



COUNTRY REVIEW:

Capacity Building Needs Assessment for the UNECE Strategic Environmental Assessment Protocol implementation in Armenia

2006 (Version 2)

DISCLAIMER

The first version of this document was prepared by Boris Ghazaryan (2004) and updated by Sona Ayvazyan and Julieta Ghlichyan (2006)

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List of Acronyms

EECCA	Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia
EIA	Environmental impact assessment
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NIS	Newly Independent States
RA	Republic of Armenia
REC	Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe
REC Caucasus	Regional Environmental Center Caucasus
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SER	State Environmental Review
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

Introduction

The RA has ratified the UNECE Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo Convention) on February 21, 1997 and signed UNECE Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment (Kiev Protocol) on May 21, 2003.

Currently national normative-legal acts directly regulating the processes of environmental impact assessment and strategic environmental assessment are absent. However, the process is indirectly and partially regulated by RA Law “On Environmental Review” (hereinafter the Law), adopted by National Assembly of RA on November 20, 1995. Further adopted by-laws don't refer to Strategic Environmental Assessment procedures and regulate just a few aspects of the process that is related to the state environmental review.

1. Identification of plans and projects subject to SEA Protocol

1.1. The notion of programme or plan in strategic documents

Strategic documents subject to the SEA Protocol are stated by the Law Article 1 General Provisions and Article 15 on Concepts Subject to the Assessment.

Pursuant to Article 1 par. 2 of the Law the term “concept” means proposals, programmes, complex designs and master plans. In addition, according to Article 15 par. 1, these documents include documentation on regional planning and design of complex use of natural resources. Legislation, policies and strategies are not considered as concepts.

In the end of 2004 a study was conducted to assess the existing situation in the environmental assessment system in Armenia (see 1.3). Examination of documents submitted to state environmental review (SER) during 2000-2004 indicated that during a five-year period about 540 documents have been submitted to SER, 81% of which were project documents of planned activities (mainly construction of new objects or reconstruction of the old ones), 16.4%- small size business projects, requiring bank credits (e.g. recreation objects on the bank of lake Sevan, targeted purchase of fruit and vegetables for canning), or design of small constructions in communication or other local infrastructures and only 2.6% (14 documents) represent plans and programmes corresponding to the Article 2.5 of the Kiev Protocol.

The study revealed that during last 5 years a larger number (at least 74, please see Table 1 for details) of strategic documents has been developed. Thus only 19% of those have been submitted to SER.

In accordance with several reports on the environmental review system in Armenia and expert observations, developed strategic documents have not been submitted to SER due to the poor law enforcement in Armenia as well as certain deficiencies of the law, including ambiguous legal requirements and defined responsibilities.

Table 1. List of strategic documents subject to subject to environmental review in accordance with the SEA Protocol and the national legislation

Sectors	Types of Strategic Documents	Number of Strategic Documents
Agriculture	Programme, concept, strategy	34
Forestry	Assessment	1
Fisheries	-	No data
Energy	Programme	2
Industry, including mining	-	No data
Transport	-	No data
Regional development (i.e. socio-economic planning)	Programme, concept	2
Waste management	Action plan	1
Water management	Programme, plan	2
Telecommunications	-	No data
Tourism	Concept	1
Town and country planning or land use	Plan, concept, feasibility study, programme, scheme	8
Health	Plan	1
Nature protection (combating desertification, protected areas, biodiversity)	Programme, strategy, assessment, plan, strategy	11
Other strategic documents	Law, regulations	11
TOTAL		74

1.2 Identification of activities subject to SEA Protocol

Pursuant to Article 15.1 of the Law, concepts developed in the following fields are subject to SER:

- Social-economic development
- Energy
- Urban development (urban planning)
- Transport
- Communication
- Agriculture
- Fishery
- Mining
- Industry sectors
- Healthcare
- Social sector
- Nature protection
- Recreation, tourism, consumer services

Thus, in addition to the fields identified in the SEA Protocol, the Law includes social-economic development, healthcare, social and nature protection fields. At the same time, the Law fails to address such important sectors as forestry, waste management and water management.

1.3 Identification of strategic documents by sectors

To find out the national and regional strategic documents – developed in Armenia and subject to Kiev Protocol a circular letter has been sent to 16 Ministries and agencies of the country on behalf

of the Minister of Nature Protection Mr. V Ayvazyan, requesting the lists of developed or being developed strategic documents for last 5 years.

The data provided by the ministries and departments of RA, including the Ministry of Nature Protection, are presented in table 1. Some of the ministries have failed to respond to the inquiry.

- Column “Sector” includes the fields of application defined in the SEA Protocol as well as additional sectors of Nature Protection and Health identified in the Armenian Law “On Environmental Review”.
- Column “Types of Strategic Documents” includes the types of documents adopted in fields Subject to SEA in accordance to the SEA Protocol and additional fields in accordance with the Armenian legislation within the given 5 year period.
- Column “Number of Strategic Documents” gives the total number of documents subject to SEA developed and adopted in Armenia within the given 5 year period.

2. Overview of the existing environmental assessment procedures in Armenia

2.1. Assessment procedure in force

As it is mentioned above, the environmental assessment in Armenia is indirectly and partially ensured by RA Law “On Environmental Review”, which clearly separates two types of documents to be assessed:

- Projects on proposed activities (construction of new objects, reconstruction, enlargement, as far as temporary closing down and demolition). The list for those activities with determination of threshold value (capacity, rating, and output) is given in the Article 4 of the Law.
- Strategic documents, e.g. concepts (see point 1.1.).

Pursuant to Espoo Convention and Kiev Protocol the proposed activities require EIA procedure and the strategic documents - SEA.

The mandatory nature of EIA is set forth in Articles 12 and 15 par. 6 of the Law, saying that the implementation of the proposed activity and adoption of the concept are prohibited without the positive conclusion of the state environmental review.

The procedure of conducting environmental assessment of the proposed activity and strategic documents is described below and is based on the state environmental assessment system, ensured by Law. The Law does not regulate the EIA procedure of the strategic document as a whole, but states only some stages and provisions with regard to environmental assessment process. (Conducting necessary EIA studies by the developer, publishing the document and records of strategic decision, organizing public hearings, considering the public opinion and submitting the documents to SER). *Per se*, those provisions are declarative, as the relevant normative legal acts are not adopted yet to regulate the procedure.

Provisions of environmental assessment for proposed activities are described by Law in a more detailed way, than the provisions of assessment for strategic documents; hence the approaches stated by Law for EIA are applied while performing the assessment of the strategic documents too.

2.1.1. Screening mechanism

Article 6 of the Law is dedicated to the mechanism of screening of EIA documents. The provisions are stated rather obscure; consequently they are difficult-to-interpret and inefficient in practice. According to the Article, the developer must inform the authorized body on his intention to carry out a proposed activity. The notification should include the description of activity, land size, technological solution, possible environmental impact and consent of state structures. The authorized body should study the documents and collect the public and stakeholder opinions. The Article 6 of the Law does not fix the further actions of the authorized body, necessary for completion of the notification stage.

During the 8 years of the Law in force, about 800 proposed and strategic activities were submitted for assessment and the screening mechanism was never applied. The reason is that the documents were submitted to authorized body omitting the notification stage. They were already developed in details, which is necessary for the state environmental review.

2.1.2. Documents necessary for assessment

According to the Article 7 of the Law, the content and scope of the documentation for EIA should be determined by a relevant by-law, which has not been adopted as of today.

However, despite the absence of by-laws, the Article 5 of the Law sets forth the extent of documents of EIA subject for SER, which can be identified with the content of materials for environmental assessment, namely:

- Estimation, description and evaluation of possible direct or indirect impact of proposed activity on:
 - climatic conditions, flora and fauna, ecosystems components and their sustainability, specially protected areas, landscapes, air, surface and underground water, entrails, soil,
 - health and welfare of human beings,
 - environment of populated areas,
 - natural resources use
 - historical and cultural monuments
- alternative solutions, including zero action alternatives, comparative analysis and selection of most acceptable alternative,
- proposed measures to eliminate or minimize the possible environmental impact of proposed activity;
- detailed evaluation of consequences of socio-economic development on the zero action environmental protection, selected in the result of negative environmental impact of proposed activity.

Table 2 below shows the compliance and the gaps between the Law and the requirements set forth in the SEA Protocol.

Table 2. Level of compliance of the mentioned provisions of the Law to the requirements set forth in the SEA Protocol

Items to be considered when preparing the SEA Report under the Protocol	Items to be considered when preparing the Environmental Report under the current national legislation ¹
1. The contents and the main objectives of the plan or programme and its link with other plans or programmes.	1. Not required
2. The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment, including health, and the likely evolution thereof should the plan or programme not be implemented.	2. Solutions, including zero action alternatives (not proceeding with the activity).
3. The characteristics of the environment, including health, in areas likely to be significantly affected.	3. Implied in point 6 below
4. The environmental, including health, problems which are relevant to the plan or programme.	4. Implied in point 6 below
5. The environmental, including health, objectives established at international, national and other levels which are relevant to the plan or programme, and the ways in which these objectives and other environmental, including health, considerations have been taken into account during its preparation.	5. Not required
6. The likely significant environmental, including health, effects ² as defined in Article 2, paragraph 7 of the Protocol.	6. Estimation, description and evaluation of the assumed direct and indirect impacts on: - climatic conditions, flora, fauna, ecosystem components, their interrelation (function) and stability, specially protected natural areas, landscapes, rock formations, air, surface and underground waters, soils; - health and welfare of population, - environment of populated areas; - the utilization of natural resources; - historical and cultural monuments. Detailed evaluation of consequences for socio-economic development and environmental protection.
7. Measures to prevent, reduce or mitigate any significant adverse effects on the environment, including health, which may result from the implementation of the plan or programme.	7. Proposed measures and conditions that will eliminate or minimize the possible environmental impacts.
8. An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including difficulties encountered in providing the information to be included such as technical deficiencies or lack of knowledge.	8. Comparative analysis of solutions and selection of the most acceptable alternative. Evaluation of whether the zero action alternative be selected due to otherwise significant environmental impact.
9. Measures envisaged for monitoring environmental, including health, effects of the implementation of the plan or programme.	9. Not required
10. The likely significant transboundary environmental, including health, effects.	10. Requirement for SER, the conclusion of which state environmental review of which is approved by the RA Government.
11. A non-technical summary of the information provided.	11. Not required

¹ This provision relates to the planned activity. The reference to these provisions for the strategic document is not clearly prescribed.

² These effects should include secondary, cumulative, synergistic, short-, medium- and long-term, permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects.

The overwhelming majority of developers poorly understand the Law and national normative-legal acts (which are rather imperfect too), and are guided mainly by construction norms and rules and other guiding documents operational in the former Soviet Union. Hence, the projects submitted for SER usually include a chapter on “Environmental Protection”, which in essence corresponds to EIA or SEA report.

In the case of insufficient data (initial documents, conclusions, measures and other documents), the authorized body should issue a negative resolution in accordance with Law, as the latter does not provide for a procedure for inquiring additional data or returning of documents for further elaboration.

In practice, considering the inadequacy of the Law and aiming at creation of favourable conditions for economic development, as well as ensuring that all the environmental requirements are met, the authorized body allows the developer of activity to make modifications in the EIA/SEA documents while those are under the SER process. Though specific scopes for environmental assessment are not set in the country, as well as the relevant methodical guidelines and standards are absent, the authorized body identifies the issues and measures to be completed, based on comments received. If the developer refuses to complete the documents, the authorized body issues a negative conclusion.

It is not very clear why the Law provides additional requirements to the content of documents for SER when the resolution is prepared by external (invited) experts (complete set of documents, integrity of all the positive and negative environmental impacts, methods applied and integrity of information, relevance of supposed technical solutions to the modern scientific and technological standards).

2.1.3. Context requirement

Due to absence of guideline/methodology for developing environmental report, including context requirement, the authorized body shall take the necessary measures to ensure that the authorities are given opportunity to express their opinion. Pursuant to Article 6 par. 2, the notification stage requires the following documents:

- decision of municipality (local self-government) affected by impact of proposed activity on the compliance of the activity with the approved regional development plans,
- decision of municipality (local self-government) affected by impact of proposed activity on providing a territory for planned activity
- the opinion of concerned state body (e.g. in the sector of mining, industry, etc.), and a license, if necessary.

Besides, the Article 8.1 of the Law states that the authorized body shall immediately forward copies of documentation upon receipt to relevant government bodies. Afterwards, according to Article 8.5 of the Law the government bodies shall send back their opinion to authorized body within 30 days period. Actually, the authorized body determines the scope of interested government entities, though the Law does not set any liability for this reason.

The Law assigns also, that if no opinion is presented within the determined period, it shall be considered that there is no negative opinion on the documentation.

2.1.4. Requirement for public participation

Article 2 par. 3 of the Law sets up the principle of transparency of decision-making, indirectly understood as public participation in the environmental review process. Public involvement and participation at 3 stages of the environmental impact assessment is unambiguously set up in the Article 3 of the Law.

Public participation in screening

Obligation of authorized body to inform the public on proposed activity on the screening stage is set forth by the Article 6 par.3 of the Law. Article 6 par. 4 of the Law assigns the responsibility for organization of public hearings to the community authorities and the promoter of the activity. The same Article determines the timetable for hearings and states that the procedure of hearings should be developed by RA Government (the procedure has not been developed yet). The Law states, that, if the public opinion is not received during the determined period it should be considered as positive (Article 6 par. 5).

Public participation in review of EIA documents

On the main stage of the SER the authorized body informs the public when and where it will be possible to obtain information on documentation and organizes the study and public discussions on those within the 30 days period jointly with the community authorities and promoter of activity (Article 8 par.1 and Article 8 par. 2), as a result of which it receives the opinion of the public.

Public participation in SER conclusion

On the final stage of SER the authorized body shall ensure public hearings of the external expert opinion, public opinion, opinion of community authorities and relevant government bodies. They should be considered while developing the expert conclusion. Minutes of the public hearings should be submitted to all participants by the authorized body.

When assessing the strategic documents the developer should ensure access to the strategic document and the EIA report in agreement with authorized body no later than within 30 days prior to public hearings (Article 15 par. 3). Afterwards, according to Article 15 par. 4, the developer shall arrange public hearings and consider opinions. The law provides vaguer terms for public participation in the process of assessment of strategic documents. Neither does it set forth ways for considering the opinions.

2.1.5. Mechanism for developing SEA report

No mechanism for developing SEA report is set by the Law.

2.2. Analysis of strengths and weaknesses of the current environmental assessment system

Because of the lack of certain normative-legal acts to regulate environmental assessment process, the latter actually is indirectly regulated by the provisions of the Law.

Strengths of the environmental assessment system include the provisions of the Law that regulate the objectives of environmental review, in fact covering the following issues of environmental assessment (Article 3 and Article 5 par. 1):

- analysis of the possibility and expediency of activity,

- development of alternatives,
- assessment of impacts of the activity and its consequences for human health, components of environment, historical and cultural monuments,
- development of measures to prevent, eliminate or minimize the negative impact during construction, exploitation, as well in emergency situations,
- ensuring sustainable use of natural resources.

The strengths are also:

- availability of information and public participation in all the stages of assessment (Articles 4, 8 par. 2, 10 par. 1),
- participation of the state government and local self-government bodies in hearings (Articles 10 par. 2, 15 par. 4),
- determination of time for some stages of the process (Article 6 par. 3, 4, 5, 6, Article 8 par. 1, 2, 3, 5, Article 9 par. 5, Article 10 par. 1, 2, Article 11, par. 1, 8, Article 15 par. 3,5).

One of the strengths for strategic document is the requirement of Law (Article 15 par. 2) for developer to carry out an adequate extent of research, as stipulated by legislation, to ensure justification of the assessment.

Thus, the practice of environmental assessment reveals a number of essential gaps both in the procedure of EIA and in relation to the requirements of the SEA Protocol. The main gaps are:

- lack of procedures for screening and impact assessment, enabling the activity to be classified by degree of impact to the human health and environment and selection of adequate content and activities (scoping) for assessment,
- lack of mandatory consideration of the environmental factors from the early stages of assessment,
- lack of criteria, parameters, norms, standards, methodologies and guidelines aimed at environmental assessment and forecast of the state of environment, which causes dual interpretation of situations and discretion in decision-making,
- unclear scope of participants of the environmental assessment process and decision making,
- uncertainty of procedures for environmental assessment, their agreement, discussions and consideration of comments.

Besides, the procedure of SER of proposed activities is unsoundly emphasized by Law, opposite to the procedure of the SER of strategic document, which indirectly gives a higher status to the activity. For example, for strategic documents the SER shall be accomplished within 90 days, while for proposed SER shall be conducted within 120-180 days. Public hearings for SER of proposed activities are foreseen in three stages, while for the SER of strategic documents in one stage. Lastly, for SER of proposed activities participation of an external expert is mandatory, while for SER of strategic documents it is not foreseen at all. However, considering the higher status of strategic documents, the approaches established for SER of planned activities in practice are applied for SER of strategic documents as well.

Opportunities to improve the environmental assessment system

In order to improve the process of SEA, a series of actions shall be implemented in Armenia targeting development of system, institutional and human capacity for SEA as well as stakeholders' awareness raising activities of a general nature.

Measures targeted at improvement of capacity for SEA are going to be a part of more comprehensive reforms in the environmental assessment processes in general, which are going to be promoted through adoption of a new RA Law “On State Environmental Review” to replace the existing Law. The new law aims at regulating the process of the SER as well as EIA and SEA. Its adoption will be followed by development of other supporting legal acts, which may include amendments to the existing legislation, government decrees and ministerial orders. Development of the whole legal base, including the methodological foundation, for successful implementation of environmental assessments is going to ensure the necessary system capacity for implementation of SEA.

Improvements in the environmental assessment system will need to target capacity building of institutions, in particular to the authorized organization in charge of SER, territorial administration and local government entities, stakeholder organizations involved in development of documents subject to SEA, professional organizations actually conducting environmental assessments and the concerned non-governmental organizations. Capacity building efforts will also need to be directed at individuals working with the mentioned organizations.

One possibility for consistent capacity building strategy could be establishment of a National Environmental Assessment Center aimed at improvement of EIA and SEA processes, training of specialists for environmental assessment, conducting the discussions on the EIA and SEA documentation, etc.

3. Analysis of priorities for the introduction of SEA Protocol

The data in the table below is provided by contact persons of the RA Ministry of Nature Protection on the Espoo Convention and indicates the analysis of the priority issues for the effective implementation of the SEA Protocol.

Table 3. Analysis of priority issues for the effective implementation of the SEA Protocol.

Efficiency	2-priority, 1-important, 0-not relevant	Special questions requiring assistance
- conduct SEA during developing the plans and projects according to determination of SEA in thee Article 2.6	2	Clarify the term "plan, project" for local conditions
-conduct screening according to Articles 4 и 5	2	Best practice of the countries on identification of SEA stages
-determine the scope of SEA according to Article 6	2	Best practice of the countries applying the SEA procedure
-develop basic scenario of environmental development for SEA (according to Annex IV , p. 2, 3 and 4)	1	Best practice of other countries on content of environmental report
-apply nature protection purposes in (according to Annex IV, p. 5)	1	Set up the local priorities
-analyze the possible significant environmental consequences (according to Annex IV .p. 6)	1	Conduct appropriate studies
-compare the alternative plans and projects (according to Annex IV .p. 8)	1	stipulate with a legal act
-develop a monitoring plan based on results of SEA (according to Article 12 и Annex IV .p. 9)	1	-/-
-analyze transboundary effects (according to Annex IV .p. 10)	2	-/-
-organize public hearings of environmental report, according to Article 8)	2	-/-
-organize consultations with authorities dealing with nature protection and health issues, according to Article 9	1	-/-
-organize transboundary consultations, according to Article 10	2	-/-
- clarify for competent authorities the advantages of SEA and required expenses	0	Awareness raising in the sector
apply SEA to strategies and legal regulations according to Article 13	2	Clarify the term "plan, programme ", considering strategies and legal regulations
-develop draft Law and/or executive regulations to enforce SEA Protocol	2	Application of international practice

4. Key structures, participating in reforms related to SEA

4.1. Stakeholder organizations

Currently Ministry of Nature Protection is a single designated state institution in the sector of nature protection authorized to conduct SER of proposed activities (subject to EIA) and concepts (subject to SEA), according to Law "On Environmental Review". Preparation of expert conclusion is the responsibility of the "Environmental Review" State Non-Commercial Organization, acting within the Ministry of Nature Protection.

Table 4. Contact persons at the Ministry of Nature Protection responsible for the SER (including the SEA)

Eleonora Grigoryan	Adviser to the Minister of Nature Protection, Focal Point of the Espoo Convention, Ministry of Nature Protection (Yerevan, Governmental building 3, tel: (374 10) 585349, email: interdpt@rambler.ru)
Julieta Ghlichyan	Head of Normative Methodological Department of MoNP (Yerevan, Governmental building 3, tel: (374 10) 585394, email: julieta_ghlichyan@yahoo.com)
Ashot Santrosyan	Director, Ministry of Nature Protection “Environmental Review” State Non-Commercial Organization (Yerevan, 29 Komitas St., tel: (374 10) 220218)
Boris Ghazaryan	Deputy Director, Ministry of Nature Protection “Environmental Review” State Non-Commercial Organization (Yerevan, 29 Komitas St., tel: (374 10) 221568, email: boris_gh@freenet.am)

4.2. Key stakeholders and networks promoting SEA reforms in the country

While the stakeholders of SEA processes will include multiple groups of the society depending on the fields of application of respective strategic documents and the significance of those at a given place and a given time, the scope of stakeholders interested in the promotion of SEA reforms in the country in general will be particularly limited to the following groups:

- Authorized body for SER, which will be in charge of screening, scoping of SEA and the quality control of relevant environmental reports (for contacts see table 4);
- Other units of the Ministry of Nature Protection regularly being consulted within the process of SER. These will include the units of the Ministry functioning at the national level as well as the regional offices of the State Hydromet Service (11), Environmental Monitoring Center (6), State Environmental Inspection (11), Basin Management organizations (5) and specially protected areas (5);
- Ministry of Health and the national and regional offices of its Hygiene and Anti-epidemiological Inspection (17) and expert centers (17) in charge of the environmental health control in the country;
- Environmental as well as health authorities of Yerevan Municipality and 10 marzpetarans (territorial administrative units). According to the Draft Law on State Environmental Review these entities are also responsible for organization of public discussions of strategic documents developed for or likely to affect respective geographic areas (for environmental contacts see table 5);
- Design companies specialized in and contracted for development of plans and project and conducting relevant environmental assessments (for contacts see table 6);
- Non-governmental organizations interested in the subject of SEA and actually having contribution in the public consultations of SEA documents (for contacts see table 7);
- University divisions teaching environmental subjects and interested in the relevant developments in the country (for contacts see table 8).

Table 5. Contact information on environmental authorities

Territorial Administration Unit	Contact Person	Contact Information
Yerevan Municipality	Romik Kosemyan, Head of Environment Department	(374 10) 514188
Aragatsotn Marzpetaran	Vachik Harutyunyan Head of Agriculture and Environment Department	(374 232) 32368
Ararat Marzpetaran	Tigran Virabyan Head of Agriculture and Environment Department	(374 235) 25109

Territorial Administration Unit	Contact Person	Contact Information
Armavir Marzpetaran	Artur Ayvazyan Head of Agriculture and Environment Department	(374 237) 63850
Gegharkunik Marzpetaran	Hambardzum Hambardzumyan Head of Environment Department	(374 264) 24088
Kotayk Marzpetaran	Mher Yeghiazaryan Head of Agriculture and Environment Department	(374 223) 21373
Lori Marzpetaran	Volodya Buniatyan Head of Agriculture and Environment Department	(374 322) 43099
Shirak Marzpetaran	Movses Manukyan Head of Agriculture and Environment Department	(374 312) 35467
Syunik Marzpetaran	Kajik Khachatryan Head of Agriculture and Environment Department	(374 285) 68580
Tavush Marzpetaran	Razmik Meliqjanyan Head of Agriculture and Environment Department	(374 263) 36178
Vayots Dzor Marzpetaran	Babken Mkrtychyan Head of Agriculture and Environment Department	(374 281) 23050

Table 6. Contact information on design companies

Design Institute	Contact Person	Contact Information
YerevanProject Institute	Gurgen Musheghyan, Director	(374 10) 580561
ArmEnergyProject Institute	Armen Grigoryan, Director	(374 10) 650983
ArmIndProject Institute	Felix Ghazaryan, Director	(374 10) 582162
ArmHydroEnergyProject Intsitute	Alexander Sanahyan, Director	(374 10) 532052
ArmCommuneProject Institute	Manuk Zakaryan, Director	(374 10) 540301
ArmProject Institute	Grigor Azizyan, Director	(374 10) 575895
ArmWaterProject Institute	Yuri Javadyan, Director	(374 10) 277661
ArmAgroProject Institute	Varuzhan Hovasapyan, Director	(374 10) 244307
Mining Institute	Hovhannes Nikoghosyan, Head of Environmental Department	(374 10) 542265, 525203
JINJ Consulting company	Eduard Mesropyan, Director	(374 10) 540102

Table 7. Contact information on non-governmental organizations interested in SEA

NGO	Contact Person	Contact Information	Email
“Armenian Forests” NGO	Jeffrey Tufenkyan, President	(374 10) 541529	info@armenianforests.am
“Armenian Greens’ Union” NGO	Hakob Sanasaryan, President	(374 10) 257634, 281411	amgreen@ipia.sci.am
“Armenia Tree Project” NGO	Vache Kirakosyan, Director	(374 10) 447401	vache@armeniatree.org
“Armenian Women for Health and Health Environment” NGO	Elena Manvelyan, President	(374 10) 523604	office@awhhe.am
“Association for Sustainable Human Development” NGO	Karine Danielyan, President	(374 10) 522327	ashd@freenet.am
“Burg” Youth Environmental NGO	Arman Vermishyan, President	(374 10) 541529, 250671	burg@xter.net
Caucasus Environmental NGO Network	Vram Tevosyan, EIA Expert	(374 10) 235928	tececo@netsys.am
“Center for Regional Development/ Transparency International Armenia” NGO	Sona Ayvazyan, Environmental Policy Expert	(374 10) 585578	crd@transparency.am
“Eco-Globe” NGO	Nune Darbinyan, President	(374 10) 57-55-27	sea_arm@yahoo.com
“Environmental Public Advocacy Center” NGO	Aida Iskoyan, President	(374 10) 574986	epac@arminco.com

NGO	Contact Person	Contact Information	Email
“Environmental Survival” NGO	Dshkhuhi Sahakyan, President	(374 10) 523830, 525424	esu@sci.am
Regional Environmental Center Caucasus, Armenia Information Center	Hovhannes Ghazaryan, Head	(374 10) 574743	info@rec-caucasus.am
“Social-Ecological Association” NGO	Srbuhi Harutyunyan, President	(374 10) 347418	sea_arm@yahoo.com
“Sustainable Water Environment” NGO	Arevik Hovsepyan, President	(374 10) 541233	swe_hasmik@yahoo.com
“Tapan” Eco-Club” NGO	Hrant Sargsyan, President	(374 10) 733322	grant-tapan@infocom.am
World Wildlife Fund Office in Yerevan	Karen Manvelyan, Head	(37410) 260424	kmanvelyan@wwfcaucasus.am

4.3. Trainings on EIA and SEA

Actually most of the state and private higher education establishments of RA are in this or that extent involved into the process of environmental education. However, a special (targeted) course on EIA/SEA is due in the following institutions:

Table 8. Contact information on higher educational institutions having environmental curricula

Institution	Units	Contact Person	Contact Information
Yerevan State University	Chair for Ecology and Nature Protection	Karlen Grigoryan, Chair	(374 10) 572119
Armenian State Engineering University	Chair for Technologies of Synthesis of Organic Substances and Environmental Engineering	Gagik Torosyan, Chair	(374 10) 524832
Yerevan State University of Economy	Chair for Natural Resource Economics	Suren Gevorgyan, Chair	(374 10) 589742
Armenian Pedagogical University after Kh.Abovyan	Chair for Ecology and Nature Protection	Nshan Margaryan, Chair	(374 10) 521533
Armenian Medical University after M.Heratsi	Chair for General Hygiene and Ecology	Larisa Avetisyan, Chair	(374 10) 560101
Armenian Agrarian University	Chair for Agroecology	Eduard Hayrapetyan, Chair	(374 10) 562001
American University of Armenia	Environmental Conservation and Research Center	Renee Richer, Director	(374 10) 512520

A summer school on “Environmental Management” has been organized in Yerevan State University in June 2004 with financial assistance of Open Society Institute Assistance Foundation Armenia for participants from CIS countries (module EIA/SEA, 20 credits).

5. Past, ongoing and planned developments on SEA capacity strengthening

5.1. Key planned activities on the state level

RA Government Decree N115 from February 25, 1998 “On Adopting the Measures for Implementing of RA Commitments towards International Conventions” approved the plan of measures for the period 1998-2002 towards Espoo Convention. The measures are aimed at harmonization of national legislation with the Convention provisions, improving the system of SER of proposed activities, development of EIA procedure, procedures on public hearings, development of SEA principles. However, the planned measures have not been fully implemented due to insufficient funding.

As a first step towards strengthening the foundation for environmental assessment, the Ministry of Nature Protection, in cooperation with the “Center for Regional Development/Transparency International Armenia” NGO developed a new draft Law on State Environmental Review, which regulates SER, EIA and SEA processes by a single legal act. The new draft law, in particular, ensures

- adaptation to local conditions the criteria and parameters, provided in Annexes I and III of the Espoo Convention and Annexes I and III of the SEA Protocol;
- grouping of proposed activities into different categories, depending on the level of environmental impact of those likely to result in case of implementation

To further build the potential for SEA, it is necessary:

- to develop EIA and SEA methodological guidelines, based on “EIA guideline for CIS countries”, implemented within the framework of UNDP project “Development of Recommendations for Improvement of the EIA process in the CIS countries” as well as on the best international practices;
- to develop SEA procedures in case of transboundary impacts;
- to improve methodologies for assessment and forecast of consequences, ecological-economic comparison of alternatives, risk assessment, monitoring, etc.;
- developing of SEA methods for policies, legislation and strategies.

5.2. Completed or ongoing strategic documents

Identification of Strategic Documents by Sectors is summarized in section 1.1, table 1.

5.3 NGO projects

NGOs in Armenia do not implement special projects on EIA or SEA, because of limited funding opportunities for such purposes.

According to available information, the following projects have been implemented thanks to donor support:

1. “SEA of the Water Code of Armenia” project, implemented by “JINJ” Engineering Consulting Center with financial support of USAID (2002). Chapters on EIA for some water supply and drainage units were developed (on contractual basis).
2. “EIA for Gyumri Master Plan”, conducted by the “Social Ecological Association” NGO with financial support of USAID (1999). At the same time publication of “Kumayri” newspaper was initiated by the NGO, devoted to the issues of SER, which was active only a year. In the framework of the REC Caucasus grant the association developed and published a brochure “Database for Conducting Complete Environmental Review” in 2002.
3. Development of a Draft Law “On State Environmental Review” by the “Center for Regional Development/Transparency International Armenia” NGO in 2003-2004, with financial support of Britain Government and in cooperation with MoNP, where the issues of SER, EIA and SEA were been regulated.
4. Training seminar in Yerevan, conducted by the “Eco-Globe” NGO supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Environment of Norway, devoted to capacity strengthening for strategic environmental assessment.
5. EIA of Yerevan Tannery Reconstruction in 2003, conducted by the “Environmental Survival” NGO with support of the USAID.
6. A series of public hearings on 10 Laws of RA and a project on genetically modified organisms in regard to the environmental impact assessment since 2001, conducted by the “Environmental Public Advocacy Center” NGO with support of REC Caucasus.

6. Recommendations on activities for ensuring efficiency of UNDP/REC project

In order to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of efforts devoted to the development of the SEA in the county, the Ministry of Nature Protection of Armenia, with support of the REC, developed a National Strategy for Implementation of the UNECE Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment (2006-2010) This document will be submitted for adoption by the Government of Armenia and will become the basic document of the country for promoting reforms in SEA. The strategy has been discussed with the major stakeholders, whose comments were taken into consideration in the final draft of the document.

7. Analysis of the number of consultations with nature protection, healthcare authorities and public in the design process and SEA

Due to absence of normative –legal acts, regulating the process of EIA and SEA, the table below is developed according to requirements of the RA Law “On Environmental Review”.

Table 9. Public Participation according to the existing legal provisions

Stages of environmental assessment	Consultations with authorities dealing with nature protection and health issues		Information accessibility and public participation	
	Required by legislation	Applied in practice	Required by legislation	Applied in practice
Informing	X For EIA	Not applied in practice	X For EIA	Not applied in practice
Environmental report elaboration	-	-	X For SEA	X (not always)
SER	X For EIA	X For EIA and SEA	X For EIA	X For EIA and SEA
Decision-making	X For EIA	X For EIA	-	-

Consultations with health authorities are conducted in the process of SER with the Hygiene and Anti-epidemiological Inspection of the Ministry of Health, mainly on the subject of drinking water, sewage processing and disposal, sanitary cleaning of solid and construction wastes.