



Policy Instruments for Chinese Sustainable Future:
Environmental Policy Integration and
Strategic Environmental Assessment
for the Energy and Transport Sectors

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Proposal for the Transport Plan and EA (ex-post SEA) Review Report

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Project outline

Policy Instruments for Chinese Sustainable Future focuses on the integration of the environment into transport and energy planning in China, both at the policy level and in terms of concrete measures for the two administrative levels of provinces and municipalities. The implementation of this project will help to build transportation and energy-use systems that are environmentally sound and capable of achieving sustainable development in China. As part of the Asia Pro Eco II Programme the project contributes to the programme's main themes for China: energy savings, improved air quality and reduced emissions of GHGs.

At the heart of this project are two closely related mechanisms that are central to the EU efforts to promote sustainability: Environmental Policy Integration (EPI) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).

The action targets the inadequate reflection on environmental policy objectives and the weakness of the environment as a cross-sectoral priority and the need for information and knowledge of technical/practical solutions that can lead to immediate improvements in the development of sectoral plans. The 30 months Action consists of four work packages and multiple activities.

For further information please look at:

http://www.epi-in-china.com/project_information/summary.html

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1. Purpose of this report

The report will be a Review Report (RR) at variance from the earlier planned SEA report due to the fact that no changes will be possible in the Transport Plan and that the assessment taking place is in the form of the review of existing EA report (ex-post SEA) and has to fill in the gaps of the assessment and elaborate the frameworks, which will be proposed for further SEA implementation in China's Transport sector.

The main idea of the framework is to:

- Suggest a table of contents which reflects good international practice
- Ensure that the resulting report would meet the requirements of the European project, as per agreements signed by the partners (deliverable for WP III.2)
- Ensure that the report to be produced is consistent with the requirements of the existing Chinese law, so as to minimise complexity for the Chinese partners. This however, needs to be balanced with the overall aim of the Asia Pro Eco II project to advance SEA practice and provide guidance based on European and international good practice.

The RR framework was coordinated with the Energy case SEA report framework, but has some specific features due to the process happening ex-post.

As it was pointed out in the Amsterdam closing seminar of November 2007, focus has to be on strengths and weaknesses as well as maximum utilization of European experience in the Transport case. Therefore, substantial part of the framework is coordinated not only with the existing information from the Transport Plan (via SWOT), but also with the European Council's Directive on the Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment (EC SEA Directive 2001/42/EC).

2. Key concepts (based on the Energy case concepts)

The proposal for an RR is based on the overarching idea that the Report is a document that illustrates the **quality of the SEA process** (filling the gaps and sections where EA process falls short of the "standard"), as well as providing an **overview of the likely effects** of a plan on the environment and sustainability.

The following principles apply:

- Clarity of language
- Balance between:
 - o The use of the main body of the text to deliver the main messages for decision-makers and the public/stakeholders, and
 - o The Annexes for the more technical data

- Identification and analysis of the SEA process outline, including:
 - o Process design
 - o Consultation, cooperation amongst governmental administrations and key actors (e.g. research institutions)
 - o Public participation or suggestions for PP process design based on international practice with adaptations for China (listing potential groups of the public, locations, tools to be used, etc.)
 - o Strengths and weaknesses of the EA application for strategic level planning (e.g. in Transport sector) and way forward with SEA (in general)
- Evidence of the range of likely effects, including uncertainties and how to deal with them.

3. Transport Plan Review – a Proposal for the Report Framework

The framework below is based on the concepts and documentation presented in the Annexes. It aims to combine above materials. Explanations and questions are placed in brackets [...]

ABBREVIATIONS

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Origins of the Task

1.2 Purpose of the Assessment

1.3 Scope of the Assessment (including timeline and proposals to meet SEA requirements)

[What is included and what is excluded in the EA report and what else has to be there based on the UNECE SEA Protocol¹, and other examples of international SEA practice? Including a geographical coverage? Suggestion: include a table with the key China's legal requirements for EIA/SEA and how these were met in this study + how international expectations for SEA report have been met. Timing issues in relation to the planning process (as per table produced in the SWOT) will be discussed here.

2. THE OUTLINE OF THE PROPOSED TRANSPORT PLAN

[this includes the content of the transport plan and some explanation on each section (key ones) as it was provided for an EA report. Description here should not be long. 1-2 paras. SWOT did not have how the Transport Plan was structured. Perhaps it is like Chapter 2 of EA report "Survey of Planning for Expressway Network and Analysis of Coordination"??]

3. ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

[It combines the elements of "Survey of Current Environmental Situation in Shaanxi Province" of the EA report and adds extras as appropriate]

3.1 Introduction

3.2 Shaanxi baseline

- Environmental characteristics of the area affected by the plan (perhaps the entire province, and issues in relation to the environmental characteristics: landscape, cultural heritage, density of the population, etc., see item (c) of the Annex 1 of the EC SEA Directive)
- Environmental quality status (current problems, constrain factors: air quality, including rare animals and plants, see item (d) of the Annex 1 of the EC SEA Directive)

¹ United National Economic Commission for Europe Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment under the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in Transboundary Context (www.unece.org)

- Future trends of the environmental situation if no Transport Network will be extended
 - This chapter can be structured as appropriate
- 3.3 Key messages from the baseline [environmental setting] review and conclusions

4. THE SEA: OBJECTIVES, PROCESS AND METHODS

[It includes elements from the SWOT report]

4.1 SEA Objectives [as per SWOT “SEA Purpose and approach” from the Chapter 8 and more]

- Environmental and sustainability issues [as per SWOT Chapter 6: including additions suggested by Chinese partners]
- Environmental and sustainability objectives and targets [as per SWOT Chapter 7: including additions suggested by Chinese partners]
 - o List of environmental and sustainability objectives
 - o Discussion on how the environmental and sustainability objectives cover the issues highlighted in the item (f) of the Annex 1 of the EC SEA Directive)
 - o Compatibility analysis of the selected environmental and sustainability objectives

4.2 SEA process

- Integrating planning and assessment processes [why it was not been done in China and how can it be changed, what is needed and comments to the table on the main stages in planning and assessment of the ShaanXi Province highway Plan]
- Stakeholders [actors] and responsibilities
 - o Key actors and consultation process with them [state and province level]
 - o Public participation [assessment of the Chapter 7 of the EA report, communication channels, identification of interested and concerned stakeholders, how it can work]
 - o Communication process as for EA Report and comments

4.3 SEA methods [Assessment Methodology]

- Methods used in the EA report [Chapter 4 of the EA report] and analysis of their applicability
- SEA assessment methods which can be used for Transport Plans [as per SWOT Chapter 8]
- Assessment Indicators
- Other

4.4 Conclusions

5. ASSESSMENT OF THE DRAFT TRANSPORT PLAN

5.1 Introduction

5.2 Main findings of the assessment [Transport plan chapter by chapter]: significant environmental effects and their mitigation measures

[This section will depend very much on how the plan is developed. The framework below is very general and may not fit all the chapters, since in some cases there may be no assessment, but additional information suggested. The impact prediction categories should be based on the objectives or the key environmental issues that have been suggested in SWOT. Detail assessment goes into the annex and here we need only summaries]

5.3 Cumulative impacts and proposed mitigation measures

5.4 Regionally other significant projects (plan or programmes) and links to their EIA (SEA)s [if any! And mitigation measures proposed to link the plans to ensure that they are coordinated]

5.5 Impacts on nature conservation sites and mitigation measures [where appropriate, description of the sites to be affected and where in the report the mitigation measures are explained, supposedly in the chapter 6 below]

5.6 Consultation process (on the scope of the project, on the EA and on the Plan, description is needed of how communication was carried out with Shaanxi Provincial Department of Communications and Shaanxi Provincial Department of Communications and other involved organizations, forms of consultation)

- 5.7 Trans-boundary impacts [into other provinces? If not done, was it feasible? Who to consult in such cases and on which issues? When?]
- 5.8 Difficulties and uncertainties [as per chapter 8 of the EA report]
- 5.9 Conclusions and recommendations

6. DISCUSSION ON ALTERNATIVES

[we are aware that there are none, but could you think of any, which could have been there and describe them shortly? In European planning and SEA practice, setting and describing alternatives is the task for planners, but since we are aiming at setting example for SEA in China, it is important to demonstrate how the process should be with all the steps, therefore this task. Here we need to describe in 1-2 pages possible alternatives so the planners would know what we mean by alternatives.

Additionally, as per item (h) of the Annex 1 of the EC SEA Directive, but taking into account the specifics of the Chinese planning process for transport, how the alternatives can be introduced, suggestions and how SEA process can help with it?]

7. DISCUSSION ON MONITORING ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

[as per item (i) of the Annex 1 of the EC SEA Directive, but taking into account the specifics of the Chinese environmental monitoring system, indicators, suggestions and how SEA process can fit?]

7.1 Indicators used in the EA

7.2 Additional indicators

7.3 Plan to collect information on the impacts of the plan based on the indicators. [Possibility to link it with the national environmental monitoring system]

8. NEXT STEPS

8.1 Commenting on this report and documentation of the decisions

- Consultation with other Government authorities
- Public Participation [it seems there was no public consultation, can it be organized for the purpose of the review of the plan? How would you plan one, details of methods, timing and scope]

8.2 Monitoring and follow-up measures envisaged

9. NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

[as per item (j) of the Annex 1 of the EC SEA Directive, but may be similar to 'executive summary'. There is not rule where to place it in the report. Ideally must include summary and conclusions (all) from all above listed chapters:

- Outline of the objectives of the plan and relations of the plan to other plans/projects (taking place or recent)
- Relevant environmental features of the territory (short) and possible future situation without the plan implementation
- Existing environmental problems in the territory, especially in relation to implementation of the plan and protected areas
- Relevant environmental objectives (and why? How they have been selected and proposed)
- Summary of significant effects on the environmental media and issues namely: biodiversity, population, health, soil, water, air and climate change, material assets, cultural heritage, landscape and relationship of all above (summary of cumulative effects).
- Note on the alternatives and the alternatives selected (or why there was only one alternative)
- Monitoring and its set up (here on indicators and the process of monitoring)
- On the consultation process which was done in order to come with conclusions of this report and how the consultations over this document will be taken into account.

APPENDICES (in separate files)

- A. SEA expert group
- B. SWOT report
- C. EA report (or at least the background section of the EA report)
- E. Any analysis or analytical tables (not repetition of the SWOT or EA report, but any other analysis)
- F. Cumulative impact identification tables and mitigation
- G. Consultation meetings' proceeding: minutes, names of the participant, location, time, etc.

Annex: Information used to Prepare the Framework

This report is based on two useful inputs from documents by the Chinese partners and additionally, the proposed content of the Environmental (SEA) Report as of EC SEA Directive (2001/42/EC) was used.

A) Contents for the Transport EA report

Chapter 1 Introduction
 Chapter 2 Survey of Planning for Expressway Network and Analysis of Coordination
 Chapter 3 Survey of Current Environmental Situation in Shaanxi Province
 Chapter 4 Environmental Impact Analysis and Assessment
 Chapter 5 Alleviating Measures and Suggestions
 Chapter 6 Environmental Management, Monitoring and Follow-UP Assessment
 Chapter 7 Public Participation
 Chapter 8 Difficulties and Analysis of Uncertainty
 Chapter 9 Summary of Implementation

B) The main stages in planning and assessment of the ShaanXi Province Highway Plan

Date	Planning tasks	Lead organisation	Inputs required	Analysis proposed	Outputs expected
Aug. 2005		Shaanxi Provincial People's Government	Planning for State Expressway Network	Investigation and research	Require further accelerating the construction of expressway
Aug. 2005		Shaanxi Provincial Department of Communications			Scale of highway network
Nov. 2005	Highway network planning scheme	ShaanXi Highway Survey and Design Institute			Highway network planning scheme
Jan 2006	Solicit opinions	Shaanxi Provincial Department of Communications	Highway network planning scheme	Consult relevant departments	Adjustment opinions of highway network planning by all departments
June 2006	Final draft	Shaanxi Provincial Department of Communications	Opinions put forward by all departments; planning protocol	Adjustment of planning scheme	Plan report
Sep 2006	Environmental Impact Assessment	CATS	Demand models; Routes Etc.	Indicators based evaluation....	Constraint maps SEA Report
Nov. 2006	Analysis of results from assessments	ShaanXi Environmental Protection Agency	SEA Report	Revision of the report by ???	Memo explaining how the results were considered ???
Feb 2007	Plan Approval	Provincial Gov (with DRC)	Final Draft Plan	Council Debate??	Final Plan

C) Proposed content of the SEA Report based on the EC SEA Directive (2001/42/EC), Annex I

- (a) an outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan or programme and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes;
- (b) the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme;
- (c) the environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected;
- (d) any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC;
- (e) the environmental protection objectives, established at international, Community or Member State level, which are relevant to the plan or programme and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation;
- (f) the likely significant effects (1) on the environment, including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors;
- (g) the measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme;
- (h) an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with, and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered in compiling the required information;
- (i) a description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring in accordance with Article 10;
- (j) a non-technical summary of the information provided under the above headings.