

Support to SEA pilots

Introduction

The implementation of SEA Directive in ECRAN countries is still in a very early stage and there is a lack of capacity for appropriate SEA application. Therefore, the ECRAN project will provide support on selected real SEA cases, which could be considered as the most efficient way of capacity building for SEA. Besides direct technical assistance, the supported SEA pilots will serve as a basis for SEA-related training activities within ECRAN project.

It needs to be emphasized that the support provided by ECRAN shall be considered as the additional assistance for the SEAs, which are required by the national legislation and thus the planning agency has to ensure the proper application of SEA anyway (from the national or provincial budget). It means that the planning agency will have to establish the SEA team, ensure all administrative and procedural steps etc. as stipulated by the SEA legislation in a given country, and the ECRAN inputs will be provided in close cooperation with the appointed SEA experts, SEA competent authority and the planning agency.

For selected SEA cases the training events and expert consultations would be organized i.e. the ECRAN experts together with the planning agency in cooperation with a competent environmental authority and the company conducting SEA would discuss actual SEA stage / analysis (e.g. supporting preparation of the ToR for SEA, how to define the scope of the assessment) and conclusions from the training could be used in real SEA). In such a way the ECRAN would provide direct inputs to the practical application of SEA and facilitate also cooperation between planning and environmental authorities.

Selection criteria

In order to fully demonstrate benefits resulting from proper SEA application, the SEA pilots to be supported will have to meet certain criteria:

- (i) Time schedule of planning or programming process: Optimally, SEA should be applied in parallel with plan or programme preparation – thus ECRAN will support SEA pilots, which can be initiated in early stages of the planning or programming process.
- (ii) Commitment of planning agency: The SEA is primarily a planning tool – therefore it is important that the agency preparing the plan or programme to be assessed is ready to work with SEA inputs and be open for likely modifications of the plan or programme as well as for opening it for consultations to the relevant stakeholders including public (and – if relevant – also neighbouring country).
- (iii) Transboundary aspect: Selected pilots should include likely transboundary effects and thus transboundary consultations should be part of it¹.

¹ Although the transboundary aspect is highly important and is going to be addressed in other EA WG activities, for selecting the SEA pilots the first two criteria shall be prevailing. It means that preference will be given to the pilots with appropriate schedule and planning agency open for cooperation but without likely transboundary impacts (e.g. regional spatial plan for a region with no borders to other countries), rather than for pilots possibly including transboundary impacts and consultations, however which can be applied only in late stages of the planning process and/or with not very cooperative planning agency.





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