Project description: 

Background

Since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, also known as the ‘Earth Summit’ was held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, Mediterranean countries have been working, with the support of international programmes and regional bodies, on the elaboration of their development agenda, as well as on Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) guidelines, and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). Land-use planning is one of the major problems leading to environmental degradation in Lebanon. Developing a framework for an SEA would therefore help to deliver many of the country’s commitments to sustainable development. It would allow for impact identification and analysis and assessment of environmental risks associated with poor land-use planning and policy formulation. It would also complement the existing EIA process initiated by the Ministry of Environment.

Objectives

The overall ambition of the project was to integrate environmental considerations into policies, programmes and plans at the national level in Lebanon to alleviate the major problems facing the sustainable development agenda in the country. It sought to achieve this by developing a framework for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in Lebanon and drafting a national
strategy for incorporating environmental considerations into urban planning and land-use management procedures. These measures would require an evaluation of the environmental consequences of official plans and programmes and the development of open and participatory decision-making processes. They should complement the existing Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process that was developed by the Ministry of the Environment. To support this work it sought to build the capacity of the concerned national institutions to elaborate the SEA and provide institutional support to the Ministry of Environment, the General Directorate of Urban Planning (GDUP) and other stakeholders for the development of environmental directives to be applied to land-use planning at the national level.

Results

The project achieved the development of a draft SEA decree, which has been endorsed by Ministries and by the High Council of State and also managed to improve institutional capacity in this field. It thus successfully created a framework for SEA in Lebanon. The project was able to identify the most suitable model and internal procedures for SEA in Lebanon. On this basis it carried out training on SEA planning and applications with staff from the Ministry of the Environment. The beneficiary prepared training manuals and case studies for use during a workshop it organised addressing national stakeholders from the public and private sectors as well as NGOs. A national strategy was elaborated on how to integrate SEA in Urban Planning and guidelines produced for more environmentally friendly land-use planning. A draft decree for SEA was written along with two complementary draft decrees on public consultation and access to information. To demonstrate the application of the SEA framework, a pilot activity was organised and executed in the area of Balouh Baatara in consultation with local authorities and the Directorate for Urban Planning. Alternative plans for the development of the proposed area were compared to identify the most appropriate option. The tools developed by the project and the capacity built within the ministries should now be utilised for implementing and evaluating an increasing number of SEA studies. Three sector-specific SEA initiatives have already been launched: • SEA study for the proposed zoning of the Jounieh seafront cultural area • SEA study for the Lebanon Mountain Trail project • SEA study for the coastal zone masterplan. These actions are at different stages of development and depend on the acquisition of funds, but demonstrate the high ownership of the project’s results in Lebanon and the positive impact it has had on awareness and capacity to deliver SEA. The experience gained could prove to be a useful model in neighbouring countries in the Middle East Region. In Lebanon, the great challenge for the future is now to achieve official approval of the decrees to make SEA a legal requirement.
Environmental issues addressed:

Themes

Land-use & Planning - Spatial planning

Keywords

sustainable development, development model, land use planning

Natura 2000 sites

Not applicable

Beneficiaries:

Coordinator
UNDP United Nations Development Programme

Type of organisation
NGO-Foundation

Description
The UNDP is the UN’s global development network advocating for change and connecting countries through knowledge, experience and resources to help them build a better life. In Lebanon it has been involved in numerous projects promoting the integration of better environmental practices into the development process.

Partners
Ministry of the Environment, Lebanon

Administrative data:

Project reference
LIFE00 TCY/INT/021

Duration
01-DEC-2002 to 30-JUN-2006

Total budget
429,968.00 €

EU contribution
285,600.00 €

Project location
Mediterr. Lebanon (RL)(Lebanon)
Read more:

Project web site
Publication: Proceedings

Title: "Draft Framework Note On Priority Sectors To Be Tackled By SEA" Author: Strategic Environmental Assessment and Land Use Pl No of pages: 16