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Location: Tajikistan

▶ European ECO Forum
SEA Excellence Centers:

NGO “Youth Group for Environmental Protection”, *Tajikistan*

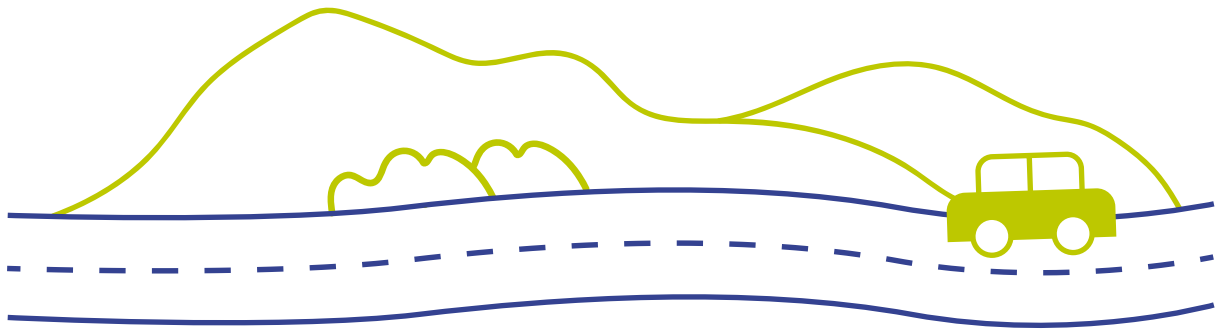
In 2021 with the support of Resource & Analysis Center “Society and Environment” we prepared an environmental report in the course of pilot SEA. For this purpose, one of the actual state programs was chosen. For the preparation of environmental report three experts were involved and the overall process took 3 months.

In general, this experience of conducting SEA was very useful and timely for us. In Tajikistan, the legislative framework on environmental issues is gradually being improved, in 2022 it is planned to adopt the Environmental Code of the Republic of Tajikistan. We believe that the next step will be the accession of Tajikistan to the Protocol on SEA, since SEA is an important tool for ensuring sustainable development of the country and the entire region.

Key findings and recommendations

01 The main difficulty in the process of preparing the report was the issue of collecting the necessary data

The Law of the Republic of Tajikistan on the Right to Access Information of 2008 guarantees the availability, openness and reliability of information, but in practice it is difficult to find the necessary and relevant data on environmental issues. This is primarily due to the insufficient capacity and outdated technical base of the relevant authorities (e.g. Department for Environmental Protection has 2–3 full-time employees at the city or district level, which is not enough to fully fulfill the assigned tasks). Accordingly, published information on environmental issues may be



inaccurate and not take into account all key factors. A SEA conducted on the basis of incorrect data will lead to the adoption of erroneous decisions, which ultimately can lead to negative impacts on the environment and public health. We faced the greatest difficulties in the preparation of the section «Detailed assessment of the potential impacts of the implementation of the Program on the environment and public health», due to the lack of relevant and verified data in order to identify trends and assess potential changes. Nevertheless, by analyzing and comparing data from different sources, within the framework of the SEA pilot report, we were able to satisfactorily solve this problem.

Based on this, we would recommend that experts who will carry out SEA in the future, first of all, plan field works — field visits, experiments and analyzes in order to double-check the available data, as well as collect the missing ones.

It is also necessary to develop environmental indicators and determine their target values, on the basis of which it will be possible to take into account and monitor the results.

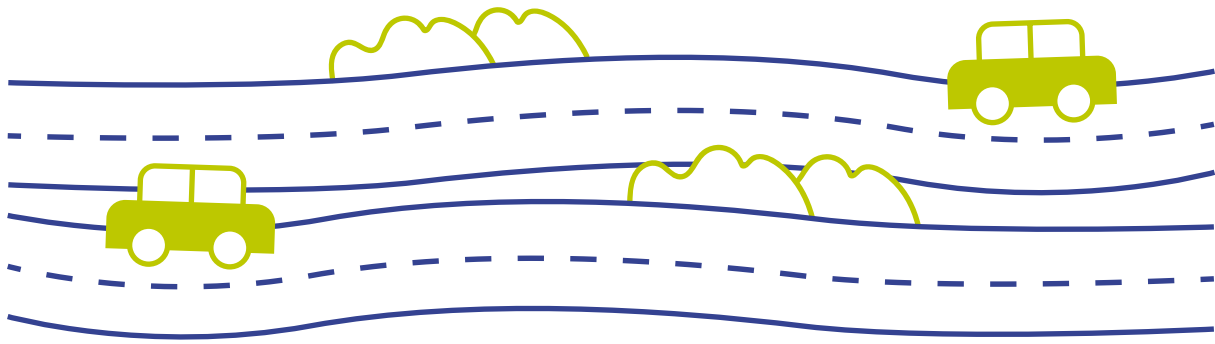
Public organizations, if they will analyze the SEA reports, should consider analysing the primary data, comparing them with alternative sources.

Since in practice SEA is carried out by a government agency, there will be more difficulties than in our case, including: obtaining permits, transportation costs (field visits), involving experts, taxes and administrative measures.

Also, regardless of the level of SEA, the statistical data must be checked. We believe that in this case at least five people will be involved, which will significantly affect costs.

02 Conducting an SEA requires certain additional resources

We estimate that SEA may require the following resources: around €5000 with 2–3 months duration for plans/programmes of city/rayon level; between €5000 and €10000 for regional level; about €20000 for the work on national level related to one sector with duration of 1 year and €20000 and more for national long term strategies with 1 year duration.



03 Conducting public consultations in the SEA process has its own peculiarities

The UNECE Protocol on SEA (2003) provides early, timely and effective opportunities for public participation in strategic environmental assessment of plans and programs. For effective public relations, the SEA responsible body needs to prepare and distribute in advance (publish in electronic platforms, local media, send out to interested parties) an extract from the prepared document with key provisions, designed for a wide audience, in an accessible format. This publication should contain information about what activities are planned, what are the expected results and potential impacts, as well as the date and place of public hearings so that all stakeholders have the opportunity to participate in the discussion.

04 When holding public hearings, it is important to consider the following points:

- provide sufficient time after the publication of the information so that all interested parties can familiarize themselves and participate in the discussion;
- make information publicly available;
- take into account the proposals and comments received during public hearings;
- publish the final version with explanations of which provisions and for what reasons were accepted/rejected.

In order for public hearings to be effective, to contribute to the improvement of the adopted plan / program and ultimately to ensure sustainable development, the population and civil activists should also not be indifferent. They should familiarize themselves with the published information and make their suggestions for improving and improving the adopted plan / program.

We believe that this is where civil society organizations should play a key role. Based on the fact that today state bodies in the field of environmental protection have limited human and technical resources, public organizations can act as a connecting link, contributing to the dissemination of information, increasing environmental education and awareness in society, as well as helping to increase the capacity of state bodies in the field environmental protection.

About organization

The public organization “Youth Group for Environmental Protection” / YGPE was registered in 2003. Over the years, the organization has implemented over 40 projects in the field of environmental protection.



ОО «Молодежная Группа по
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