

# EaPGREEN



Partnership for Environment and Growth



This project is funded by the EU



# Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for the Master Plan of Orhei Town





# Applying the UNECE Protocol on SEA

**Strategic environmental assessment (SEA)** is a systematic and anticipatory process, undertaken to analyze the environmental effects of proposed plans, programmes and other strategic initiatives and to integrate the findings into decision-making. The UNECE Protocol on SEA to the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) in a Transboundary Context was adopted in Kyiv in 2003. It entered into force in 2010 and by the end of April 2015 had 26 Parties, including the European Union as a regional organization. The Protocol requires Parties to integrate SEA into their development plans and programmes at the earliest stages — so helping to lay the groundwork for sustainable development.

Under the Protocol, **the term 'SEA' has a specific meaning:**  
*the evaluation of the likely environmental, including health, effects, which comprises the determination of the scope of an environmental report and its preparation, the carrying-out of public participation and consultations, and the taking into account of the environmental report and the results of the public participation and consultations in a plan or programme (art. 2, para. 6).*

## What is the value of SEA in general?

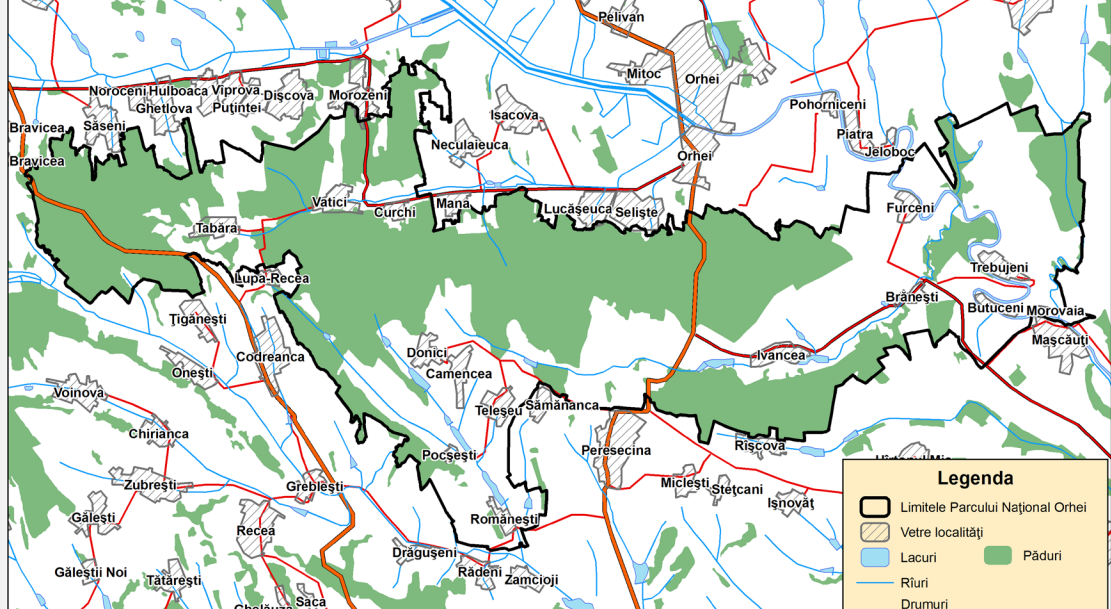
The immediate benefits of SEA application can be found in information that assists sound decision-making and in the consequent gains achieved in environmental protection and sustainable development. When properly implemented, the SEA process should:

- Provide for a high level of environmental protection
- Increase the efficiency of decision-making
- Facilitate the identification of new opportunities for development
- Increase capacity to adapt to climate change
- Help to prevent costly mistakes
- Strengthen governance

More information: [www.unece.org/env/eia/sea\\_protocol.html](http://www.unece.org/env/eia/sea_protocol.html)



UNECE supports the six countries of the EU's Eastern Neighbourhood in developing and applying SEA legislation and systems in the framework of the EaP GREEN programme.



# SEA for the Master Plan of Orhei Town

**The SEA for the Master Plan of Orhei Town was conducted in line with main principles set out in the UNECE Protocol on SEA** in order to generate practical experience with SEA process as well as to test applicability of the draft legislation on SEA in the Republic of Moldova.

The pilot SEA took place in parallel with the process of actualisation of the Master Plan of Orhei so that the SEA-driven consultations as well as analyses prepared by SEA team served to optimization of the Master Plan from the environmental point of view.

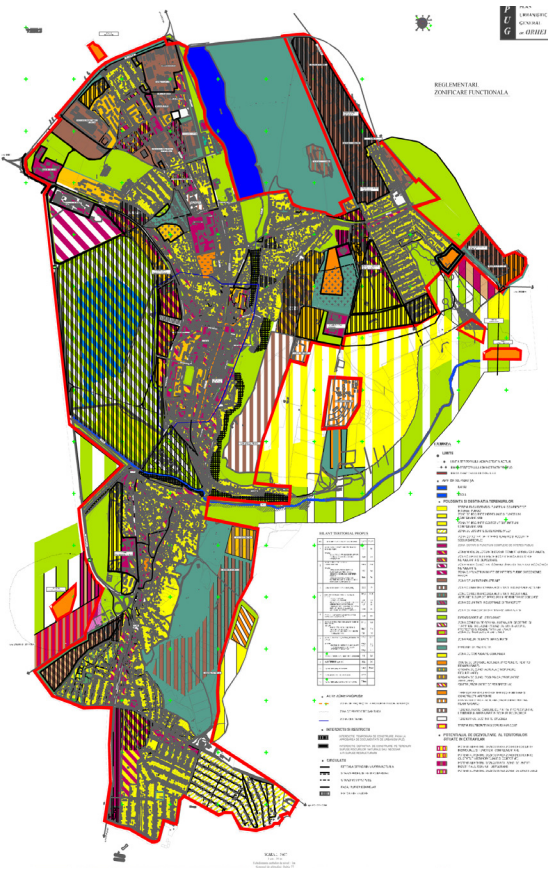
## The SEA process had following phases:

- **Establishment** of SEA team, initial consultations and identification of stakeholders (July – August 2014).
- **Scoping**: identification of key relevant environmental concerns, including a public Scoping Workshop, several targeted consultations, and the preparation of a Scoping Report (end of July – October 2014).

- **Environmental baseline analysis** (October 2014 – December 2014).
- **Evaluation of risks and potential** for cumulative environmental effects, and considering alternatives (December 2014 – February 2015).
- **Development of recommendations** for mitigation measures and environmental monitoring (February – March 2015).
- **Preparation of SEA Environmental Report** and conducting public consultations (January – June 2015).

## The SEA process highlighted major environmental and public health

**concerns** in Orhei, such as the presence of the open stone mines within the city limits, vulnerability of certain areas to flooding, the transport-related pollution in the city center, deficiencies in waste water treatment, poor state of the existing landfill, lack of management and maintenance of the Nature and Paleontological Monument „Defile Orhei”, and limited areas available for spatial development.



- The development a system of drainage, which will reduce water pollution, and improve environmental and sanitary conditions of the city.
- The modernization of waste management infrastructure (provision of platforms and containers for separate waste collection, etc.) in order to help reduce pollution and littering, increase recycling and reuse of secondary resources, and facilitate implementation of environmentally sound approaches in the field of waste management.
- Ensuring basic monitoring of air quality in the city center and on the highway of national significance and the monitoring of water quality (environmental and health indicators).
- Development of a management plan for the natural monument “Defile Orhei” and delimitation of its boundaries in the territory will improve the safety and protection of the monument (see image in the top left corner).

While considering the potential impacts of planned spatial development,

## SEA Evaluation of the Master Plan of Orhei Town

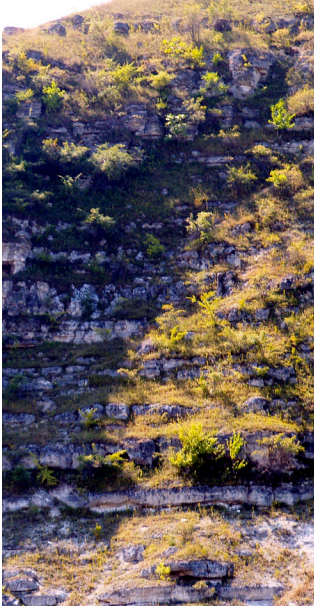
The national SEA team - guided by UNECE experts - evaluated individual components of the Master Plan in order to identify potential for negative environmental impacts of the planned developments as well as potential conflicts with environmental policy goals established in other strategic documents

This allowed to formulate - in agreement with planners - a number of measures to prevent, reduce or mitigate identified potential negative consequences for the environment and public health, which should be of priority in the context of the Master Plan implementation:

SEA experts proposed an alternative routing of a projected bypass road in order to minimize potential negative environmental impacts on the paleontological monument protected by the state “Defile Orhei”.

This alternative has been adopted in the Master Plan.





## Benefits of the Pilot SEA Process in Orhei Town

- The SEA process **provided support to the Master Plan development team** in the identification of the major environmental problems and in obtaining new data, necessary for the environmental chapter and environment-related maps of the Master Plan.
- SEA **facilitated the dialogue** between local authorities and municipal services in the city; environmental and health authorities have participated on the Master Plan development and environmental problems evaluation through the SEA-initiated consultations; public was widely involved.
- The **local priority environmental problems were highlighted** and can be presented to the national level authorities, in cases their assistance (e.g. financial) is necessary for effective solution.
- Data gaps identified during the evaluation **helped to formulate the needs to change/upgrade the data collection schemes** for rayon and national statistical reporting.
- **Measures and indicators for the monitoring** of the performance of the new Master Plan from environmental point of view were developed in the framework of the SEA.
- The SEA facilitated identification of potential for **improvement in the existing draft Law on SEA** in Moldova.
- The SEA process **raised awareness** regarding the environment and urban planning among concerned public.

UNECE's pilot project on SEA in Moldova helped prevent, reduce and mitigate potential negative consequences for the environment and public health in the Orhei region.

The results of the pilot project will be published shortly in a comprehensive report on the UNECE's project website:  
[www.unece.org/environmental-policy/treaties/environmental-impact-assessment/about-us/protocol-on-sea/envseaeapgreen/sea-pilot-projects.html](http://www.unece.org/environmental-policy/treaties/environmental-impact-assessment/about-us/protocol-on-sea/envseaeapgreen/sea-pilot-projects.html)





## About EaP GREEN

The “Greening Economies in the European Union’s Eastern Neighbourhood” (EaP GREEN) programme supports the six the Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries to move towards green economy by decoupling economic growth from environmental degradation and resource depletion. These countries are: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine.

The programme is financially supported by the European Union and other donors. It is jointly implemented by four international organisations - the OECD, UNECE, UNEP and UNIDO.

More information: [www.green-economies-eap.org](http://www.green-economies-eap.org)