

GUIDELINES ON INCLUSION OF GREEN ASPECTS INTO PUBLIC POLICY DOCUMENTS

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The Guidelines on inclusion of green aspects into public policy documents have been developed in cooperation with the Public Policy Secretariat and the Ministry of Environmental Protection of the Republic of Serbia.

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1.Introduction

The growing challenges faced by the world due to increasingly pronounced climate changes and the degradation of the environment and natural resources have resulted in the strengthening of global initiatives and agreements to take actions to mitigate the consequences of human activities that affect the entire living world on earth.

The global agreement for the preservation of the planet represents the 2030 Agenda of the United Nations, which set the goals of sustainable development, the country's obligations to contribute to the achievement of the set global goals, in order to ensure the conditions for economic and social development of both current and future generations.

The processes related to environmental protection and sustainable development carried out in the European Union are one of the key drivers in the implementation of Agenda 2030 in the Republic of Serbia. The Green Deal and the Climate Action, set EU member states to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050.

The Republic of Serbia is a signatory to the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans, which further encourages activities to introduce elements of environmental protection into other relevant sectoral policies.

In the framework of the project "Improving Public Finance Management for the Green Transition in the Republic of Serbia", which is being conducted in cooperation with the World Bank and the French Development Agency (Agence française de développement/AFD)¹, the need for the development of Guidelines on inclusion of green aspects in documents of public policies was recognized (hereinafter: Guidelines), as support for the implementation of the regulation that foresees the inclusion of those aspects in sectoral public policies.

The purpose of the Guidelines is to ensure the inclusion of **green aspects, which also include climate aspects** (hereinafter: green aspects), respectively to ensure the application of regulations and principles of sustainable use of natural resources, management of environmental protection, mitigation of climate change and adaptation to changed climate conditions in the process of drafting, adoption and implementation of public policy documents (hereinafter: PPD). In the process of including green aspects in PPD, solutions that could have a significant impact on the environment, climate change

¹ The Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Environmental Protection, the Republic Directorate for Property, the Republic Secretariat for Public Policies and the Directorate for Public Procurement participate in the project.

and human health are identified and efforts are made to ensure the optimization of public policies in terms of their impact on the mentioned aspects. This includes identifying additional measures that could be taken to eliminate the negative impacts of public policies or to reduce these impacts within acceptable limits.

Considering the impact on the environment and climate change in the process of making public policies ensures the reduction of costs for eliminating the consequences of harmful effects on the environment, as well as the compliance of public policies with the principles of sustainability and the expected contribution to the sustainable development goals of the United Nations 2030 Agenda, as well as other relevant international and national regulations related to the environment and climate.

The guidelines are intended for public administration officials at the republican and provincial level and at the level of local self-government units, who are involved in the development and adoption of the PPD, as well as all experts involved in the development of the PPD and the assessment of the impact of public policies on the environment, climate and human health.

The guidelines contain practical instructions for the highest possible inclusion of relevant aspects in the PPD and achieving, as much as possible, a more uniform approach in the application of the regulations governing the obligation to include the policy of environmental protection and climate change in other sectoral policies.

Within the Guidelines, possible ways of including green aspects in PPD are shown, based on current regulations in the field of planning system, climate change and strategic environmental impact assessment.

The guidelines were drawn up in cooperation with the Republic Secretariat for Public Policy and the Ministry of Environmental Protection, including consultations with experts in all relevant sectors, which are responsible for environmental quality management, strategic impact assessment, climate change and nature protection.

2. Framework for creating Guidelines

2.1 Methodological approach to the development of Guidelines

As a first step in the preparation of the Guidelines, an analysis of the existing international and national planning and regulatory framework relevant to the inclusion of green aspects in the PPD was carried out and an overview of the scope of documents to which the Guidelines refer, at all levels of planning: national, provincial and local. After identifying the scope of the PPD, the differences between the process of creating

an environmental impact assessment and the process of carrying out a strategic environmental impact assessment were considered.

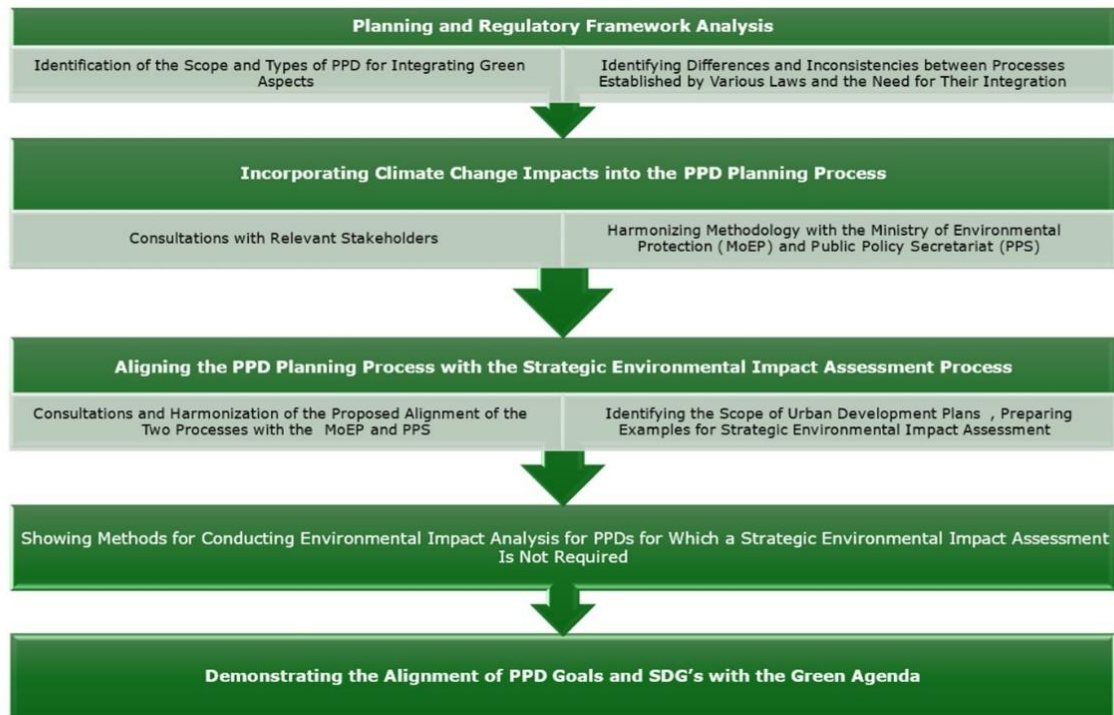
The proposal for harmonizing the prescribed process of creating a PPD and the prescribed process of implementing a environmental strategic impact assessment, for PPDs that are subject to a strategic assessment, was discussed and agreed between the Ministry of Environmental Protection and the Public Policy Secreteriat.

In order to present the way of including green aspects through the implementation of a strategic PPD environmental assessment, existing examples of environmental strategic impact assessment reports were analyzed. Also, the coverage of sectors that are subject to the development of a environmental strategic impact assessment was identified, as well as the coverage for which the inclusion of green aspects is carried out according to the Law on the Planning System.

In order to present the inclusion of the impact of climate change in the process of defining goals and measures in sectoral PPD, as a new approach in public policy planning, consultations were conducted with the relevant employees of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and a harmonized proposal was prepared.

Linking the PPD goals with the sustainable development goals of Agenda 2030 and the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans was presented in accordance with the methodology developed through the activities of Public Policy Secreteriat in connection with the implementation of the goals of sustainable development in the Republic of Serbia.

The presentation of the methodology for the preparation of the Guidelines is given in Graph 1.



Graph 1. Presentation of the methodology for the development of Guidelines

The content of the Guidelines is structured in such a way that the framework for the preparation of the Guidelines is first presented with an overview of valid regulations, strategic and planning documents, which regulate certain obligations to include aspects of the environment and climate change in the preparation of the PPD. Then the principles on the basis of which environmental protection policies are integrated into other sectoral policies, as well as on the basis of which policies are created in the area of environmental protection itself, are listed.

After the introductory framework, the ways of including relevant aspects in PPD are listed.

In this chapter, clarifications are given on the ways in which climate change projections on the future development of a certain sector are taken into account during the creation of the PPD and the most relevant sectors within which these impacts should be recognized when creating public policies. Also, the ways of including green aspects in PPD are presented through the assessment of the impact of the foreseen options, i.e. the proposed measures within the PPD on the environment, where two different processes are described: 1) the process of strategic assessment of the impact on the environment, which is carried out for the PPD for which is the prescribed obligation to create an environmental impact assessment strategy and 2) the process of analyzing

the impact of determined measures on the environment for PPD for which that analysis is carried out based on regulations governing the planning system.

Finally, guidelines are given for showing the contribution of the PPD goals to the achievement of the sustainable development goals of the 2030 Agenda and the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans.

Within the chapter detailed guidelines are given on how, through the mapping of indicators of goals and PPD, with indicators of sustainable development goals, the contribution of PPD goals to the realization of the Agenda can be assessed 2030, and in what way PPD goals are connected with the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans. Also, a format was proposed for displaying those links in the PPD itself.

2.2 Regulatory framework for the inclusion of green aspects in public policy documents

The international framework, which largely determines the treatment of the environment and strives to include environmental protection policies in other sectoral policies, is determined by Agenda 2030 and various conventions in the field of protection of various factors of the environment and climate change.

Agenda 2030 was adopted in 2015, as an effort at the level of the United Nations (UN) to re-emphasize the commitment of the countries of the world to sustainable development. The obligations of the signatories are specified through 17 goals and 169 sub-goals. Achieving the goals of sustainable development, for which indicators for monitoring progress have been established, depends on policies that should ensure progress in the development of both current and future generations, taking into account the natural capacities of the Planet to support such development. The key principle is to achieve welfare for people and every individual, so that no one is left out of development. A number of sustainable development goals relate to preserving the quality of natural resources, water, air, soil and biodiversity, as well as reducing pressures on the quality of the environment by achieving sustainable cities, promoting sustainable practices for sustainable energy, industry, agriculture, etc.

In the context of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, numerous conventions related to the environment and climate were adopted. One of the significant steps towards achieving a global agreement on joint action is the **Paris Agreement**, which was adopted in December 2015, in order to strengthen the global response to threats caused by climate change. Pusher countries have committed to reduce greenhouse gas (Green House Gass/GHG) emissions in order to limit the increase in average global

temperature to "well below" 2°C, that is, to strengthen efforts to limit the increase in average global temperature to 1.5°C by the end of the century, compared to the pre-industrial period. Also, the the significant Convention on Biological Diversity (Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework after 2020) was adopted, which includes 4 general and 23 specific goals, as well as other valid agreements in the fields protection of air, water and soil.

As a member of the UN, the Republic of Serbia undertook to contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, while it confirmed the Paris Agreement in 2017.

The Republic of Serbia mostly implements Agenda 2030 and other international conventions through the process of EU integration.

At the EU level, there are numerous public policy documents that achieve the goals of sustainable development. One of the very important ones is the **European Green Deal**, with whom the EU committed itself to meeting the goals of the Agenda 2030 and the Paris Agreement. It represents an ambitious package of measures aimed at making Europe the first climate-neutral continent by 2050, with zero GHG emission.

In addition to the European Green Deal, a number of other strategic EU documents were adopted, which are significant from the point of view of including green aspects in sectoral policies and achieving sustainable development. Some of those documents are: **Ready for 55% (Fit for 55)** – climate package adopted to align key EU policies with the goal of reducing GHG emissions by at least 55% by 2030 compared to 1990 levels, which includes the new EU Climate Change Adaptation Strategy (2021) and proposes new legislative instruments for achieving the goals agreed and established in the Climate Act (2021). Other strategies that enable the achievement of the vision for carbon neutrality, green and digital transformation for sustainable development in Europe follow: **Strategy for Sustainable and Smart Mobility** (2020), **New Industrial Strategy for Europe** (2020, supplemented in 2021), new **Action Plan for Circular Economy - for a cleaner and more competitive Europe** (2021).

Also, there are numerous documents for solving existing pollution problems in the environment in order to achieve zero pollution with toxic substances, as well as for the restoration and recovery of natural resources and the protection of human health: **Strategy for sustainability in the field of chemicals** (2002), **Clean Air Program for Europe** (2013). **EU Land Strategy until 2030** (2021), **EU Biodiversity Strategy until 2030** (2021), **EU Forest Strategy until 2030** (2021), **Farm to Fork Strategy** (2020).

In accordance with the new policy of carbon neutrality and the newly adopted strategic documents, the EU revised the existing legislative framework. A series of directives aimed at achieving the goals of the Green Agenda were adopted, which envisage reducing GHG emissions, increasing the use of renewable energy sources, improving

energy efficiency, improving waste management and recycling, protecting natural resources and biodiversity, supporting ecologically sustainable agriculture and fisheries, as well as encouraging sustainable mobility and construction of buildings with high energy standards. On the basis of the treaty establishing the EU, it was established as an imperative for sustainable development, and in this regard, the EU has since its foundation established very extensive regulations related to environmental protection. In connection with the harmonization of sectoral policies with environmental protection policy, in 2001, the EU adopted the Directive on the strategic assessment of the impact of certain plans and programs on the environment².

The Republic of Serbia accepted the agreement on the implementation of the Green Agenda, by accepting the Sofia Agreement on the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans (2020). That agreement foresees the implementation of the Green Agenda through several "pillars": decarbonization, circular economy, pollution reduction, protection and preservation of biodiversity, sustainable agriculture and rural development, and sustainable mobility. The Green Agenda is integrated into the national planning system by creating an umbrella sectoral strategy for environmental protection and climate change.

As part of its public policy documents, the Republic of Serbia has established goals related to the improvement of various segments of the environment and the fight against climate change. Valid documents, and documents that will result from the strategy for the green agenda, set goals related to the protection and preservation of nature, air, water, the development of a circular economy, ensuring industrial safety, achieving low-carbon development and adapting to the changed climatic conditions, etc³.

The relevant regulatory framework for the inclusion of green aspects in public policy documents is represented by the following laws:

- 1) Law on Environmental Protection;
- 2) Law on Planning System;
- 3) Law on Strategic Environmental Impact Assessment;
- 4) Law on Nature Protection;
- 5) Law on Climate Change.

² Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 June 2001 on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment;

³ The current PPD are: Strategy for low-carbon development, Strategy for water management, Air protection program, Program for adaptation to changed climate conditions, Program for circular economy, Sludge Management Program, Nature Protection Program.

Law on Environmental Protection ("Official Gazette of RS", no. 135/04, 36/09, 36/09 - other law, 72/09 - other law, 43/11, 14/16 -US, 76 /18, 95/18 - dr. law and 95/18 - dr. law) regulates the integral system of environmental protection, which ensures the realization of the human right to life and development in a healthy environment and a balanced relationship between economic development and the environment in the Republic of Serbia. The creation of public policies through PPD is regulated by the

Law on the Planning System ("Official Gazette of RS", number 30/18). This law governs the planning system of the Republic of Serbia, which implies the management of the system of public policies and medium-term planning, types and content of planning documents, which in accordance with their competences are proposed, adopted and implemented by all participants in the planning system, mutual compliance of planning documents, the procedure for establishing and implementing public policies and obligations to report on the implementation of planning documents.

In accordance with this law, **public policies** represent the directions of action of the Republic of Serbia, autonomous provinces and local self-government units (hereinafter: local government), in certain areas, in order to achieve certain goals at the level of society. The **management of the public policy system** itself implies the process of planning public policies, conducting analysis of effects, preparing and adopting planning documents, coordinating, monitoring, evaluating the effects of public policies in order to review and improve them, as well as reporting on the achieved effects of public policies.

The aforementioned law also defines the types of planning documents, namely: 1) development planning documents; 2) public policy documents, and 3) other planning documents. While development planning documents (Development Plan of the Republic of Serbia, development plans of local authorities, Spatial Plan of the Republic of Serbia, other spatial and general organizational plan)⁴ are documents of the widest scope, which determine the directions of development and are of the widest importance for the bearer, PPD are documents that are determined public policies, mainly in different sectors, or already established public policies are elaborated in development planning documents.

This law also defines the PPD types. PPD consists of: 1) strategy; 2) program; 3) policy concept, and 4) action plan. **The strategy** according to sectoral coverage can be sectoral or intersectoral, and according to spatial coverage it can be national (if it covers the entire territory of the Republic of Serbia) or subnational (if it covers part of the

⁴ The Spatial Plan of the Republic, and other spatial plans, the general urban plan are defined by the law governing spatial and urban planning.

territory of the Republic of Serbia, as it is geographically connected or with some common features and characteristics). The program, in accordance with this law, is a PPD narrower in scope than the strategy, which, as a rule, elaborates a special goal of the strategy or some other planning document in accordance with which it is adopted (Development Plan, Government Program, Development Plan local authorities, policy concept). **The policy concept** is a starting document of public policy, which adopts the principles and/or guidelines according to which the systemic reform in a certain area will be implemented. The policy concept can also provide guidelines for creating a strategy or program and adopt the principles of reform in a certain area. **An action plan** is a PPD of the highest level of detail, through which a strategy or program is elaborated, with the aim of managing the dynamics of the implementation of public policy measures that contribute to the achievement of the specific goals of the strategy or program. The action plan is an integral part of the strategy and program and, as a rule, is adopted simultaneously with those public policy documents.

The strategy, program and policy concept, among other things, contain general and special public policy goals that are intended to be achieved and measures to achieve general and special goals, while strategies and programs also contain key performance indicators at the level of general and special goals and measures, which measures the efficiency and effectiveness of the implementation of public policies established by that document.

The law on the planning system also stipulates the obligation to carry out an **analysis of effects**, which is carried out during the process of planning, formulating and adopting public policies, in order to assess the change to be achieved, its elements and the cause-and-effect relationships between them and the selection of optimal measures to achieve the goals public policies. That portion represents an ex-ante analysis of the effects. Also, it is planned to carry out an analysis both during and after the implementation of already adopted public policies, for the purpose of evaluating the effects, reviewing and improving the valid public policies, which represents an ex-post analysis of the effects.

The accompanying regulation⁵ prescribes the steps in conducting an ex-ante analysis, which include: 1) analysis of the current situation, identification of the change that needs to be achieved in a certain area and the conditions for implementing that change, 2) determination of general and specific goals and performance indicators for monitoring the achievement of goals, 3) identifying options, i.e. possible

⁵ Regulation on the methodology of public policy management, analysis of the effects of public policies and regulations and the content of individual public policy documents ("Official Gazette of RS", No. 8/2019)

measures/groups of measures for achieving special goals and resources for their implementation, 4) analysis of effects option, 5) choosing the optimal option or the optimal combination of considered options 6) identifying the necessary resources for the implementation and monitoring of the implementation of public policies and determines performance indicators at the level of established measures.

When considering possible implementable options (possible measures or a group of measures to achieve special goals of PPD), the "status quo" option must also be taken into consideration, which serves as a base scenario in relation to which other options are considered.

Comparison of options implies a comparison of all the advantages and disadvantages of each of the analyzed options, in order to determine which one is the most effective for achieving specific goals, that is, which one has the least disadvantages. Based on the results of the effect analysis, the preferred options are first selected, and then the optimal option is chosen from among the preferred ones, as the best way to achieve the established goals.

The choice of the optimal option based on the comparison of all the identified and analyzed options is reduced to the comparison of the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of the considered options.

In accordance with this regulation, the analysis of the effects of options, i.e. measures/groups of measures is carried out in relation to the following types of effects: 1) financial effects, 2) economic effects, 3) effects on society, 4) effects on the environment, 5) management effects.

The effects analysis of the considered options on the environment, in accordance with the aforementioned regulation, involves looking at all aspects of the environment, including effects on water, air and soil quality, food quality, urban ecology and waste management, raw materials, energy efficiency and renewable energy sources, integrity and ecosystem biodiversity, as well as flora and fauna. It was also stated that this analysis is particularly important if considering options for measures in areas such as competitiveness, agriculture, mineral resources and mining and energy and transport, in order to ensure environmental protection and promote sustainable development by integrating the basic principles of environmental protection into the preparation process of public policy documents that include the above-mentioned issues. Also, it was attributed that during the analysis and assessment of the effects on the environment, it is necessary to respect the precautionary principle and to carry out a detailed analysis and assessment of the effects on the environment whenever options for determining public policy measures related to the health of citizens are considered, as well as that when determining measure of those public policies, it is necessary to foresee

supplementary/corrective measures in order to reduce the risk to citizens' health. In the aforementioned regulation, the questions on the basis of which the analysis of the impact on the environment is performed, which are attached to this regulation, are defined.

In connection with the implementation of the analysis of effects on the environment, the said regulation established that **the analysis of effects on the environment of the measures provided for in the PPD is of a strategic nature, in the sense of the law regulating the strategic assessment of the impact on the environment, and that it is prepared in detail in accordance with that law.**

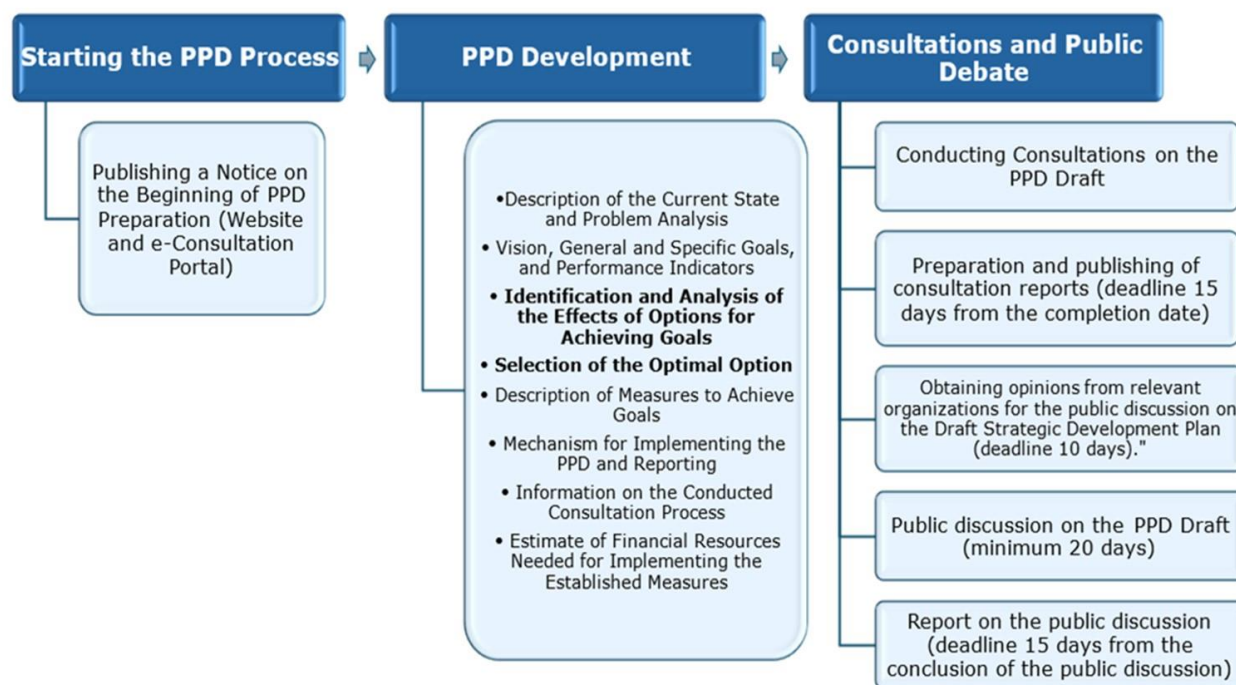
The law on the planning system also stipulates the obligation to carry out a **consultative process** in all stages of the development of the PPD. Thus, PPD proponents are obliged to conduct consultations with interested parties and target groups during the ex-ante analysis of the effects of public policies and collect and process data, in order to propose the optimal option or the optimal combination of considered options. In terms of this law, **interested parties** are bodies and organizations, natural and legal persons who have an interest in public policy measures, while **target groups** are groups of natural and/or legal persons, i.e. other interested parties that are under the influence of public policy measures. Stakeholders and target groups are citizens and business entities, associations of citizens or business entities and other civil society organizations, scientific-research, professional and other organizations, as well as representatives of state bodies, local authorities and other participants in the planning system who implement or in relation to which that policy is implemented.

In connection with the implementation of the consultation, the competent proponent is obliged to publish information on the results of the consultation on its website, no later than 15 days after the end of the consultation.

The same law prescribes the obligation to conduct a **public hearing** before submitting for consideration and adoption of the PPD, as well as the preparation and publication of a report on the conducted public hearing on the website of the competent proponent. If the competent proposer is a state administration body, the report on the implementation of the public hearing is published on the e-Government Portal within 15 days from the end of the public hearing. The duration of the public hearing is prescribed by the Rules of Procedure of the Government, for PPD whose proponents are state administration bodies, whereby it is stipulated that the public hearing for PPD lasts at least 20 days. For PPD whose proponents are local authorities, the duration of the public hearing is prescribed by acts of the competent authority (autonomous province, unit of local self-government).

Exceptions to this law, to the extent necessary to adapt to a special law, are planning documents, which are adopted on the basis of laws governing the budget system, spatial and urban planning, defense, security, i.e. confidentiality of data or laws confirming international agreements, which prescribes the adoption of a planning document deviating from certain provisions of the law governing the planning system (Art. 50).

The documents adopted in connection with the process of negotiations on the accession of the Republic of Serbia to the European Union are recognized as a special group of PPD. Those PPDs are prepared in the form, with content, according to the procedure and within the deadlines stipulated by the methodological recommendations of the European Commission, i.e. the methodological instructions of the Government, in accordance with the needs arising from the accession process (Article 49), and the competent proponent conducts consultations in accordance with legal framework on conducting negotiations on the accession of the Republic of Serbia to the European Union. The process of creating a PPD is given in **Graph 2**.



Graph 2. The procedure for creating a PPD

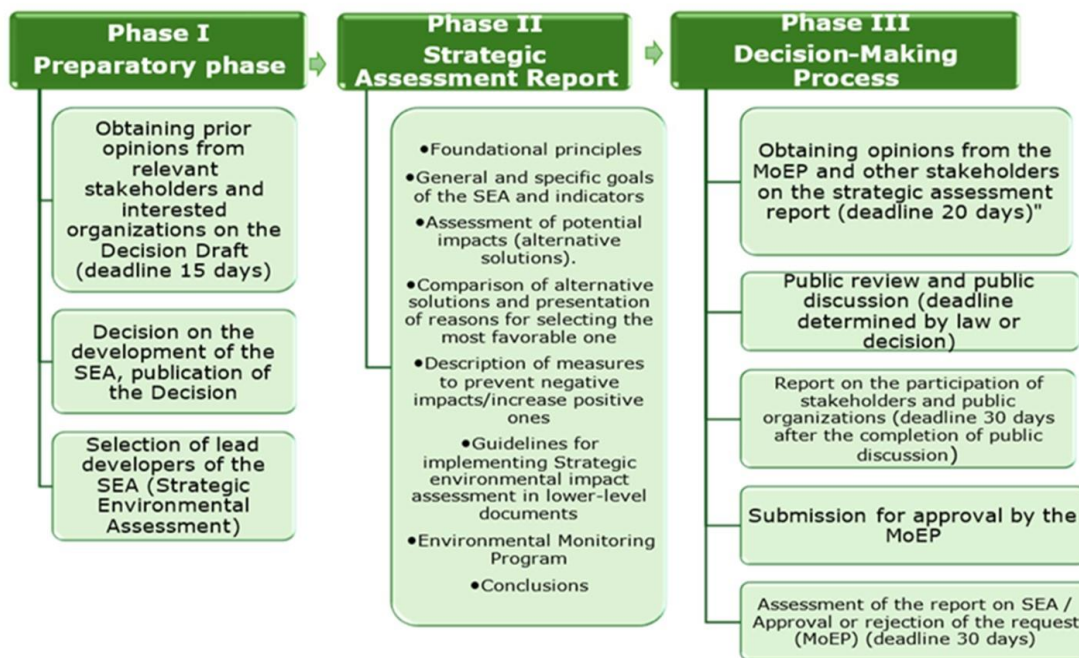
The current **Law on Strategic Environmental Impact Assessment**⁶ ("Official Gazette of the RS", No. 135/2004, 88/2010) prescribes the method and procedure for assessing the impact of certain plans and programs on the environment, i.e. planning documents and public policy documents (hereinafter: strategic assessment), in order to ensure environmental protection and promote sustainable development by integrating the basic principles of environmental protection into the process of preparing and adopting plans and programs.

The law prescribes the scope of documents for which it is mandatory to carry out a strategic assessment (Art. 5), as well as that the responsible **minister prescribes a list for which it is mandatory to carry out a strategic assessment and a list for which a strategic assessment can be requested**. Exceptions are explicitly prescribed for which a strategic assessment is not carried out and they refer to plans and programs intended for the defense of the country, to plans mitigating and eliminating the consequences of natural disasters and on financial and budget plans.

The minister in charge of environmental protection shall determine in more detail the lists of plans and programs for which a strategic environmental impact assessment is mandatory and the lists of plans and programs for which a strategic environmental impact assessment can be requested.

In terms of the law, **plans and programs mean** all development or other plans and programs, foundations, strategies, including their amendments, which are prepared and/or adopted by an authority at the republican, provincial or local level, or which the competent authority prepares for the respective the adoption procedure in the National Assembly or the Government of the Republic of Serbia, that is, the assembly or the executive body of an autonomous province, that is, a local self-government unit, as well as plans and programs adopted on the basis of regulations. The process of conducting a strategic assessment includes the preparation of a report on the state of the environment, the implementation of the consultation process, the consideration of the report and the results of the consultation in the decision-making process and the adoption of certain plans and programs, as well as the provision of information and data on the decision made. The strategic assessment report is part of the documentation that is attached to the plan or program and contains the identification, description and assessment of possible significant impacts on the environment due to the implementation of the plan and program, as well as the variants considered based on the goals and spatial scope of the plan and program. The conducting process of a strategic assessment is given in **Graph 3**.

⁶ <https://pravno-informacioni-sistem.rs/eli/rep/sgrs/skupstina/zakon/2010/88/5>



Graph 3. The conducting procedure of a strategic assessment

This law stipulates the obligation to include interested parties during the review process of the report on the strategic environment impact assessment. The law recognizes interested authorities⁷ and organizations⁸, the public and the interested public⁹.

The impact assessment of plans and programs is carried out on the basis of the prescribed criteria in relation to the objectives of the strategic assessment, in such a way that the impact of variant solutions to achieve the objectives of the plans and programs is considered and the most favorable solution for the environment is selected.

The Law on Nature Protection¹⁰ ("Official Gazette of RS", no. 36/2009, 88/2010, 91/2010 - correction, 14/2016, 95/2018 - other law, 71/2021) regulates the protection and preservation of nature, biological, geological and regional diversity as part of the environment. This law stipulates the obligation to carry out the procedure for **assessing the acceptability of the ecological network**, which evaluates the possible impact of

⁷ organs and organizations of the Republic, autonomous provinces and local self-government units that, in accordance with their competences, have an interest in making decisions related to the environmental protection

⁸ the public includes one or more natural or legal persons, their associations, organizations or groups

⁹ interested public includes the public that is affected or may be affected by the plan or program and/or that has an interest in making decisions related to environmental protection, including non-governmental organizations that deal with environmental protection and that are registered with the competent authority

¹⁰ <https://pravno-informacioni-sistem.rs/SIGlasnikPortal/eli/rep/sgrs/skupstina/zakon/2009/36/9/reg>

the strategy, plan, basis, program, project, works or activities on the conservation objectives and the integrity of the ecological network area.

The above-mentioned procedure is carried out by the ministry responsible for environmental protection or the agency of the autonomous province, among other things, for strategies and programs that may have a significant negative impact on conservation goals and a negative impact on the integrity of the ecologically significant area, with previously obtained conditions from the competent institute for nature protection.

The acceptability assessment procedure consists of: 1) preliminary assessment, and 2) main assessment and is carried out in accordance with the precautionary principle.

Also, this law stipulates that the evaluation of acceptability for the ecological network is carried out for strategies, plans, foundations and programs for which, in accordance with a special law, the strategic assessment procedure is carried out, as well as for projects, for which, in accordance with a special law, carries out the impact assessment procedure, the acceptability assessment is carried out within those procedures¹¹.

After the admissibility assessment procedure has been carried out, if it is determined that the proposed document may have a significant negative impact on the objectives of nature conservation and a negative impact on the integrity of the ecologically significant area, the competent authority refuses to give consent, and in cases where there is no other alternative solution or there is a determined general interest, the competent authority can issue consent, along with the adoption of a decision of the ministry responsible for environmental protection, which determines compensatory measures. In the process of carrying out the acceptability assessment, the involvement of the public, as well as its notification of the results of that involvement, was foreseen.

Law on Climate Change¹² ("Official Gazette of RS", number 26/2021), among other things, regulates the system for limiting GHG emissions and for adapting to changed climate conditions.

This law stipulates the obligation to harmonize **sectoral strategies** with the **Carbon Development Strategy**, in such a way that **sectoral strategies must contain a quantitative assessment of the impact on the change in the level of GHG**

¹¹ For the implementation of the provisions of the aforementioned law, which refer to the implementation of the acceptability assessment in within the framework of the strategic assessment, it is necessary to pass a special by-law and harmonize it Law on Strategic Environmental Impact Assessment

¹² <https://pravno-informacioni-sistem.rs/SIGlasnikPortal/eli/rep/sgrs/skupstina/zakon/2021/26/1/reg>

emissions from sources and removal by means of sinks calculated in accordance with accepted international methodology (Article 9).

The aforementioned law foresees the adoption of a program of adaptation to changed climatic conditions, in order to identify the impact of climate change on sectors and systems and to determine adaptation measures to changed climatic conditions (hereinafter: adaptation measures) for those sectors and systems in which it is necessary to reduce adverse impacts.

Also, according to Article 15 of the Law, The program of adaptation to the changed climate conditions is being realized by adopting sectoral strategies, plans, programs and others documents, as well as planning documents of autonomous provinces and units of local self-governments and in connection with that, the above-mentioned documents must be prepared taking into account the objectives of that program.

2.3 Principles of inclusion of green aspects

In accordance with the aforementioned regulation, when including green aspects in PPD, it is necessary to apply the following key principles:

- **The principle of precaution and prevention**, which means that every activity must be planned and implemented in such a way as to prevent or reduce negative impacts on the environment, climate and human health;
- **The polluter pays principle**, which means that the polluter is obliged to pay compensation for the environmental pollution he causes;
- **The principle of integrity and sustainable growth and development**, which implies that when drafting and implementing planning documents, the requirements of environmental protection, the fight against climate change, mitigating the effects of climate change and adaptation to climate change, preventing excessive use of natural resources, increasing energy efficiency are taken into account and the use of renewable energy sources and the reduction of GHG emissions, their effects on society, especially on local communities, their development and peculiarities, sensitive categories of the population, gender equality, as well as the fight against poverty, i.e. that all state authorities, the authorities of the autonomous province and the authorities of the local self-government unit ensure the integration of environmental protection and improvement in all sectoral policies by implementing mutually agreed public policies;
- **The principle of publicity and partnership**, which implies that public policies are determined within a transparent and consultative process, i.e. that during the

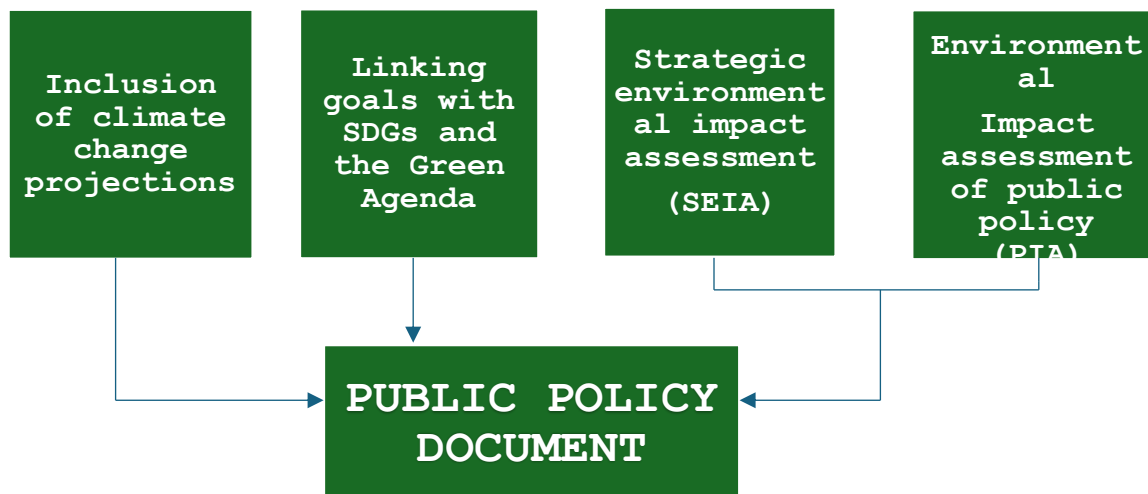
preparation and implementation of planning documents, as well as the analysis of the effects and evaluation of the effects of public policies, a transparent consultation process is carried out with all interested parties and target groups, including associations and other civil society organizations, scientific-research and other organizations, taking care to enable the realization of individual legal and other interests of all interested parties and target groups, while simultaneously protecting the public interest.

3. Ways of including green aspects in PPD

Bearing in mind the global trends regarding the intensification of actions to achieve sustainable development goals, the EU's efforts to achieve a climate-neutral continent by 2050, the readiness of the Republic of Serbia to contribute to those efforts, as well as to achieve its own sustainable development, the inclusion of green aspects in PPD is one from the way to achieve these efforts within the deadlines set by the planning documents of the Republic of Serbia in the field of environmental protection and climate change.

The basis for the inclusion of green aspects in PPD is the existing regulations, stated in the chapter "Planning and regulatory framework for the inclusion of green aspects in public policy documents" of these guidelines. From the aforementioned regulations, it follows that during the preparation of the PPD, the impact of climate change on the future development of the sector is first considered, then the contribution of the goals of the PPD to the sustainable development goals of Agenda 2030 and the Green Agenda can be seen, and then, through the analysis of the effects/influences, the most favorable option/solution for achieving goals of PPD. Which of the aspects to be included in the process of creating the PES depends on the nature of the PES, that is, the relevance of each of the green aspects for a specific PPD, the specific sector for which the PPD is being prepared.

Possible ways of including green aspects in PPD are given schematically in Graph 4.



Graph 4. Ways of including green aspects in PPD

3.1. Inclusion of the aspect of climate change when planning PPD

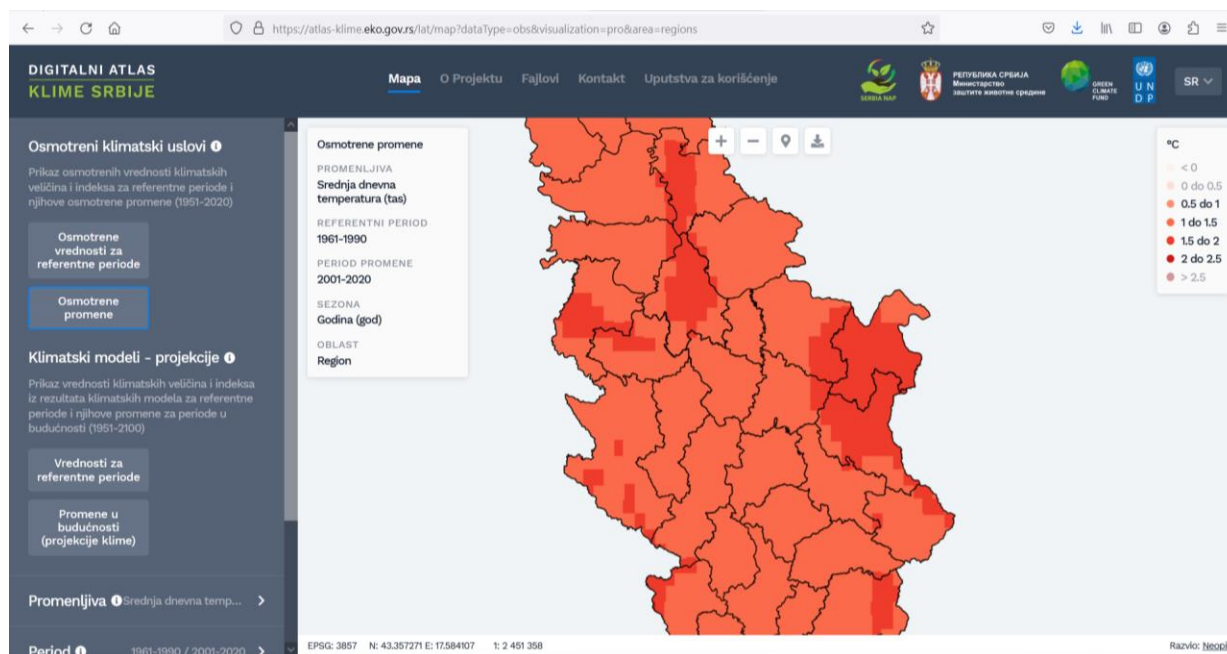
Climate change is one of the global challenges facing humanity today, and increasingly so in the future. According to the Program for adaptation to changed climatic conditions of the Republic of Serbia for the period from 2023-2030., climate change today are occurring ten times faster than it has ever been in the past. The Republic of Serbia is warming more intensively and significantly faster than the global average, and it is estimated that the frequency and intensity of climatic hazards caused by climate change will increase in the territory of the Republic of Serbia in the future, with a clear trend of change until the middle of the 21st century. The future trend of climate change will depend on the success of the implementation of climate change mitigation measures determined by the Paris Agreement.

Extreme climate and weather episodes have caused significant material and financial losses in the Republic of Serbia, as well as damages and the loss of human lives. That is why, when planning development in sectors such as agriculture and food production, forestry, water management, industry, energy, transport, infrastructure, energy, human health, etc. their vulnerability to climate change should be taken into account, that is, policies and measures should be planned in all sectors by including climate change projections with climate change risk assessments.

Climate projections are considered during the preparation of the description of the situation and the analysis of problems/challenges when developing PPD for a specific planning area, or sub-area in the case of developing a program. This further results in

the definition of the goals of the PPD, which is thus influenced by the forecasting of the impact of climate change on a specific sector in the period for which the PPD is adopted.

For PPD proponents and other involved stakeholders, climate data (observed climate and climate projections) is available in the **Digital Climate Atlas** ((atlas-klime.eko.gov.rs)¹³.



Graph 5. Digital atlas climate platform - front page

The digital climate atlas (**Graph 5.**) represents the digital web platform, which contains relevant climate data for analysis climate change and impact, for the purposes of policy planning, activities and adaptation measures from national to local level and which provides the possibility of viewing and downloading data. In assessment climate change, vulnerability and risk, use is recommended methodologies contained in the Adaptation Program to the modified climatic conditions for the period 2023-2030, in order to ensure consistency of climate hazard assessments.

In order to ensure the sustainability of measures and activities both in the field of mitigating climate change and adapting to changed climate conditions, etc. areas, the application of the concept of Nature based Solutions (NBS) is recommended. The development and multiple application of this concept led to the fact that, especially in the EU countries, these solutions considered as an umbrella concept, applicable in all areas of development, which include interventions and practices of management of natural resources, infrastructure, etc. in a sustainable way. Therefore, it is

¹³ <https://atlas-klime.eko.gov.rs/lat/map?dataType=obs&visualization=pro&area=regions>

recommended that in PPD, i.e. when defining measures and activities apply the concept of Solutions based on nature.

There are several levels when determining the application of the above concept so that:

- full implementation of the concept of Solutions based on nature - the so-called "green measures" means that when defining measures in fully utilize natural systems and processes, which are self-sustainable and long-term, have the necessary monitoring planned and way to implement interventions in case of violation their functionalities;

- partial implementations of the concept Solutions based on nature - the so-called "combined green-gray measures", it means that when defining the measure, they use natural systems and processes are combined with gray measures, i.e. engineering solutions;

- the concept of Solutions based on nature was not applied, that is, the measures fall under the group of "gray measures", which means that when defining measures, they use only engineering solutions.

Systematization of the identified measures, according to the application of the concept Solutions based on nature can be shown according to Table 1.

Table 1. Table form for systematizing measures during their defining in relation to the concept of solutions based on nature

Measure name	APPLICATION LEVEL OF THE SOLUTIONS CONCEPT BASED ON NATURE		
	COMPLETELY ("green measures")	PARTIAL ("green-gray measures")	NO APPLICATION ("gray measures")
			✓
			✓
	✓		

In case that the measures represent, for example, "soft measures", which are related to the legislative framework, policy documents, financial mechanisms, monitoring and reporting systems and the like, when it is not possible to categorize them in the proposed way, it is recommended that assessment of whether they contribute or can contribute to the explanation application of the concept of Solutions based on nature, monitoring of conditions for their sustainability, etc.

3.2. Inclusion of green aspects in PPD through strategic environmental impact assessment

A strategic impact assessment is a procedure that assesses the impacts of proposed PPD on the environment for the purpose of making a decision on the choice of public policy solutions that are favorable from the point of view of environmental impact and climate change¹⁴. In this way, it is ensured that green aspects are included in the process of creating the PPD and ensures coordination when determining sectoral public policies and their mutual harmonization.

The obligation to prepare a strategic assessment is prescribed for projects in the field of spatial and urban planning or land use, agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, preservation of natural habitats and wild flora and fauna, which establish a framework for approving future development projects determined by the regulations governing environmental impact assessment (Article 5 of the Law).

The Minister can also prescribe a list of documents for which the obligation to conduct a strategic assessment can be requested.

The decision on the need to prepare a strategic assessment for minor amendments and additions to the PPD, which do not require a prescribed adoption procedure, as well as for PPDs that are not specified in Article 5 of the Law, is made by the authority responsible for preparing the PPD, according to the criteria prescribed by the Law, if it determines that there is a possibility significant impacts on the environment.

Authorities responsible for environmental protection, interested authorities and organizations and the public participate in the strategic assessment process.

3.2.1. Harmonization of the process of making a strategic impact assessment with the process of making a PPD

The process of creating a PPD, shown in **Graph 2**, involves several steps that include the following:

- Publication of the start of construction;
- Preparation of PPD with ex ante analysis of effects;

¹⁴ The guidelines do not refer to spatial and urban plans, which are regulated by the Law on Planning and Construction ("Official Gazette of RS", no. 9/20, 52/21 and 62/23).

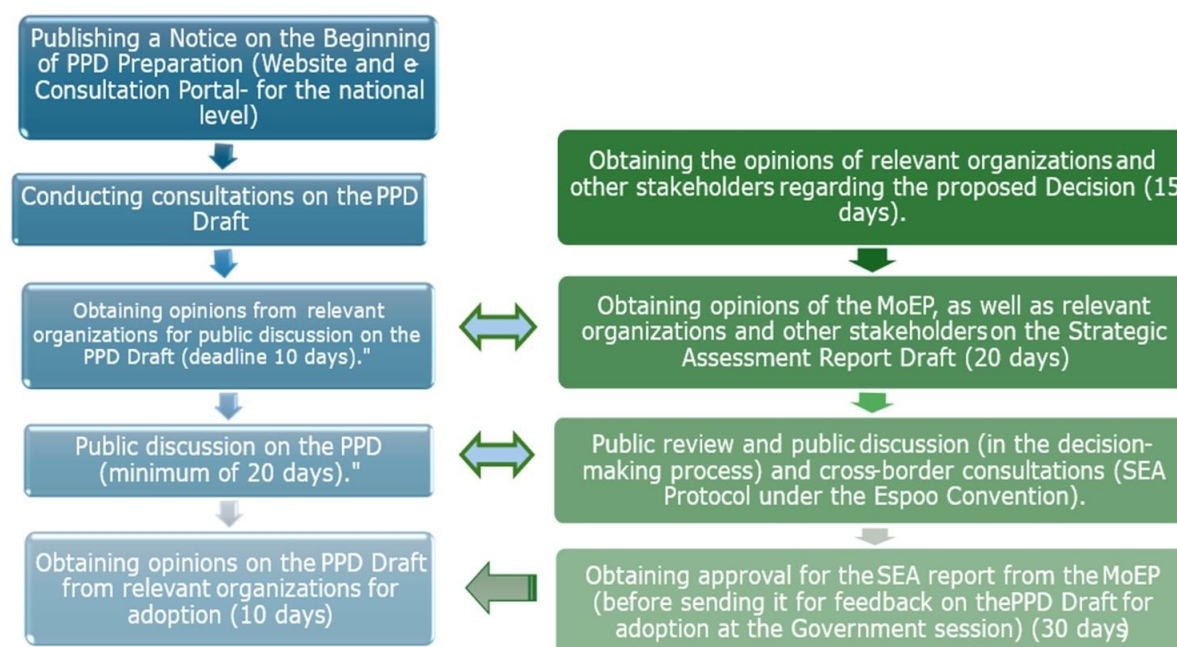
- Consultations on the draft;
- Preparation of the PPD proposal based on the consultative process;
- Providing opinions for the implementation of the public hearing process, i.e. making a decision of the city/municipal council on the implementation of the public hearing;
- Public debate on the PPD proposal;
- Implementation of the procedure for adoption (obtaining opinions, i.e. decision-making by the city/municipal council);
- Adoption of the PPD by the competent authority (Government, Government of the autonomous province, Assembly of LGUs).

On the other hand, the process of creating a strategic assessment, shown in **Graph 3**, includes the following steps:

- Deciding on the preparation of a strategic assessment (obtaining opinions from interested bodies and organizations and the authority responsible for environmental protection and making a decision on the preparation of a strategic assessment);
- Selection of the holder of the strategic assessment;
- Issuance of a report on strategic assessment;
- Obtaining opinions on the Draft Report on Strategic Assessment from interested authorities and organizations for submitting the Draft Report to public introduction and public discussion;
- Public inspection and public debate on the Proposal for a report on the strategic portion;
- Preparation of the final report on the strategic assessment;
- Obtaining the consent of the body responsible for environmental protection based on the previous assessment of the strategic assessment report.

The two processes should start at the same time and be carried out side by side, until adoption of the PPD.

Graph 6 shows how those two processes are coordinated with each other in the part related to procedures and the involvement of interested parties and the public.



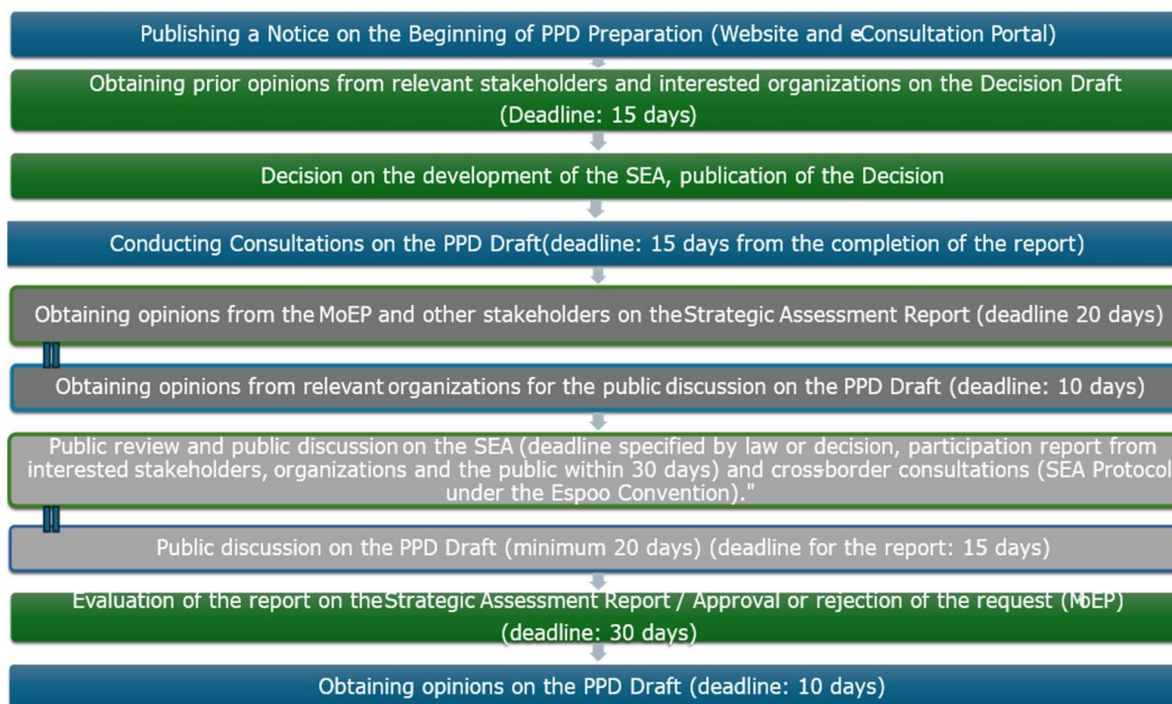
Graph 6. Presentation of the harmonization of the process of creating the PPD (blue color) and the process of creating a strategic assessment (green color)

Graph 6 shows the deadlines related to PPD with national scope, i.e. whose proponents are republican bodies or organizations. The prescribed deadline for giving an opinion at the request of the proponent of the PPD for republican bodies and organizations is 10 days from the date of receipt of the request, while the prescribed deadline for conducting a public hearing is at least 20 days from the date of publication of the PPD proposal for public hearing. On the other hand, the deadlines in the process of implementing the strategic assessment are different, that is, slightly longer than the deadlines in the process of creating the PPD. Obtaining the opinions of interested authorities and organizations on the proposed decision on the preparation/non-preparation of a strategic assessment takes 15 days from the date of submission of the request. That step does not affect the process of making the PPD, because the preparation of the PPD starts in that period. The second step, obtaining an opinion on the draft report on strategic assessment, with which the draft PPD is also submitted, lasts 20 days from the day of receipt of the request and it affects the period in which an opinion is obtained on the draft PPD for reference to public discussion. In this regard, the process of drafting the PPD is "waiting" for the deadline for obtaining opinions on the proposal of the strategic assessment report, so that the publication for public discussion and the public discussion can be carried out simultaneously.

After conducting a public hearing, a PPD proposal is prepared and sent to the relevant authorities and organizations for an opinion, with a deadline of 10 days from the date of

receipt of the request. On the other hand, the final versions of the Strategic Assessment Report are submitted to the authority responsible for environmental protection for evaluation and approval of the Strategic Assessment Report, with a deadline of 30 days for a decision. Bearing that in mind, if the opinions on the PPD proposal are obtained within 10 days (if there is no need to harmonize the opinions), the referral for adoption will wait until the approval of the strategic assessment report is obtained.

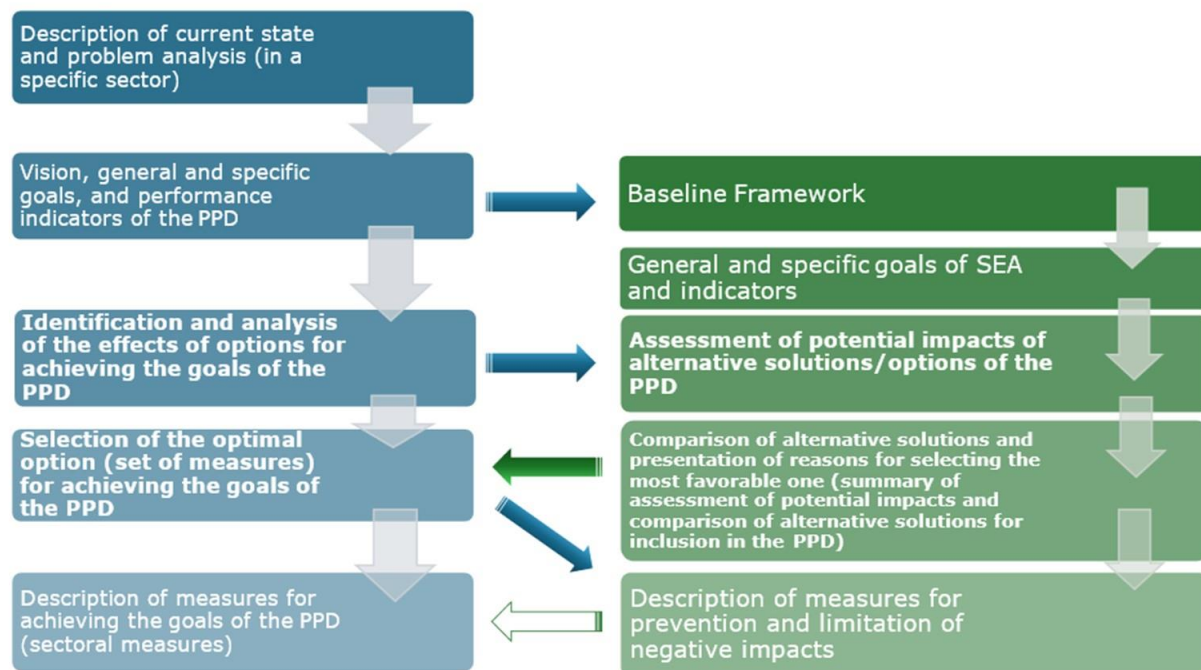
Graph 7 shows the sequence of steps in the implementation of both processes.



Graph 7. The sequence of steps for the parallel implementation of the process of creating the PPD and the process of strategic assessment

Harmonization of PPD preparation and strategic assessment preparation is done at the level of content of PPD and strategic assessment reports. This means that within the PPD the elements used in the impact assessment are defined, and then the findings of the impact assessment within the strategic assessment report influence the content of the PPD.

Graph 8 shows the links between the content and the content of the strategic assessment report.



Graph 8. Connections between the content of the PPD (blue color) and the content of the strategic assessment report (green color)

During the preparation of the PPD, a description of the situation and an analysis of the problems are first prepared, on the basis of which the vision, general and special goals of the PPD are defined, including performance monitoring indicators, and then the options for achieving the special goals of the PPD are identified. The options include a "status quo" option. Then the analysis of the effects of each of the options is carried out, their comparison and the selection of the optimal option are carried out. After selecting the optimal option, a description of each measure within that option is given.

On the other hand, the preparation of the report on strategic assessment begins with the starting points, on the basis of which the general and special objectives of the strategic assessment and their indicators are determined. Then, an assessment of the impact of variant solutions which also includes the "status quo" (option for achieving PPD goals) is carried out, a description of how to compare variant solutions is given, and the reasons for choosing the most favorable for the environment are explained. In the event of a negative impact of the solution chosen by the proponent of the PPD, a description of the measures to prevent and limit the negative effects of the implementation of the PPD on the environment is prepared.

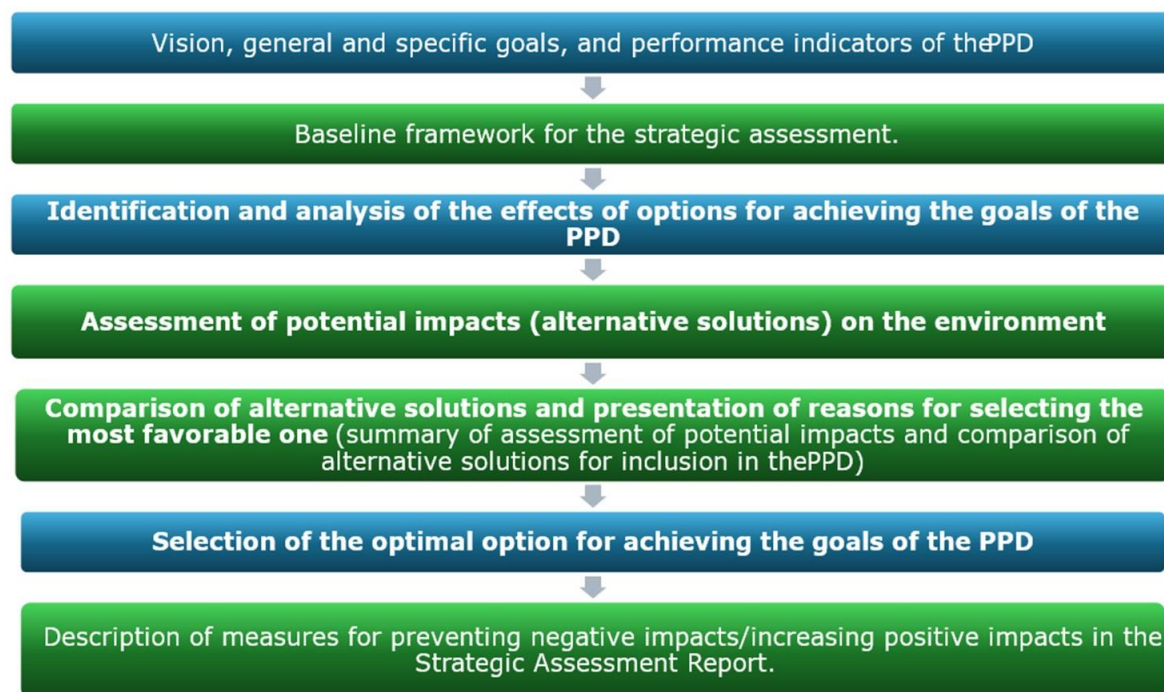
The basic elements of the strategic assessment report are prepared based on the PPD text, which includes: description of the situation, problem analysis, vision and goals. The

assessment of the impact of alternative solutions is carried out on the basis of the options identified during the development of the PPD for the achievement of the defined goals. The analysis of the effects of PPD options is carried out, taking into account the comparison of variant solutions and the proposal of the most favorable solution for the environment.

The PPD option is the same as the variant solution in the strategic assessment report:

PPD OPTION = VARIANT OF STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT SOLUTION

On the basis of the chosen option, after the analysis of the effects of the options for the achievement of PPD goals relating all potential effects (economic, financial, social, governmental and environmental), measures are prepared within the strategic assessment report, which should ensure the reduction and limitation of the negative effects of the chosen option/variant solution on the environment. **Graph 9** shows the sequence of steps in the preparation of the contents of the PPD and the preparation of the contents of the report on the strategic share of influence.



Graph 9. Sequence of steps in creating the content of the PPD and creating the content of the risk assessment report

3.2.2. Strategic impact assessment

In the first phase, i.e. the preparatory phase of implementing a strategic impact assessment, the proponent of the document first considers the need for its preparation for a specific PPD and prepares a proposal for a decision, in accordance with the subject and scope of the PPD and the observed characteristics of the estimated significant environmental impacts based on the data available. That analysis has the characteristics of a qualitative analysis.

The PPD proponent prepares a draft decision and obtains opinions on the draft decision from the ministry responsible for environmental protection and interested bodies and organizations.

Annex I of the Law on Strategic Environmental Impact Assessment is used to decide on the need for a strategic assessment.

In accordance with the Law on Nature Protection (Art. 10), it is foreseen that within the framework of the strategic assessment procedure, the assessment procedure is carried out acceptability for environmental network for PPD (strategies and programs) for which a strategic assessment is carried out¹⁵. The procedure implies the previous one rating and the main acceptance rating for the ecological network, in accordance with the precautionary principle.

Scoping is also part of the preparatory phase and has characteristics of semi-quantitative analysis. It represents a structured method for identifying and quantifying key sustainability issues related to environmental impact, bearing in mind the need to achieve strategic goals in the field of environmental protection and climate change, which are established by international agreements, accepted international initiatives and national and locally established goals in planning documents.

Scoping should determine the content of the strategic assessment and the relevant criteria related to environmental impact and climate change. It is based on knowledge of

¹⁵ For the implementation of the provisions of the aforementioned law, which refer to the implementation of the acceptability assessment in within the framework of the strategic assessment, it is necessary to pass a special by-law and harmonize it with Law on Strategic Environmental Impact Assessment.

potential effects on the environment and climate change, as well as knowledge of the characteristics of sensitive environmental factors.

Bearing in mind the great variety of subjects of strategic assessment and the possibility of assessing the impact on the environment, this analysis has a flexible character, which means that the assessment is adapted to the type and specifics of the PPD. The scope of the strategic assessment should be proportional to the assessment of the possible impacts of PPD on the environment and climate change.

The questionnaire given in Appendix 2 of these Guidelines can be used to assess the scope of strategic assessments, that is, which aspects of the environment should be considered during the strategic assessment and to what level of detail should they be analyzed.

The second stage in conducting a strategic assessment is the stage of drafting a strategic assessment report. This phase implies:

- Preparation of starting points;
- Definition of general and special objectives of strategic assessment and selection of indicators;
- Assessment of possible impacts of the proposed options/variant solutions for the realization of the goals of PPD;
- Providing guidelines for impact assessment at lower hierarchical levels and project impact assessment on the environment;
- Proposal for a program for monitoring the state of the environment (monitoring) during the implementation of the PPD.

The following content is also provided in the strategic assessment report:

- Presentation of the use of methodology and possible difficulties in making a strategic assessment;
- Presentation of the way of deciding on the most favorable option for the environment;
- The conclusions reached during the preparation of the strategic assessment report are presented in a way that is comprehensible to the public.

The baselines of the strategic assessment (hereinafter: the baselines) are based on existing data and information from the area that is the subject of the assessment. These data and information should enable the holders of the preparation of the strategic assessment report to see the relationship between the subject PPD and other documents relevant to the environment and climate change, as well as to assess the

state of environmental factors that may be influenced during the implementation of the PPD. The following is given in the starting basics:

- A brief overview of the content, objectives of the PPD and the relationship with other relevant planning documents;
- Overview of the existing state and quality of the environment in the area covered by the PPD for which a strategic assessment is being made;
- Overview of the characteristics of the environment in the area where there is a possibility of being exposed to a significant impact;
- Considerations of issues and problems of environmental protection and presentation of the reasons for omitting certain issues and problems from the assessment procedure.

The content overview and objectives are taken from the PPD draft, and the options identified for implementation, i.e. variant solutions, which are considered in the next phase in terms of environmental impact, are listed.

The state and quality of the environment in the area covered by the PPD for which a strategic assessment is being made is a variable category, which changes due to natural and anthropogenic influences. Accordingly, within the current state, a description of current phenomena in the environment is given and it is explained how various factors influence such a state. The physical characteristics of the space, the current state of certain environmental factors, the presence and state of biodiversity, climatic conditions, etc. are described. The review of the quality of the environment contains an assessment or evaluation of the state of the environment, from the aspect of sustainability of ecosystems and natural resources, as well as convenience for human life.

The description of the characteristics of the environment in areas that have the possibility of being exposed to a significant impact is given after identification of the possible impact of PPD on environmental factors and assessment of the level of vulnerability of subjects.

As part of the starting points, certain issues are discussed and problems that, as specific to the subject PPD, are significant from the environmental aspect are discussed. From these considerations, some questions and problems can be omitted, e.g. due to the lack of reliable and relevant data and/or certain dilemmas that make it impossible to assess and predict certain possible impacts. In that case it is necessary to explain the reasons for which certain questions, issues and identified problems were left out of the assessment process and left out of consideration.

Defining the general and specific objectives of the strategic assessment and the selection of indicators

The general objectives are defined in accordance with the goals of PPD and other planning documents in the field of environment and climate change at the level of the republic and local authorities¹⁶, documents at the international level, which the Republic of Serbia has accepted, the existing data on the state of the environment, as well as the observed problems in this area, and bearing in mind the goals of PPD.

Those documents are listed in chapter 2.2. Planning and regulatory framework for the inclusion of green aspects in public policy documents, these guidelines.

Annex 1 provides a proposal for general objectives in terms of environmental protection that can be adopted during the preparation of the Strategic Assessment, depending on the area of planning and objectives of the PPD.

Specific objectives are defined in order to achieve the general objectives of the strategic assessment. Special goals focus on concrete and measurable elements, they are more detailed than general goals, so their realization can be more easily monitored.

Indicators are determined for the purpose of monitoring the achievement of the defined special objectives of the strategic assessment.

The indicator of the special objective of the strategic assessment represents the unique value of the observed element (agent) or the state of the environment and is an instrument for identifying, monitoring and comparing changes and achieving the goals of policies in the field of environmental protection.

The holder of the strategic assessment report takes over certain indicators of monitoring the implementation of existing planning documents from areas of environmental protection, or chooses a new set of indicators.

If a new set of indicators is chosen, the criteria on the basis of which the selection is made are different, and in most cases the criteria that are applied are the following:

- the importance of the problem from the point of view of negative impact on the environment;
- the possibility of assessment of the present state of the environment and subsequent monitoring;

¹⁶ At the level of the province and local self-government units

- compatibility (the indicator must be compatible with other indicators so that the indicators can be compared) i
- possibility of monitoring trends.

The OECD has identified and defined a set of 72 environmental indicators based on relevance, analytical validity and measurability, of which 30 are monitored for the Republic of Serbia. The European Environment Agency (EEA) has developed its own "core" sets of environmental indicators, according to the model (motive, pressure, state, impact, response). The World Health Organization (World Health Organization/WHO) recommends a set of "core" indicators that include effects on human health, which can be classified as shown in **Graph 10**.



Graph 10. Schematic representation of clustering of environmental indicators (WHO)

The set of indicators to be selected for impact assessment refers to indicators in the areas of pressure, state, exposure and effects. At the same time, interest and motive indicators are covered by the general objectives of PPD, while response indicators are defined at the level of environmental protection measures.

When choosing indicators, the indicators determined by the Rulebook on the National List of Environmental Protection Indicators ("Official Head of RS", No. 37/11) can be used.

3.2.2.1. *Environmental impact analysis of variant solutions*

The assessment of possible impacts of PPD on the environment contains the following elements:

- a presentation of the estimated impacts of variant solutions, that is, an option of PPD;
- comparison of variant solutions and presentation of the reasons for choosing the most favorable solution;
- the way environmental factors were taken into account during the impact assessment;
- the way in which the characteristics of the impact were taken into account during the assessment: probability, intensity, complexity/reversibility, time dimension (duration, frequency, repetition), spatial dimension (location,

- geographical area, number of exposed inhabitants, transboundary nature of the impact), cumulative and the synergistic nature of the impact;
- identification and description of measures to prevent and limit negative impacts objectives of the PPD, if such impacts are identified.

Assessment of the possible impacts of the proposed options/variant solutions

implies the analysis of variant solutions for the achievement of special objectives of the PPD, which were identified during the drafting of the PPD. Variant arrangements include the "status quo" option (in the event that the measures provided for in the PPD would not be implemented).

The assessment requires the preliminary preparation of assessment criteria, which includes the assessment method (expert assessment using qualitative or quantitative analysis, using risk assessment methods, using software tools, etc.), the way of presenting the results obtained from the assessment and the possibility of comparing and checking the results.

The impact of each variant solution on environmental factors, including climate change, is assessed, with particular consideration being given to those elements of the environment that are more sensitive to the identified impacts. For this assessment, the data obtained as part of the preparation of the baselines of the strategic assessment are used, as well as those that contain the identification of possible sources of negative impacts on the environment. Environmental factors including data on: air, water, soil, climate, ionizing and non-ionizing radiation, noise and vibrations, plant and animal life, habitats and biodiversity are taken into account during the impact assessment, protected natural assets, population, people's health, cities and other settlements, cultural and historical heritage, infrastructural, industrial and other objects or other created values.

In **Annex 2** of these guidelines, a possible way of identification of pollution sources is shown for each variant solution. Based on the identified sources, in the next step, for each variant solution evaluation of the characteristics of the impact, in relation to environmental factors, which may have consequences from the identified sources of impact, should be done. A possible way of presenting the assessment of the characteristics of the impact of one variant solution in relation to the objectives of the strategic assessment is given in Annex 3 of these guidelines (variant solution 1 is taken as an example).

Characteristics of the impact, negative, positive, are determined in relation to the goals and indicators of the strategic assessment. **Identified impacts are quantified**, whenever possible.

Public policy documents should contain quantitative GHG emissions reduction assessment for policies and measures, in accordance with internationally accepted methodologies for estimating GHG reductions, to the possible extend.

The **Table 2** can be used for rating the characteristics of a specific impact on environmental factors.

Table 2. The way of impact rating¹⁷

No	Impact characteristics		Rating
1.	Spatial dimension of impact	local	1
		national	2
		transboundary/ global	3
2.	Duration of impact	rarely	1
		periodically	2
		continuously	3
3.	The vulnerability of recipient	small	1
		medium	2
		big	3
4.	Cumulative effects	no significance	1
		medium	2
		significant	3
5.	Impact consequences	not recorded	1
		transitory	2
		permanent	3
6.	Probability	≤10	1
		10 - 70	2
		>70 %	3
7.	Positive impacts	no importance	1
		medium	4
		significant	6
Total*			

*The sum of positive impact rating characteristic (7) is subtracted from the sum of all impact rating characteristics (1-6). The impact is also ranked as large if more than two ratings of the impact characteristics are marked with **3**.

For the assessment of cumulative and synergistic impacts, data on the possible effects/consequences of the impacts of the identified pollutants are used. The characteristics of pollutants are analyzed in terms of their ability to accumulate in certain environmental factors or living organisms, as well as the possibility of additive and synergistic effects of two or more pollutants.

In addition to the mentioned methods, the holders of the strategic assessment can also apply other methods that basically represent a semi-qualitative expert assessment. In

¹⁷ As an example, the table shows selected impact characteristics

doing so, it should be borne in mind that in the absence of appropriate data for assessment, the report can be based on a qualitative expert assessment.

To display the impact characteristics a special evaluation matrix defined by the International Standard 14001 (Environmental management System – Requirements with Guidance for use, ISO 14001:2004/E) can be used. The adjusted range of effect size rankings is shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Range for Impact dimension Rankings**

IMPACT DIMENSION	Cumulative rating
Small impact	0 - 20
Medium impact	21 - 70
Big impact	>70

**ranking of impact dimension is based on adaptation to practice ranking according to ISO 14001:2024/E

The holder of the strategic assessment can choose some other method to show how they have been taken into account characteristics of the impact of the PPD on the environment.

The comparison of variant solutions is carried out in relation to the size and type of impact (positive or negative), which they have on reaching the special goals of the strategic assessment, for each variant solution based on the ranking range shown in Table 3.

An example of how a comparison can be tabulated for choosing the most favorable alternative solution for the environment (ranking), is shown in **table 4**. The ranking is based on identifying the source of influence shown in **Annex 2**, ratings results of impact characteristics in relation to the objectives of the strategic assessment shown in **Annex 3** and the ranking range shown in Table 3.

The presentation of the reasons for recommending the most favorable alternative solution must contain the reasons for the choice in detail, as well as the way in which environmental protection issues and other issues are included in the recommendation on the choice of an alternative solution. Stating the reasons for choosing the most favorable variant solution should also be followed by stating the reasons why the other considered variant solutions were not proposed. The reasons for choosing the most favorable variant solution, as well as other data of importance for the proposal for the selection of variant solutions, can be presented in a tabular form.

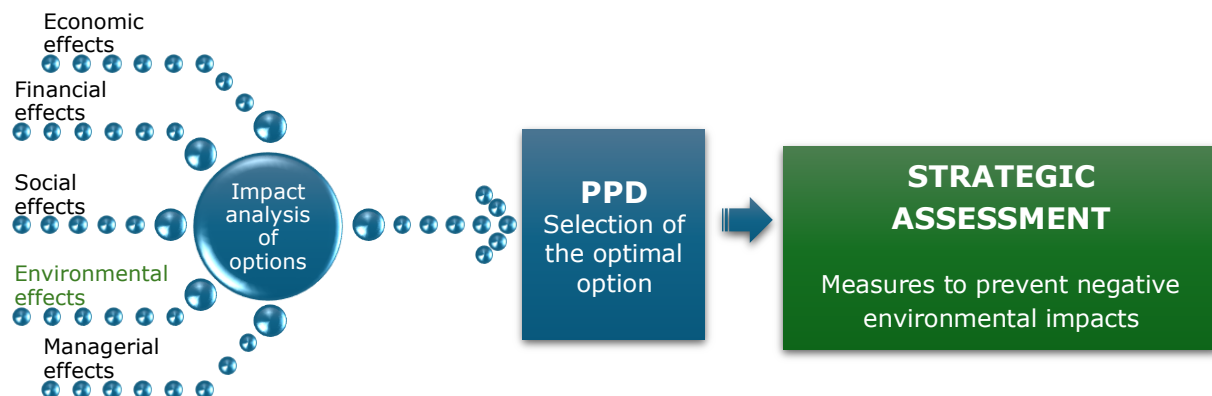
3.2.2.2. inclusion of strategic assessment in the analysis of the effects of options in the process of selecting the optimal option for achieving the goals of PPD

After completing the impact assessment and comparing the variants solutions, a summary of the impact assessment with a proposal for the best solution in terms of environmental impact is prepared and submitted to the PPD proponent for inclusion of the impact assessment in the analysis of the effects of the PPD options and the selection of the optimal option in terms of all impacts, i.e. effects: economic and financial, impacts on society, on the environment in management effects.

After choosing the optimal option for reaching specific objectives oh the PPD, that information is submitted to the holder of the strategic assessment, who further considers the need to determine additional, compensatory measures in the event that a variant solution is selected in some of the considered characteristics that are unfavorable for some of the environmental factors. Measures are proposed to prevent and limit certain identified negative impacts.

Also, measures can be proposed that can increase the identified positive impacts.

The method of connecting the analysis of effects and the selection of options in the PPD with the next step in the strategic assessment - identifying measures to reduce and limit negative environmental impacts, if any, is shown in **Graph 11**.



Graph 11. Presentation of the connection between the process of effect analysis and the selection of the optimal option for PPD with the determination of measures to prevent negative impacts on the environment within the strategic assessment

To analyze the effects of PPD, you can use the Manual for the analysis of the effects of public policies and regulations, which is available on the website of the Public Policy Secretariat of the Republic of Serbia¹⁸

3.2.2.3. Identification and description of measures to prevent and limit negative environmental impacts of the selected option/variant solution

Measures to prevent and limit negative impacts and improve the environment are the result of an analysis of the state of the environment, assessment of the impact of identified sources of pollution and the option that was chosen. At the same time, the holders of the report on strategic impact assessment have in mind the protection measures relevant to the subject area of influence, defined by existing regulations and other documents of the Republic of Serbia and local self-governments, as well as the conditions obtained from competent authorities and organizations.

These measures can include **compensatory measures**, which the decision is determined by the ministry responsible for environmental protection in the event that, after the procedure for assessing the acceptability of the proposed PPD, it is assessed that the document may have a significant negative impact on the objectives of nature conservation and a negative impact on the integrity of the ecologically significant area, and only if there is no other alternative solution or there is established general interest. Otherwise, the competent ministry refuses to grant consent.

Measures to prevent and limit negative impacts and improve the environment are determined in the process of strategic assessment and acceptance ratings for the ecological network and represent additional, i.e. compensatory measures in relation to the measures established in the sectoral or intersectoral PPD for the realization of their special ones goals.

When identifying the mentioned measures for each estimated impact, the measures which are:

- defined by existing regulations;

¹⁸ <https://rsjp.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/Prirucnik-za-analizu-efekata-javnih-politika-i-propisa-21012021-1-srb.pdf>

- given within the terms of the competent authorities and organizations;
- measures to protect all potentially endangered factors of the environment;
- biodiversity and ecosystem protection measures;
- measures to protect people;
- climate protection measures;
- accident protection measures, etc. protection measures.

Table 4 shows the method of determining specific measures within each of the possible groups of measures.

Table 4. Method of determining concrete measures for prevention, limiting negative impacts and improving the environment

No	Group of measures	Method of identifying the measures
1.	Measures defined by existing regulations	Individual measures determined by laws, decrees, regulations, etc., as well as adopted international documents in the field of environmental protection, which are important for the subject area of interest are identified.
2.	Measures given within the terms of the competent authorities and organizations	Based on the conditions of competent authorities and organizations, all measures that can have an impact on the realization of the adopted goals of the strategic assessment are taken
3.	Measures to protect all potentially endangered factors of the environment	All measures to prevent and limit negative impacts on identified sensitive environmental factors are identified
4.	Biodiversity and ecosystem protection measures	All measures in the field of protecting biodiversity and strengthening the resilience of ecosystems are identified within the adopted objectives of the strategic assessment
5.	Measures to protect people	All measures aimed at protecting people's health and life and strengthening resistance to environmental impacts are identified, and are related to the adopted objectives of the strategic assessment.
6.	Climate protection measures	All climate protection measures and climate change adaptation measures that are within the scope of the subject area of interest are identified, taking into account the concept of "Solutions based on nature"
7.	Accident protection measures, etc. protection measures	The protection measures provided by the conditions of the Ministry responsible for environmental protection and other authorities and organizations responsible for managing emergency situations are listed.

For each of the identified measures, in the Strategic Assessment Report, the responsible institution is determined, which has the authority to coordinate the implementation of the measure and which should plan that measure or several measures in its medium-term plan. Also, it is desirable for each proposed measure to establish an indicator for monitoring performance in implementation, as well as determine the period of implementation and present an estimate of the required financial resources. The competent proponent plans and implements additional measures proposed to prevent and limit negative impacts and improve the environment within his jurisdiction, and in the event that other institutions are responsible for the implementation of certain measures, he sends each of the competent institutions a notification about the proposed measures for their further action.

3.2.2.4. Involvement of the public in the process of implementing a strategic impact assessment and creating a PPD

The Law on the Planning System and the Law on Strategic Impact Assessment establish the obligation to include interested parties and the public, in such a way that both laws imply that stakeholders, target groups, interested bodies and organizations, the interested public and the public are all understood as a whole the following groups: bodies and organizations of all levels of government, business entities, associations of citizens or business entities and other organizations of civil society, scientific-research, professional and other organizations, the public that is particularly interested in the impact on the environment because the implementation of a certain PPD can affect it particularly influence, as well as the general public.

The law on the planning system stipulates the obligation to include interested parties in all stages of the development of the PPD. This implies that the interested parties are included in the process of making an ex ante analysis, i.e. determining the existing situation and problem analysis, as well as determining the objectives of the PPD, and public consultations are conducted in this connection. The next step involving the involvement of interested parties and the public is public hearings. Relevant bodies and organizations are also involved in all stages of the creation of the PPD and participate in the procedure for the adoption of the PPD by giving opinions.

According to the Law on Strategic Assessment, interested authorities and organizations participate in the first phase, i.e. the phase of making a decision on the need to carry out a strategic assessment, then they give their opinions on the proposal of the report on strategic assessment before it is submitted for public inspection and public discussion together with the proposal of the PPD, and in the last phase, the authority

responsible for environmental protection gives consent to the strategic assessment report after the implementation procedure for its assessment.

The differences between the prescribed procedures refer to the deadlines for the implementation of the procedures for conducting consultations and conducting public hearings, preparing reports on the conducted consultations and public hearings and collecting opinions, i.e. giving consent to the final proposals of the PPD and the strategic assessment report.

The deadlines for each of the above-mentioned stages are longer for strategic assessment than for PPD. In this regard, it is necessary that certain steps in the preparation of the PPD, if completed earlier, "wait" for the completion of the corresponding phase in the process of preparing the strategic assessment report in order to harmonize all the corresponding phases. Alignment between the steps in the output of PPD and the stages in the development of a strategic assessment are shown in Graph 6 and Graph 7.

The only problem with harmonizing the deadlines exists with the preparation and publication of the report on the public hearing on the proposal of the PPD and the report on the implementation of the public hearing on the basis of the strategic assessment report. The deadline for the PPD is 15 days from the end of the public hearing, and for the strategic assessment report it is 30 days. Given that the public hearing must be conducted simultaneously, that is, it must begin and end simultaneously, and the report on the public hearing for PPD must be prepared and published earlier than the report on the public hearing on the proposal of the strategic assessment report. For support in the involvement of interested parties in the preparation of the PPD, the Manual for involving the public in planning, drafting and monitoring the implementation of public policies and regulations can be used¹⁹.

Ensuring public participation in decision-making on matters of importance for environmental protection is one of the pillars of the Convention on the availability of information, public participation in decision-making and the right to legal protection in environmental matters - the Aarhus Convention²⁰. The Republic of Serbia confirmed this convention in 2009, and in connection with this, numerous activities were carried out to strengthen the capacity of interested parties and the public for active participation in decision-making on matters of importance for environmental protection.

¹⁹ <https://rsjp.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/Prirucnik-za-analizu-efekata-javnih-politika-i-propisa-21012021-1-srb.pdf>

²⁰ Law on Confirmation of the Convention on Availability of Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and the Right to Legal Protection Environmental Matters ("Official Gazette of RS", No. 38/09)

3.3. Environmental effects analysis of PPD for which strategic environmental impact assessment is not carried out

PPD that are not subject to the implementation of a strategic environmental impact assessment, are subject to the obligation to produce an analysis of environmental effects according to the Law on the Planning System, when those effects are relevant.

These are documents belonging to planning areas such as: public administration, public security, justice and the legal system, employment and social protection, education, health, sports and others.

For the mentioned PPD, the analysis of the effect on the environment is carried out at the same time as the analyzes for other effects (economic, financial, management and effects on society). Those analyzes are carried out in accordance with the accompanying Regulation of the Law on the Planning System. Article 28 of the aforementioned Regulation establishes the method of conducting an analysis of the effect on the living environment, and the questions listed in Annex 8 are used as an aid in the preparation of that analysis.

Considering the nature of PPD for which no strategic assessment is carried out, the effects that PPD options have on the living environment are in most cases indirect and such impacts can be described qualitatively. It is possible that in some cases the PPD has no environmental impact and in that case these effects are not considered when comparing the options.

If the chosen option, that is, the group of measures that has been determined to achieve the special goals of PPD, has indirect effects on the environment, then the description of those effects is given within the description of the effect of the selected measures.




A preliminary check of whether certain effects on the environment can be expected can be carried out by means of a check list: yes/no, using the questions in Annex 8 of the accompanying regulation of the Planning System Act.

3.4. Mapping PPD according to the Sustainable Development Goals and the Green Agenda




The goals of sustainable development, which can be labeled as "green goals", i.e. goals that contribute to the greatest extent to the protection and improvement of the environment, the preservation of natural resources and ensuring their availability for the further development and well-being of all people, the preservation of biodiversity and the reduction of the impact of climate change are goals: 6, 7, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15. In connection with goal 14 - Preserve and sustainably use oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development for the Republic of Serbia, sub-goals 14.4 and 14.6 are relevant, which refer to sustainability of the fish stock and fishing, and in this connection this goal is not considered relevant by the majority. Sub-goal 13.a²¹ is also not relevant for the Republic of Serbia.

Table 5 provides an overview of the "green" goals of sustainable development.

Table 5. Sustainable development goals related to environment and climate

Simbol	Name of the sustainable development goal
	Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
	Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all
	Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable

²¹ Србија и Агенда 2030, Републички секретаријат за јавне политике, <https://rsjp.gov.rs/sr/dokumenti-kategorija/analize/>

	<p>Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns</p>
	<p>Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts (through the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change)</p>
	<p>Protect, restore, and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation, and halt biodiversity loss</p>













On the other hand, it is a key mechanism for achieving the goals of sustainable development in the Republic of Serbia, which are related to the environment and climate change is represented by the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans. The scope of that agenda is as follows:

1. Climate change and emissions reduction: reducing GHG emissions and adapting to changed climate conditions, using renewable energy sources, energy efficiency and reducing dependence on fossil fuels;
2. Circular economy: industrial symbiosis, waste utilization, responsible recycling, sustainable production, innovation, eco-design, green public procurement and efficient use of resources;
3. Reduction of environmental pollution: improvement of air, water and soil quality, reduction of industrial pollution and risk management, management of chemicals, reduction of noise in the environment, ionizing and non-ionizing radiation;
4. Protection of biodiversity and ecosystems: protection and sustainable management of natural resources, including sustainable management and protection of forests, protected areas and wild species;
5. Sustainable food systems and rural development: impact of agriculture on the environment, food safety, sustainable food production, organic food, use of specific chemicals (pesticides and fertilizers).

Given that the Green Agenda of the EU and the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans were conceived to achieve the 2030 Agenda, the "pillars" of the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans can be linked to the goals of sustainable development.

The mapping of the "pillars" of the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans with the goals of sustainable development is given in **Table 6**.

Table 6. Mapping the "pillars" of the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans with the goals of sustainable development

"Pillars" of the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans		SDG's		
1	Climate change and emission reduction: with a focus on reducing GHG emissions and adapting to altered climate conditions, utilizing renewable energy sources, energy efficiency, and reducing dependence on fossil fuels	7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY 	11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES 	13 CLIMATE ACTION 
2	Circular economy: with a focus on industrial symbiosis, waste utilization, responsible recycling, sustainable production, innovation, eco-design, green public procurement, and efficient resource use	12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION 		
3	Environmental pollution reduction: improving air, water, and soil quality, reducing industrial pollution and risk management, chemical management, noise reduction in the environment, ionizing and non-ionizing radiation	6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION 	11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES 	12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION 
		15 LIFE ON LAND 		
4	Protection of biodiversity and ecosystems: conservation and sustainable management of natural resources, including sustainable forest management and protection of forests, protected areas, and wild species	15 LIFE ON LAND 		
5	Sustainable food systems and rural development: the impact of agriculture on the environment, food safety, sustainable food production, organic food, use of specific chemicals (pesticides and fertilizers)*	2 ZERO HUNGER 	12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION 	15 LIFE ON LAND 

Bringing the goals of PPD into connection with the goals of the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans should be implemented indirectly, through the related sustainable development goals, according to Table 4. The methodology according to which the goals (general and special) of the PPD are connected with the goals of sustainable development is based on the connection of the indicators used to monitor the achievement of the goals of the PPD with the corresponding indicators of the goals of

sustainable development, i.e. their sub-goals. The established global UN indicators for monitoring the achievement of the sub-goals of the sustainable development goals are also monitored in a significant number for the Republic of Serbia. The Republic Institute of Statistics increases the number of indicators for the Republic of Serbia every year and publishes them on its website²².

In order to correctly determine the links between the indicators of the PPD goals and the indicators of the sub-goals of sustainable development, the indicators used in all binding PPDs, regardless of the planning area, are classified into the following three categories²³:

- **Identical** (taken over) - the wording of the PPD indicator is identical to the wording of the UN global indicator of the goals and sub-goals of sustainable development. The PPD indicator fully monitors all segments of the phenomenon and sub-goals of sustainable development and can also be used to monitor the national contribution to the goals of sustainable development. The PPD indicator is disaggregated by all criteria/target groups that are included in the sub-goal of sustainable development.
- **Adapted** (partial) - the wording of the PPD indicators partially coincides with the wording of the UN global indicator of the goals and sub-goals of sustainable development. The PPD indicator monitors one or more segments of the occurrence and sub-goals of sustainable development, but does not include all segments of the occurrence of the sub-goals of sustainable development. The PPD indicator is disaggregated only in relation to a specific target group or disaggregation criteria of the sustainable development sub-goals.
- **Additional** - the wording of the PPD indicator differs from the wording of the UN global indicator of the goals and sub-goals of sustainable development. The PPD indicator in the context of Republic of Serbia more adequately monitors the emergence of sustainable development sub-goals and as such can be used as a supplement to the UN global indicators of sustainable development goals and sub-goals.
















When creating a new PPD in any area of planning, the use of identical indicators of sustainable development sub-goals is first considered, and if for some reason they cannot be adopted as indicators of PPD goals, then the application of some adapted or supplementary indicator is considered, which is also related to with the phenomenon covered by the corresponding indicator of the sub-goal of sustainable development.

²² <https://sdg.indikatori.rs/>

²³ The proposed methodology for mapping with sustainable development goals was developed by the Republican Secretariat for Public Policies, with the support of the GIZ project

The presentation of those links can be shown in a table, by systematizing the special goals of the PPD and the goals and sub-goals sustainable development to which this special goal contributes. **Table 7** shows an illustration of how those links are displayed in the PPD text.

Table 7. A possible way of showing the links of PPD goals with the goals and sub-goals of sustainable development

General objective 1.	   
Specific objective 1.1.	  
Specific objective 1.2.	 
Specific objective 1.3.	   
Specific objective 1.4.	 

Also, in addition to the graphic representation, the links with COR should also be presented descriptively within the description of each PPD sub-goal.

When it comes to sustainable development goals related to the environment and climate change, taking over the indicators of their sub-goals will be appropriate for PPDs for the areas of public policy planning or intersectoral PPDs, which are related to the planning area of the Environment²⁴ or are directly related to that area.

On the other hand, PPDs that are prepared for areas of public policy planning or intersectoral PPDs, which contribute to the achievement of "green" goals indirectly, can also indicate these connections in the documents themselves

²⁴ Annex 11 of the Regulation on the methodology of public policy management, analysis of the effects of public policies and regulations and the content of individual public policy documents ("Official Gazette of RS", number 8/19

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ANNEXES

ANNEX 1

GOALS THAT CAN BE DETERMINED AS GENERAL OBJECTIVES WHEN CREATING A STRATEGIC IMPACT ASSESSMENT (PROPOSAL)

1. Reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions
2. Reducing the level of air pollutants
3. Waste management in a way that does not endanger the environment and human health
4. Nature protection and preservation of biodiversity
5. Mitigating and increasing resistance to climate change
6. Protection and preservation of the ecological network
7. Areas and geodiversity protection
8. Soil protection and protection against erosion and floods
9. Landscape protection
10. Protection and improvement of surface and ground waters
11. Protection of cultural and historical heritage
12. Improving the quality of the environment by reducing pollution
13. Improvement of an integrated approach to protection and management environment
14. Reduction of negative impacts of environmental factors on health and lives of people
15. Preservation and sustainable use of agricultural land in changed climatic conditions
16. Preservation and sustainable use of forests and forest land in changed climatic conditions
17. Preservation of the status of surface and underground waters threatened in changed climatic conditions.

ANNEX 2

Impact sources of variant solutions identification

No	Impact sources	Status quo	Variant solution 1	Variant solution 2
1	Emitters* of air pollution	√		√
2	Emitters of surface and ground water pollution	√	√	√
3	Emitters of soil pollution	√	√	√
4	Emitters of GHG	√	√	√
5	Occupying space		√	√
6	Noise emitters	√		
7	Emitters of ionizing and non-ionizing radiation			
8	Sources of disasters with significant consequences			√
9	Other			

*Direct and indirect emitters that can have a significant impact (√)

ANNEX 3

Impact characteristics rating of the variant solution 1, in relation to the objectives of the strategic assessment** (simulation)

No	Impact characteristics		Environmental factors										
			A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
1	Spatial dimension of impact	local	1		1	1	1		1	1	1	1	
		national		2				2					
		transboundary /global											
2	Duration of impact	rarely	1	1		1		1		1			
		periodically			2		2		2		2	2	
		continuou.											
3	The vulnerability of recipint	small				1		1		1	1		
		medium	2		2	2		2		2			
		big		3									
4	Cumulative effects	no significance	1	1			1		1	1	1	1	
		medium			2	2		2					
		significant											
5	Impact consequenc es	not recorded				1		1	1	1	1		
		transitory	2	2	2	2							
		permanent						3					
6	Probability	≤10			1		1		1	1	1	1	
		10 - 70	2	2		2		2					
		>70 %											
7	Positive impacts	no importance							1			1	
		medium				4	4	4		4	4		
		significant	6	6	6								
Total			3	5	4	6	3	8	6	3	3	6	

**Evaluation of impact characteristics is done for each proposed variant solution

Legend:

- A) Air
- B) Water
- C) Land
- D) Biological diversity
- E) Geological and landscape diversity
- F) Ecological network, ecological corridors and ecologically important area
- G) Climate, climate change and adaptation to climate change changes
- H) Cultural-historical heritage and archaeological heritage
- I) Population and health
- J) Exposure of the population and the environment to major accidents and natural disasters
- K) Other