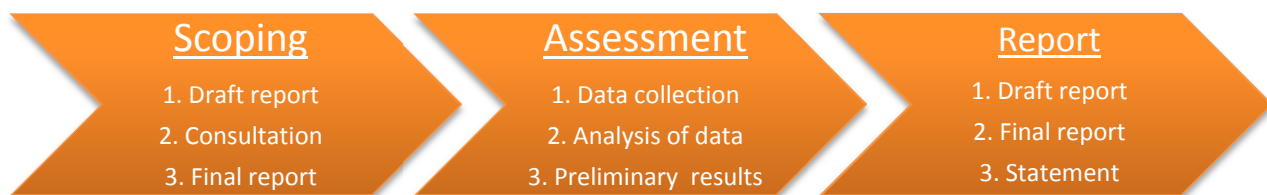


CONCEPT NOTE STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

As part of the Ex ante evaluation for the Baltic Sea Region programme 2014-2020 a Strategic Environmental Assessment (hereafter SEA) has to be carried out. The purpose of the SEA is to identify the likely, significant environmental impacts of the proposed programme in order to facilitate that these can be taken into account in the programme development thus optimising the programme's environmental performance. This means that the SEA takes place in parallel to - and in dialogue with - programme formulation/ex ante evaluation. The methodology for the SEA was presented in the proposal for the Ex ante evaluation and this concept note outlines the specific methodological steps and the activities and timing. The basis for implementing the SEA is the SEA-Directive (Annex I) and the Handbook on SEA for Cohesion Policy 2007-2013¹.

Three key tasks are to be addressed by the SEA:



1. Scoping

The **draft scoping report** is developed on the basis of the 1st draft programming document (must be a full draft). It decides the scope and level of detail of the environmental assessment and involves:

- › defining the environmental factors that are likely to be impacted by the proposed programme
- › identifying and describing existing environmental objectives in other plans and programmes that are relevant consider in the assessment
- › defining the environmental targets for each factor likely to be impacted
- › defining the indicators by which the impacts on the environmental factors may be described
- › defining the evaluation criteria employed for each potential environmental impact identified
- › defining the set of data available for describing the likely environmental impacts.

We will document this in an objectives matrix and a methodology matrix. The objectives matrix will provide a summary of existing plans and programmes, which set objectives and directions related to the environmental factors identified as potentially impacted by the programme.

Table 1. SEA Cross Matrix identifying issues, indicators

Environmental issue	Document 1	Document 2	Document 3
E.g. biodiversity	<i>Relevant objectives</i>

¹ New versions of this handbook addressing the period 2014-2020 will be taken into account should they become available. The same comment is relevant for the Annex 1 to the Guidance Document on Ex-Ante evaluation.

The SEA methodology matrix provides an overview of identified, potentially significant, environmental impacts per action listed in the draft programme document.

Table 1. SEA methodology matrix identifying issues, indicators

Actions identified in programme document	Environmental issues and objectives to be considered	Environmental indicators, questions and evaluation criteria to guide the SEA	Data
Action 1	<i>e.g. Biodiversity, water, population and human health, soil, climatic factors, landuse, landscape, material assets, cultural heritage</i>		
Action 2			
Action 3			

The table of contents for the Scoping report will look as follows:

SEA Scoping report - table of contents 1. Summary 2. Introduction 3. Identification of environmental issues, objectives and indicators 4. Approach to assessing likely environmental impact 5. Consultation procedure and next steps Annexes: Objectives matrix and SEA methodology matrix

We will conduct a **consultation procedure** on the draft Scoping report. We will submit the draft report to environmental authorities in the Member States to get their comments and suggestions. This will be organised as a written procedure. Furthermore, the report will also be submitted to the JPC and national reference groups for comments.

The **final scoping report** will be prepared taking into account the comments received and will form the terms of reference for the environmental assessment.

2. Assessment

The environmental assessment will be carried out according to the scoping report methodology with the point of departure in the 2nd draft of the programme. As part of the assessment, we will collect and generate data, process data - where available - and submit preliminary results of assessments to the Programming Task Force and JPC for comments and discussions.

3. Report and statement

Our **draft environmental report** will describe the findings of the environmental assessment and will be sent to the Programming Task Force and JPC. There will be a process of continuously refining the programme design and the environmental assessment/report, feeding results from one into the other and vice versa.

We will prepare the **final environmental report** to reflect the final programme document and responding to the requirements specified in the SEA Directive Annex 1. The table of contents for the Environmental report will look as follows:

Environmental report - table of contents
1. Non-technical summary
2. Introduction
3. Context (Programme and environmental policy framework)
4. Approach and methodology for environmental assessment
5. Findings of the environmental assessment
6. Recommendations for programme implementation (guidelines for environmental assessment of projects and monitoring of environmental impacts)

Upon finalising the Environmental Report, we will prepare an **Environmental Statement**, which documents the degree to which the Environmental Assessment has been taken into account during the drafting of the Baltic Sea Region Programme (to be included in the final programme document).

Activities and timing

It is important to carefully plan the SEA process to ensure sufficient time for feed-back from stakeholders through consultation and allowing for sufficient iteration between the programming process and the environmental assessment.

Table 5 **Activities of the SEA**

No.	Activity	Description	Timing
4.1	Concept note	Development of concept note based on discussion of the kick-off meeting with the JTS	21 May 2012
4.2	Present concept note	Presentation of the concept note at the JPC	13 June 2012
4.3	Draft scoping report	Drafting of report based on the draft programme. Draft report to be approved by JTS.	March-April 2013
4.4	Contact national environmental authorities	Contact made to identify relevant contact persons and contact details for consultation on draft scoping report	February-March 2013
4.5	Preparation of introductory note for consultation procedure	The note will be attached to the draft scoping report and will explain the purpose, deadline and procedures (written comments) for the consultation. To be approved by JTS.	April 2013
4.5	Consultation on draft scoping report	Report and note sent by JTS to relevant stakeholders. Stakeholders given 1 month to comment.	May 2013
4.6	Processing of comments from consultation	Preparation of summary overview of comments received and suggestions for amendments to scoping report	June 2013
4.7	Finalisation of scoping report	Final report submitted. Approval 4th JPC meeting	July/August 2013
4.8	Environmental assessment	Data collection, analysis, discussion of preliminary results with JTS	August-Sept 2013
4.9	First Draft SEA Report	First draft SEA report and discussion/iterations with Programming Task Force	September-October 2013
4.10	Final Draft SEA Report	Draft prepared and presented at 5th JPC meeting (November 2013)	Nov- Dec 2013
4.11	Final SEA Report	Finalise and submit report based on comments received and any changes made in the programme document (approval by JTS)	December 2013
4.12	Environmental statement	Prepare environmental statement (approval by JTS)	December 2013

