

Environmental statement

Introduction

The South-East Finland – Russia CBC programme 2014-2020 was drafted between 2013 and 2015. The programme is funded by the European Union, the Russian Federation, and Finland. It promotes cross-border cooperation between partners from South-East Finland, St. Petersburg, and the Leningrad Region. The programme has four themes: business and SME development; support to education, research, technological development, and innovation; environmental protection and climate change mitigation and adaptation; and promotion of border management and security, mobility, and migration management. The chosen themes have been translated into four priorities as follows: Priority 1: Lively, active, and competitive economy; Priority 2: Innovative, skilled, and well-educated area; Priority 3: Attractive and clean environment and area; and Priority 4: Well-connected region.

Simultaneously with the drafting of the programme, a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) was prepared in accordance with Directive 2001/42/EC. The resulting draft environmental report was published in January 2015.

The draft version of the South-East Finland – Russia CBC programme 2014-2020 and the draft SEA report were put up for public consultation for the required period of 30 days. A number of comments were received on the SEA report. All comments were replied to, and some of them led to technical revision of parts of the report. A Strategic Environmental Assessment was also prepared in Russia as an environmental expert evaluation. The draft programme and the environmental report were presented for public consultation for the required period of 30 days.

Environmental assessment

The aim of the SEA was to assess the potential negative and positive effects of the selected programme objectives on the environment, and to provide recommendations on how the positive effects might be enhanced and the negative effects mitigated.

The assessment work was integrated with the preparation of the CBC programme. This allowed the assessment to influence the contents of the CBC programme, and for the central environmental aspects to be assessed at an early stage. Each priority included in the programme was assessed separately, and their combined impacts were also assessed. The assessment was primarily carried out using assessment tables.

The SEA introduced the programme and predicted the main environmental impacts of its implementation. The aim of the environmental assessment was to encourage dialogue and support the preparation, implementation, and monitoring of the programme.



Monitoring and evaluation

According to Article 10 of the SEA Directive, all significant environmental impacts of implementation plans and programmes must be monitored in order to pinpoint adverse effects at an early stage, and to create an increased capability for the appropriate remedial action.

In accordance with the recommendations of the environmental report, monitoring will be implemented both at the overall programme level and at the level of individual projects. An environmental assessment has been integrated into the project application form, and is thus a mandatory part of the application and assessment procedure. This information will be used throughout the project to assess its contribution to the horizontal objectives, including sustainable development. Further evaluations may be included in the programme evaluation plan as required.

