembly resolution 70/1.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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[4] Available at: http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=27379.
[5] Available at: http://www.ecranetwork.org/Files/ToT_training_manual.pdf.

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