



**Workshop to strengthen capacity for the  
development of EIA and SEA systems in  
Uzbekistan, with sharing of experiences from  
other countries in the implementation of the  
Espoo Convention and in particular its Protocol on  
SEA**

**Workshop report**

November 2011



## Content:

1. Background
2. Workshop objectives
3. Training approach and methodology
4. Summary of the training outcomes
5. Workshop conclusions
6. Workshop evaluation
7. Acknowledgment

Annex 1: Workshop agenda

## 1. Background

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) offers a promising methodology to promote and improve planning processes in general and the integration of environmental aspects into policies, plans and programmes, in particular. SEA has been introduced as an obligatory instrument in many industrialized countries and is meeting with growing interest in developing and transition countries too.

SEA provides support to achieve the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), agreed to by all the world's countries and the world's leading development institutions at the UN General Assembly in 2000. MDG 7 on Environmental Sustainability resolves "to integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse loss of environmental resources".

UNECE secretariat to Espoo Convention, GEF/UNDP project for "Strengthening National Capacity in Rio Convention Implementation through Targeted Institutional Strengthening and Professional Development" and UNDP Uzbekistan jointly organized a training workshop "to strengthen capacity for the development of EIA and SEA systems in Uzbekistan, with sharing of experiences from other countries in the implementation of the Espoo Convention and in particular its Protocol on SEA" on 9- 12 November 2011, in Tashkent Uzbekistan.

The workshop was funded by UNDP Uzbekistan with co-funding from the UNECE-GIZ Programme "Regional Dialogue and Cooperation on Water Resources Management", which aims to empower the countries of Central Asia – Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan – to develop and implement mutually acceptable, long-term solutions to improve cooperation on transboundary water resources. In particular, the trainers for the workshop were financed by the UNECE-GIZ Programme.

## 2. Workshop objectives

The workshop aimed to enhance understanding of and strengthen capacity for the implementation of the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context, and in particular the Convention's Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), in Uzbekistan. It further aimed to improve participants understanding of the benefits of and possibilities for using SEA as a tool in strategic decision making. The workshop demonstrated how SEA can be applied to plans and programmes on diverse topics with differing dimensions and local conditions and showed to participants how to independently apply SEA methodology in their daily work.

Specific objectives of the workshop were:

- To introduce participants the concept and use of SEA and illustrate the process through a (hypothetical) case study;
- To relate the lessons learnt from the case study to the context in the participants;
- To illustrate possible ways for effective SEA implementation following the provisions of the UNECE SEA Protocol;

- To provide participants with examples of tackling specific environmental issues, for example climate change, within SEA;
- To obtain and discuss recommendations on future actions for improving the use of SEA methodology in Uzbekistan.

The workshop brought together 24 experts from Uzbek ministries, State committees, regional authorities and other organizations to discuss opportunities for using strategic environmental assessment (SEA) especially in domestic land-use and sectoral planning in Uzbekistan.

The agenda included one-day introductory part, where the Espoo Convention, its Protocol on SEA and the relevant legislation on environmental assessment in Uzbekistan were presented and discussed; two-day practice-oriented training on SEA using Harvard case method; and a concluding one-day discussions on the opportunities and barriers to future development of SEA system in Uzbekistan (for details, please see the training agenda in Annex 1 of this report).

### 3. Training approach and methodology

The training was largely based on SEA training manual which has been developed by the German Technical Cooperation (GTZ/InWEnt). This training package deploys innovative methods by intensively exploiting opportunities for action learning and group work.

In order to promote principles of the UNECE SEA Protocol and to customize the training to the context of Uzbekistan, a new case study exploring different aspects of planned large-scale industrial zone for exploration and processing of natural gas in a desert setting was developed. The case of 'Planning of Lars Special Economic Zone in country Laran' was based on a real-life case – it used materials and experience gained from a previous UNDP-funded SEA for a large industrial zone for processing of natural gas in the area of Persian Gulf.

The training manual and slides were modified to encourage participants to find possible practical solution for the tasks on designing an SEA process for this case through the following exercises:

- a. Determining whether the proposed plan requires an SEA
- b. Determine the key issues and scope of assessment
- c. Analyzing the baseline trends
- d. Assessing cumulative impacts of proposed development activities and propose their optimization
- e. Using effective means of participation
- f. Finding linkages between programme preparation and SEA<sup>1</sup>
- g. Ensuring reflection of SEA results in decision-making as well as an adequate management and monitoring system for implementation
- h. Managing SEA effectively within budgetary and time constraints

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<sup>1</sup> This session was repeated once again at the end of the training in order to allow the participants to use the information and knowledge gained during the previous training's sessions.

The training was given using a typical case work methodology of the Harvard Business School - i.e. the solving the case was a center-piece that set the stage for out presenting the theory and trainers' practical tips and comments and the slides were used only when needed. This allowed the trainers to flexibly respond to participants' perspectives and questions rather than overloading them with information on some 'ideal practice'. Participants worked either through individual assignments or in small groups which were established at the beginning and continued during the whole training.

The case work was accompanied by two exercises that engaged participants in more general discussions on key concerns about introduction of SEA in Uzbekistan:

- Initial corner-game on constrains to undertaking SEA in Uzbekistan which set the scene for the entire training
- 'Polar opposites' exercise on the role of SEA in decision-making in Uzbekistan which forced them to take position on whether or not the SEA should have binding outcomes on decision-making.

#### Plenary discussions



#### Working groups (SEA teams)



#### Individual work



#### Presenting opposing opinions



#### 4. *Summary of the training outcomes*

As mentioned above, each training item consisted of a very short introduction to the topic and case work, followed by either individual or group work on the assigned task, presentations of the results and facilitated wrap-up discussion.

The presented results indicated possible solutions and viewpoints that reflected personal experiences of participating experts. The following points can be concluded from the discussions within the training:

##### ***Determining whether SEA is needed for the proposed plan (screening)***

SEA screening should be done as soon as possible in the elaboration of the plan or programme, ideally already in the stage of a 'plan idea'.

Such determination should be the responsibility of the proponent. The relevant environmental authorities (e.g. GoskomPriroda) should have a supervisory role and power to prescribe SEA if the proponent of the plan or programme fails to appropriately conduct screening.

##### ***Determining the scope of the SEA (scoping)***

Those conducting SEA should consult the proponent, the relevant environmental authorities (GoskomPriroda), Ministry of Health, potentially affected municipalities and authorities in charge of cultural heritage when determining the priority environmental issues that should be addressed within the SEA.

It is a good idea to consult the leaders of relevant ministries/agencies when determining the key environmental concerns because SEA should not be carried out as an expert-driven process. Scoping should be flexible and those conducting SEA can skip or add new issues as their understanding of the impacts of the plan and programme unfolds. Scoping should be conducted in close collaboration with the planning team and it can provide useful information about possible risks that may be considered during the elaboration of the plan or programme.

##### ***Analysis of the baseline trends.***

Those who work for the state authorities should be easily able to access the relevant data, but external consultants may face difficulties in this regard. The environmental information should be relatively well accessible but access to the overall background socio-economic data – and especially data about future projects or developments that would be needed for future baseline projections – may not be available or restrained.

It was therefore highly recommended that those conducting SEA closely collaborate with the planning team which may have access to various sources of background data. Close collaboration with the planning team also enables the planning team to utilize any information about potential environmental constraints (e.g. worsening quality of ground waters) during the preparation of the plan or programme.

### ***Assessment of cumulative impacts of proposed activities and propose their optimizing.***

Most participants were eager to learn the methodological tools for predicting the impacts, and the workshop featured lively discussion about appropriateness of various qualitative tools (e.g. expert judgments, matrices, simple spatial analyses) and quantitative tools (modeling) in Uzbek decision-making context.

The prevailing viewpoint at the end was that the expert judgments by leading professionals in the field could provide sufficient basis for discussion with the planners. Such opinions can also add new information (e.g. about possible risk) to those identified during the scoping stage. The assessment of cumulative impacts should mainly facilitate presentation of the scale of the possible risks and problems and guide comparison of alternatives – it does not have to be a precise evaluation.

### ***Use effective means of consultations.***

Participants generally felt that SEA process should provide information for the ordinary public, even though the practice in the west indicates that SEA is mainly for organized public.

The rationale for this recommendation was that Uzbek citizen are keen to hear about the developments that may affect them and should have the right to be consulted in any decisions which may affect them or their livelihoods.

The participants mentioned that there are several good public participation projects in Uzbekistan that provide suitable example of communication methods that could be applicable also in SEA. Some participants only warned about problems with formal surveys and suggested that direct interviews may provide better opportunities for conducting consultations with the public concerned.

### ***Role of SEA in decision-making***

The overall conclusion was that the SEA should in the future become a formalized tool which is clearly embedded into decision-making systems through either legislative changes or administrative order or some regulations.

The participants remained split as to whether or not SEA should formulate binding statements that would have to be respected by the decision-makers.

## **5. Conclusions on**

The concluding discussion enabled the participants to debate their opinions on SEA implementation perspectives and on ways, and potential barriers to introduction of SEA in Uzbekistan.

This debate raised the following major points:

1. Time is ripe for initiating SEA implementation system in Uzbekistan. SEA could be financed as part of arrangements related to introduction of 'green economy' in Uzbekistan.

2. Aim of the SEA should be to introduce environmental issues to the planning at early stages. SEA should also facilitate close cooperation between relevant ministries and agencies on issues related to environmental protection.
3. Legislative basis offers sufficient opportunities for initial undertaking of SEA. Later it will be necessary to adopt few changes to the legal framework to make SEA an obligatory procedure. Legislative changes would be needed in the future to define issues such as:
  - who initiates SEA?
  - who finances SEA?
  - how will SEA and OVOS coordinated?
4. Legal changes however will not be sufficient to introduce SEA since the capacities are not there yet. SEA requires a dialogue between planning and environmental authorities and professionals. It is not obvious to what extent professional community of Uzbekistan is currently ready to adopt such dialectical approaches.
5. The main feature of the SEA that makes this procedure different from current practices in Uzbekistan is participatory approach that foresees involvement of environmental experts and authorities professionals in economic development planning in key sectors. At this time, all environment-related issues and the assessment process in Uzbekistan are exclusively managed within the GosKomPriroda competence.
6. It is necessary to establish cooperation between the planning professionals; to ensure participation of environmental professionals in the planning process at early stages; it is necessary to develop the mechanism for environmental-related issues to be promoted, and for expert cooperation in this field.
7. It will be necessary to carry out a pilot project to demonstrate SEA benefits and try out all methodological nuances.
8. SEA may be very relevant to railroad industry in Uzbekistan; other the industries might benefit from SEA introduction as well. Sector medium and long-term programs (up to the year 2012) could be subject to SEA in Uzbekistan; in particular, oil and gas extraction industry could be other priorities for SEA introduction.
9. During the pilot testing it will be necessary to analyze SEA costs and benefits and develop capacities for scaling up SEA application. One of the most important tasks will be to inform the decision-makers on the SEA potential and benefits. Change in the mentality of decision-makers could be achieved through trainings, especially trainings for high-level professionals and decision-makers.

## 6. Workshop evaluation

### Workshop evaluation (Results)

1. *Please, indicate how important and relevant was the workshop topic for you (mark: 1 – not important, 3 – very important)? Very important - **100%***
  
2. *Please, indicate how clear and understandable was the delivery of information for you (mark: 1 – absolutely not clear; 3 - absolutely clear )*

1	Absolutely unclear	0 %
2	Partially clear	12.5%
3	Absolutely clear	93.7%

### 3. *What, in your view, was the most useful at the training workshop?*

- Participation of the experts from various agencies and sectors;
- Work in groups and diverse assignments, which reinforce the information obtained on presentations; the presentation expanded the outlook, complemented knowledge, handouts were essential;
- The idea of SEA;
- Learning SEA, learning Espo Convention;
- Description of the concept, goal and practice of SEA compilation;
- Introduction to the experience of other countries, measures and methods for promoting SEA of programs and plans;
- Dialogues, acquisition of knowledge;
- Understood what is SEA, its mechanism, which enables to consider environmental problems and the public opinion in the beginning of the process;
- Systemic analysis of the experience related to implementation of SEA accumulated in other countries and its adaptation in the context of Uzbekistan as well as incorporating global experience;
- Acquisition of important and detailed information on SEA;
- The necessity for development of SEA in Uzbekistan became clear. The assessment of the prospects of implementation of this system;
- Communication, knowledge, case studies, examples, expansion of the outlook, International experience of SEA application, and its advantages.

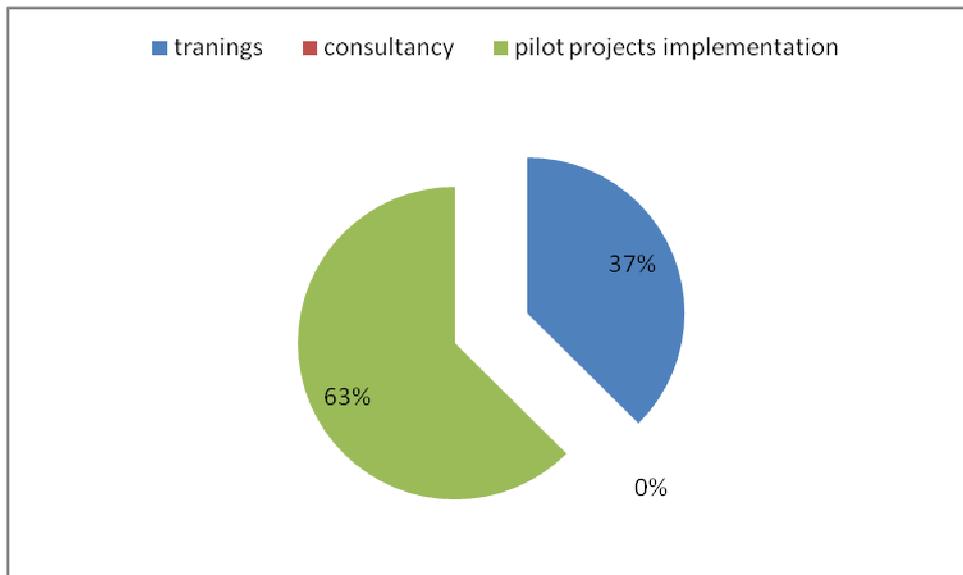
**4. Which topics you believe it is essential to conduct additional training for you and your colleagues on (please, underline as appropriate)?**

Strategic planning	- 50 %
SEA	- 25 %
EIA	- 0 %
Link between Economics and Environment	- 62.5 %
Engagement of the public in the strategic planning process (including SEA)	- 25 %

Your option:

- Review of SEA application in countries with best practices;
- Engaging the public in the SEA process;
- How all opinion can be taken into account?

**5. What forms of support are required for implementation of EIA and SEA?**



## 6. *What are your proposals to improve delivery of similar workshops?*

- Engagement of decision-makers and representatives from the relevant Research Institutions into the training;
- Ensure involvement of the decisionmakers. Implementation of the pilot project based on best practice of a region or of the country is needed;
- Split the training workshop into two levels: for executors and decisionmakers;
- Continue training, to learn the experience of other countries, where it is applicable;
- Review environmental aspects in the transboundary context;
- Ensure maximum cooperation among environmental ministries and agencies;
- Conduct such workshops more often;
- Conduct trainings with involvement of representatives of the Cabinet of Ministers of Uzbekistan and superior bodies;
- Everything is great and continue in the same manner;
- Develop voluminous handouts, including video materials;
- Workshop was successful and notably. It is important to organize similar practical workshops;
- Organization of training workshop in miscellaneous regions with involvement of the representatives of local khokimiats, environmentalists, ministers, and other stakeholders;
- Organization of trainings for developers of EIA and SEA.

## 7. Acknowledgements

The workshop was jointly prepared by Laura Leino (UNECE) and Fayzulla Salakhuddinov (UNDP Uzbekistan).

The original training methodology was developed by a consultant team consisting of Jiri Dusik, Alfred Eberhardt and Felipe Perez supported by Harald Lossack, Axel Olearius (GTZ) and Jan-Peter Schemmel (GTZ). The set of PowerPoint slides for this particular training was modified by Jiri Dusik (Integra Consulting Ltd.) who integrated also comments provided by Laura Leino (UNECE). The case study on 'Lars Special Economic Zone' was prepared by Jiri Dusik (Integra Consulting Ltd.).

The first day of the training was facilitated by Laura Leino (UNECE), the rest of the workshop was conducted by Jiri Dusik (Integra Consulting Ltd.) and Olena Borysova (Ecoline Environmental Assessment Centre).

## Annex 1: Workshop agenda

### Day 1: 09.11.2011

09.00	<b>Opening the workshop</b> <i>Ms. Koroleva, State Committee for Nature Protection of Uzbekistan</i> <i>Laura Leino, secretariat to Espoo Convention, UNECE</i>
09.10	<b>Introduction and workshop objectives</b> Introduction to training Practical information Self-introduction of participants <i>Laura Leino and Jiri Dusik, Integra Consulting Ltd.</i>
09.40	<b>Introduction to the Espoo Convention and to its Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment</b> <i>Laura Leino, secretariat to Espoo Convention, UNECE</i>
10.30	Coffee/Tea
11.00	<b>Introduction to SEA</b> Basic information Evolution of SEA <i>Jiri Dusik</i>
12.00	Lunch
13.00	<b>Comparing SEA Protocol with OVOS/SER system in CIS countries</b> <i>Olena Borysova</i>
13.30	<b>Evolution and current status of SEA and EIA in Uzbekistan – introduction</b> <i>Ms. Koroleva</i>
14.00	<b>Similarities and differences of SEA Protocol with the current legal framework for OVOS/SER in Uzbekistan (part 1)</b> Facilitated discussion <i>Facilitated by Ms. Koroleva and Fayzulla Salakhuddinov</i>
14.30	Coffee/Tea
15.00	<b>Introduction to the assignment and the case material</b> <i>Jiri Dusik</i>
15.30	<b>Screening (Determining whether SEA is needed)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction</li> <li>• Group work</li> <li>• Presentations, Wrap-up &amp; Discussion</li> </ul>
17.00	Recap and end of the Day 1

### Day 2: 10.11.2010

09.00	<b>Determine the right issues and scope of the assessment</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group work</li> <li>• Presentations, Wrap-up &amp; Discussion</li> </ul>
10.30	Coffee/Tea
11.00	<b>Analyze the baseline trends</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction</li> <li>• Group work</li> <li>• Presentations, Wrap-up &amp; Discussion</li> </ul>
12.00	Lunch
13.00	<b>Analyze proposed development priorities and their alternatives</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction, followed by short discussion</li> </ul> <b>Assess cumulative impacts of proposed activities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction</li> <li>• Group work</li> <li>• Presentations, Wrap-up &amp; Discussion</li> </ul>
15.30	Coffee/Tea
16.00 – 17.00	<b>Ensure sufficient management and monitoring during implementation of the PP</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction, followed by short discussion</li> </ul> <b>Preparation of the SEA Report</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction, followed by short discussion</li> </ul>
17.00	Recap and end of the Day 2

**Day 3: 11.11.2011**

09.00	<b>Link programme preparation with SEA</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction</li> <li>• Group work</li> <li>• Presentations, Wrap-up &amp; Discussion</li> </ul>
10.30	Coffee/Tea
11.00	<b>Use effective means of participation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction</li> <li>• Group work</li> <li>• Presentations, Wrap-up &amp; Discussion</li> </ul>
12.30	Lunch
13.30	<b>Transboundary consultations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction, followed by short discussion</li> </ul>
14.00	<b>Ensure reflection of SEA results in decision-making</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction</li> <li>• Group work</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentations, Wrap-up &amp; Discussion</li> </ul>
15.00	Coffee/Tea
15.30	<b>Manage SEA effectively within budgetary and time constraints</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction</li> <li>• Group work</li> <li>• Presentations, Wrap-up &amp; Discussion</li> </ul>
17.00	Recap and end of the Day 2

**Day 4: 12.11.2011**

09.00	<b>Experiences with SEA from former Soviet Union Countries (Presentation &amp; discussion)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legal framework and institutional set-up</li> <li>• Main issues of SEA practice</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Olena Borysova</i></p>
10.30	Coffee/Tea
11.00	<b>Similarities and differences of the SEA Protocol with the current legal framework for OVOS/SER in Uzbekistan (part 2) and Proposals and recommendations for developing a locally customized SEA system in Uzbekistan</b> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Facilitated by Fayzulla Salakhuddinov and Olena Borysova</i></p>
12.30	Lunch
13.30	<b>Introducing SEA system and developing capacity for it</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction</li> <li>• Facilitated discussion</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Jiri Dusik</i></p>
15.00	Coffee break
15.30	<b>Closing session</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wrap-up of the training</li> <li>• Training evaluation</li> <li>• Participants' view</li> <li>• Distribution of certificates</li> </ul>
16.30	<b>Closing of workshop</b>