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Umwelt
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UNECE



Event Report

Development of national strategic environmental assessment system (SEA) in Tajikistan

Final workshop



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Dushanbe, Tajikistan



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1. Background

The overall objective of the activity is to support Tajikistan in its efforts for joining the Espoo Convention and its Protocol on SEA, by reviewing national regulatory and legislative frameworks for environmental assessment systems and making recommendations to the Government on how to align these frameworks with the Espoo Convention and its Protocol. In addition, the project aims to improve awareness of EIA and SEA benefits among the environmental and sectoral authorities, developers and EIA/SEA consultants, relevant NGOs and academia.

The activities are aimed to develop efficient mitigation measures to reduce anticipated negative environmental impact. Furthermore, in relation to recent developments in the region, notably the Belt and Road Initiative, for which all Central Asian countries are recipient, EIA and SEA become highly relevant tools to promote green and sustainable infrastructure.

Final workshop “Development of national strategic environmental assessment system (SEA) in Tajikistan” was held on January 18, 2019, in Dushanbe, Tajikistan. It was organized by the UNECE in cooperation with the Committee on Environmental Protection under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan and the branch office of the CAREC in Dushanbe. The workshop gathered relevant governmental stakeholders at the decision-making level, national experts from the environmental authorities as well as representatives of international organizations, business, public associations and academia.

2. Workshop objectives

The aim of the workshop is to support development of modern SEA system in Tajikistan, to raise awareness of the representatives of environmental and planning authorities about the SEA benefits, to share the best practices of SEA application in the UNECE region and to facilitate a discussion on the way forward to development of modern SEA system in Tajikistan.

3. Approach and methodology

The workshop included substantive blocks regarding: results of the reviews of the national environmental impact assessment system via-a-vis the provisions of the Espoo Convention and SEA Protocol; information about EIA and SEA legislative reform in other countries under UNECE assistance; concept of environmental assessment and domestic legal framework in Tajikistan in the light of international

standards; legal and administrative framework for environmental impact assessment in Tajikistan in light with the provisions of the Protocol on SEA and other international standards; public participation in Tajikistan in the light with the provisions of the Protocol on SEA and other international standards.

Each block included detailed presentations by Mr. Jerzy or Mr. Andriy Andrushevych and interactive discussion. The discussion served multiple purposes, including better understanding by the participants of the issue, clarification of the reviews conclusions and, where relevant, gaps and needs to align national system to international standards. The workshop was held in English and Russian, with interpretation.

4. Summary of the Workshop

Mr. Dz. Khalilov, EIA and SEA expert, Committee of Environment Protection under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan, opened the meeting. He emphasized the role of environmental assessment procedures for enhancing environmental and health protection in Tajikistan, and – on behalf of the Committee – expressed his gratitude to the UNECE secretariat to the Espoo Convention for such a large-scale support provided. He noted the high efficiency of the participation of international experts at the first two-day seminar in November and expressed hope for productive work in the upcoming seminar.

Ms Zarina Nazarzoda, Deputy Chairman of the Committee on Environmental Protection under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan, welcomed the participants and international specialists. She stressed out that the Government of Tajikistan tries to establish the national legislative framework on SEA and EIA. She wished productive work during the seminar.

Mr. Jerzy Jendroška, UNECE international key legal expert, also addressed the participants with a welcoming speech. He presented the concept and the role of environmental assessment under international standards as well as the role of EIA and SEA reviews and overview of the legislative reforms. As a part of event he spoke about the legislative EIA/SEA reforms in EaP Green and Central Asian countries to provide participants with an example of the development of these systems in other countries. The recommendation of Mr. Jerzy Jendroška on the need to implement SEA in the Republic of Tajikistan in accordance with the Protocol on SEA and other international standards should be also noted. During the discussion with the participants of the seminar Mr. Jerzy Jendroška expressed his desire to help in further work on SEA issues, namely on the issue of public awareness in the Republic of Tajikistan.

Mr. Andriy Andrusevych, UNECE international legal consultant, welcoming the participants, he made a detailed presentation on the review of EIA and sea systems, noting the special importance of international standards, the role of the UN, as well as international and national experts. He thoroughly introduced to the participants the methodology and the results of the EIA and SEA system reviews and the recommendations according to the results. Mr. Andrusevych, discussing the main issues with the participants of the seminar, expressed hope for the adoption of common decisions based on the conclusions and recommendations and the implementation of further work to comply with international standards.

Mr. Sh. Mirazizov, scientist from Centre of water, thanked the international experts for the informative presentations and noted the importance of their recommendations for the development of environmental protection in the country. He noted the importance of public participation in the implementation of construction projects that have an impact on the environment. Public opinion is of particular importance, as the public, having some experience better knows the advantages and disadvantages of the construction of various types of structures. He also noted the importance of developing environmental awareness and methods of public awareness in rural areas.

The participants showed an increased interest in the presentation of Mr. Jerzy Jendrośka and Mr. Andriy Andrusevych and asked many questions about the cases and the SEA and EIA practice in general. The participants were, in particular, interested in whether the division of EIA and expertise in Tajikistan complies with international standards, what shortcomings experts believe exist in the implementation of environmental assessment, how to increase the staff for the expertise, whether all objects are subject to EIA and SEA in accordance with international standards. They also clarified some of the recommendations provided by international experts.

In conclusion, Mr. Dz. Khalilov summarized the key points discussed during the workshop and expressed thanks to all participants.

Mr. Dz. Khalilov thanked all participants for their active work and expressed his agreement with the statements of international experts and noted that during the development of the Environmental code in Tajikistan all the recommendations of international experts will be taken into account. He thanked the experts for their thorough work, participation and constructive recommendations and expressed hope for further cooperation.



5. Workshop conclusions

The following conclusions can be summarized from the discussions held during the event:

1. The reviews on EIA and SEA systems were fully accepted, including the conclusions regarding main gaps in national SEA and EIA vis-à-vis the Espoo Convention and the Protocol on SEA.
2. The participants agreed on the following priorities for further development of SEA and EIA systems in Tajikistan:
 - Elimination of conceptual differences and implementation of an integrated system of environmental assessment in accordance with the Espoo Convention and the Protocol on SEA;
 - Elimination of uncertainties, contradictions and gaps in the legislative regulation in the field of EIA/EE;
 - Ensuring public participation in the EIA/SEA process;
 - The optimization procedure for different types of activities (including facilitation);
 - Considering the adoption of a framework law on strategic environmental assessment in Tajikistan;
 - The system of development and approval of strategic documents in the field of sectoral or regional development, in particular, and especially state programs and strategies, requires the introduction of new special requirements for SEA;
 - The system of development of strategic documents in the field of territorial planning (documentation on planning of territories, General plans of settlements, etc.) requires changes;
 - Improving the human resources capacity on SEA; and establishing new sector (unit) on SEA/EIA after the adoption of the Law;
 - Financial resources for conducting SEA and EIA have to be identified;
 - Continuing awareness raising on SEA among governmental institutions and public;
 - Involvement of, with the support of UNECE, international experts in the process of developing the environmental code of the Republic of Tajikistan in terms of SEA.