

STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (SEA) AND LAND USE PLANNING



Mission:

To integrate environmental, social & economic considerations into public policies, plans & programmes, through the application of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), to alleviate major problems facing national sustainable development.

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WHAT IS STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (SEA)?

SEA is a decision-support tool which promotes a systematic approach for mainstreaming environmental, social and economic considerations (the triple bottom lines of sustainable development) into public decisions and undertakings.

WHAT ARE THE LEGAL BASES FOR SEA?

- UN Millennium Declaration (Millennium Development Goal no. 7a)
- Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (articles 15a, 40b & 136)
- The Lebanese Framework Law for Environmental Protection no. 444 dated 08/08/02 (articles 21 and 22c).

AIM OF THE PROJECT

The following general objectives have been set for the SEA project:

- To develop a framework for SEA suitable to the Lebanese context
- To build relevant institutional capacities at the Ministry of Environment, the Directorate General of Urban Planning as well as other

concerned government institutions & stakeholders (including the civil society)

- To apply the proposed SEA framework for the development of environmental directives for land use planning at the national level.

PROGRESS

Draft Decree

The consultation on the draft decree was initiated early this month. The circle will be widened once MOE approves the draft. SEA in Lebanon will be referred to as "Integrated Assessment" so as to ascertain its focus on the three pillars of sustainable development; i.e. economic, environmental & social considerations.

Thus far, the following characteristics are proposed:

- Screening: a list of sectoral policies, plans & programmes (PPPs) provided for guidance in annex 1
- Scoping: the responsibility of the ministry/ authority proposing the PPP (i.e. the proponent) with guidance provided in annex 2
- Integrated assessment: undertaken by either the proponent or pre-qualified consultants
- Analysis of alternative policy options: required as an integral part of the analysis

- Management strategy: encompasses both mitigation & monitoring strategies for the proposed PPP
- Review: an inter-ministerial committee, consisting mainly of the Ministries of Environment, Finance, Social Affairs, & Economy & Trade (as permanent members), will review the assessment & proposed PPP. Concerned Ministers will rely on their technical teams or outsourced consultants.
- Public notification: occurs at key stages. Professional associations are expected to play a dynamic role in this process.

Please note that these are characteristics of the preliminary draft of the proposed Decree. Consultations are underway within MOE; once completed, consultations with stakeholders & the civil society will be initiated.

Lebanese SEA Model

As noted in the previous issue, the decision-centered model is the most suitable for the Lebanese context. A conceptual framework outlining the application of procedures & communication channels has been determined.

With regard to the screening list, it is recommended that all law & decree proposals passing through the Council of Ministers will require an assessment. The list has been devised outlining sector specific PPPs with the potential to cause a significant impact on the environment, as well as on social & economic development. The only envisaged exceptions are laws typified by the character of double emergency (*loi revêtu du caractère de double urgence*) & those pertaining to national security & emergency response.

Socio-Economic Appraisal

A socio-economic appraisal has been undertaken in order to develop the SEA process into Sustainability Impact Assessment (SIA) or Integrated Assessment (IA). A series of socio-economic guidelines have been developed for use by government institutions in order to mainstream sustainable development in public decision-making.

Review of Land Use Regulations

Relevant procedures & regulations for land use planning have been compiled & are currently

undergoing review. Environmental guidelines will be developed in close collaboration with the Directorate General for Urban Planning (DGUP) for mainstreaming environmental considerations in land use planning & preparing for the pilot activity which will be undertaken in this field at a later stage of the project.

Training Manual

A draft training manual has been completed in collaboration with local & international consultants. It is intended as a reference for practitioners on the technical requirements of the Integrated Assessment. It also identifies & describes the methodologies & tools employed at different phases of the SEA process. Once finalized, the manual will be disseminated to concerned parties during relevant training sessions.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- The project's website will be activated at the beginning of May
- The schedule of the training sessions on SEA application for both public & private sector representatives will be confirmed in due course.

RESOURCES & PUBLICATIONS

The following list outlines resources & publications issued by the SEA project. Copies of the full document will be made available upon request.

- Framework Note on Environmental Priorities
- Socio-economic guidelines
- Advocacy brochure

QUERIES & DISCUSSION

For more information, queries or comments, please contact us at:

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This newsletter will be circulated every four months. It intends to inform interested parties about the progress achieved to-date on the Strategic Environmental Assessment and Land Use Planning Project, and discuss the latest outputs.