

Decision 884/2004/EC, amending Decision 1692/96/EC on “Community guidelines for the development of the Trans-European transport network” establishes (article 8) that “When projects are planned and carried out, environmental protection must be taken into account by the Member States” and that “As from 21 July 2004 an environmental assessment of the plans and programmes leading to such projects, especially where they concern new routes or other important nodal infrastructure development, shall be carried out by Member States pursuant to Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council”.

The Decision further specifies that “the Commission shall, in agreement with Member States, develop suitable methods for implementing the strategic environmental assessment with the objective of ensuring, inter alia, appropriate coordination, avoiding duplication of effort, and achieving simplification and acceleration of planning processes for cross-border projects and corridors”.

In this context, the **BEACON** project (funded within the establishment of a discussion and consultation platform of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)), was initiated by the Commission in 2003.

One of the main outcomes of the BEACON project is the new version of the **Transport SEA Manual**, which is a substantial re-elaboration of the previous version issued by DG TREN in 1999 (i.e. before Directive 2001/42/EC).

The drafting of the present Manual has benefited from an extensive exchange of information between public stakeholders and relevant services of the European Commission (DG TREN, DG ENV, DG REGIO) and input has been received from experts in both, the public and private sectors. In October 2005, the Manual was presented and discussed in the TEN-T Committee, composed of representatives from the Ministries of Transport of the Member States of the European Union, where it was well received.