

## **Informal workshop organised within the Sofia EIA Initiative**

### **APPROACHES TO STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE**

**Regional Environmental Center for CEE**

**April 9-10, 2001, Szentendre**

#### **Main findings:**

The Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries are rapidly developing legislation and methodologies for application of strategic environmental assessment (SEA). The workshop participants (see Annex 3) presented SEA case studies that indicate a set of common priorities in the development of the national SEA systems in the CEE region. The priorities are the following:

#### *Flexible approach to SEA*

1. National SEA systems in CEE countries should establish flexible framework for integration of SEA elements into development of specific strategic interventions<sup>1</sup>. National framework laws having provisions on SEA may need to be complemented by administrative orders/regulations that interpret general SEA requirements for the most important strategic interventions in the country (e.g. land-use/spatial planning, preparation of national policies, etc.).

#### *SEA process*

2. SEA process should be initiated at the earliest possible stage of development of strategic intervention that is a subject to SEA. SEA should begin at the same time as preparation of the strategic intervention (Terms of Reference for SEA should preferably be adopted at the same time as the Terms of Reference for the strategic intervention).
3. SEA process should run in parallel to the planning processes and should be fully integrated into different stages of development of strategic intervention. Annex 1 of the workshop report outlines options for incorporation of SEA into development of strategic intervention.
4. The responsibility for carrying out the SEA process should be with authority responsible for development of strategic intervention. CEE countries should establish system that ensures sufficient quality of the SEA process. In cases where there is no institutional capacity for carrying out SEA, formal review of SEA findings may be needed.
5. SEA process should typically review:
  - existing environmental/health problems relevant for the sector or region covered by the strategic intervention;
  - environmental/health (sustainability) goals and targets of the strategic intervention;
  - key conceptual alternatives of the strategic intervention - analysis of attainment of environmental/health goals (sustainability) and targets;
  - specific environmental/health impacts of suggested implementation measures;

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<sup>1</sup> NB: The term strategic intervention used in this text covers plans, programs, policies. A modified SEA process should be applied to legislative proposals.

- proposed monitoring system of environmental/health impacts during implementation of the strategic intervention.
6. Consultation with environmental and health authorities and public should be organized throughout the SEA process. At least two stages of such consultations should be carried out: at the stage of review of the environmental goals and targets of the strategy (SEA scoping) and after completion of the SEA findings. Additional stages of consultation may be organized as needed. The SEA process should also enable access to information in accordance with the requirements of the Aarhus Convention.
  7. The findings of the SEA process should be reported for the purpose of their external review (by public, national environmental and health authorities, etc.). SEA findings, draft or final, should be made publicly accessible and should be communicated to concerned public in due time and due form.
  8. Authorities responsible for development and/or approval of strategic intervention should ensure due account of SEA findings and of public comments in the decision-making on the strategic intervention.
  9. Public participation provisions and access to justice are important elements in the design of SEA systems in CEE. Given the importance and difficulty of these subjects, further detailed CEE-regional discussions should be organized on these subjects.
  10. SEA systems should ensure proper monitoring of actual effects of strategy on environment, human health and/or sustainable development. Monitoring reports should be made publicly accessible and should be communicated to the concerned public.

**ANNEX 1:****INCORPORATION OF SEA INTO DEVELOPMENT OF PLANS, PROGRAMS AND POLICIES**

Authority Responsible for Development of Strategic Intervention		SEA Supervising (Environmental and Health) Authorities
<i>Development of Strategic Intervention</i>	<i>Strategic Environmental Assessment</i>	
ToR for the strategic intervention	Approval of ToR for SEA	Comments on ToR for the strategic intervention and joint preparation of ToR for SEA (incl. specification of public participation system).
Analysis of the past development of the regions/sector covered by the strategic intervention (analytical part of strategic intervention).	Review of analytical part of the strategic intervention - whether it properly reflects past and existing environmental/health problems in the sector or region covered by the strategic intervention.	Overall cooperation in development of strategic intervention (incl. provision of relevant information) and supervision of the SEA process.
Determination of strategic goals and targets for the strategic intervention.	Review of goals and targets for the strategic intervention – whether they properly integrate relevant environmental/health (sustainability) goals and targets.	Overall cooperation in development of strategic intervention (incl. provision of relevant information) and supervision of the SEA process.
Design of conceptual alternatives of the strategic intervention.	Objective-led appraisal of key conceptual alternatives of the strategic intervention (how they relate to relevant environmental/health goals and targets).	Overall cooperation in development of strategic intervention (incl. provision of relevant information) and supervision of the SEA process.
Design of implementation measures and management and monitoring.	Assessment of specific environmental/health impacts of implementation measures that implement selected conceptual alternatives. Assessment of proposed environmental monitoring and management system.	Overall cooperation in development of strategic intervention (incl. provision of relevant information) and supervision of the SEA process.
		Optional external review of SEA Report.
Decision on the strategic intervention.		
Monitoring of implementation of strategic intervention.		

**ANNEX 3: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS**

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