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Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA): Implementation challenges and opportunities in the region

Online Training Workshop on the Practical Application of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)
in Regional and Spatial Planning

26-27 April 2021

Baku, Azerbaijan

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Key challenges (for SEA in the Eastern Partnership countries)

- Insufficient capacity for the practical application of SEA in all the countries (with nuances for each country) including:
 - Limited awareness and capacity of sectoral authorities (line ministries)/other relevant stakeholders (e.g. local authorities) responsible for the application of SEA to their plans and programmes; of environmental assessment practitioners and of the civil society regarding the application of SEA;
 - Yet insufficient institutional capacity (e.g. # of staff), tools and varied expertise for environmental and health authorities to contribute and coordinate SEA procedures.
- Unfinished legislative reforms in some of the beneficiary countries
- Quality control and monitoring

Countries' experience in applying SEA remains sporadic and is significantly less developed than the application of EIA; COVID-19 restrictions impacted on the conduct of environmental assessment

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Opportunities (for SEA in the Eastern Partnership countries)

- Legal and institutional frameworks + wealth of guidance documents/guidelines provided under the UNECE Protocol on SEA and the European Union's SEA Directive
- Exchange of experience and lessons learnt among the EaP countries, with EU member states and countries in the UNECE region supported under EU4Environment; bodies to the Espoo Convention and its Protocol on SEA, etc.
- Updated national legal frameworks for env. assessment put in place recently
- **European Green Deal and the political momentum and dynamics it builds**
- Recognition of SEA as a tool for greening post-COVID economic recovery initiatives, contributing to Sustainable Development Goals and climate objectives

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