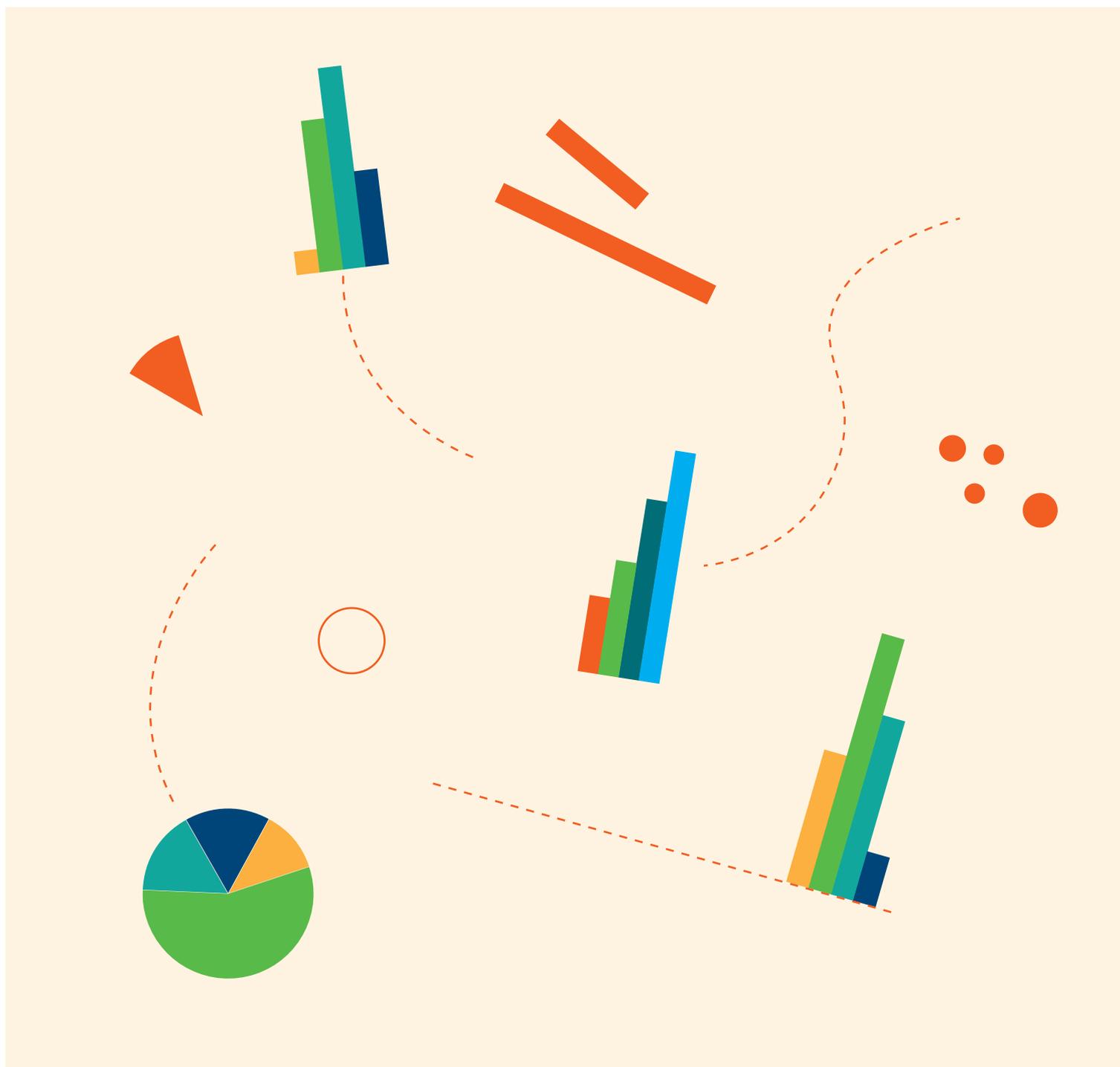


Effectiveness and relevance of recent environmental assessments for policy-making and public information in Ukraine

Working paper, October 2017



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1 Introduction

This report synthesises the results of a survey among the users of environmental assessments in Ukraine. The direct objective of the study, which was funded by the EU within the project “Implementation of the Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS) principles and practices in the European neighbourhood regions (ENI SEIS)”, was to better understand how users perceive the quality and usefulness of environmental assessments published in their countries. The end goal was to then identify how the countries’ capacities for regular environmental assessment and reporting could be further enhanced in order to better support their policy-making, public awareness and, in the end, environmental performance.

The study, designed and commissioned by the European Environment Agency (EEA) and carried out by Zoï Environment Network, was conducted through a series of interviews with the users of environmental assessments in Ukraine. The interviews were based on a standardised questionnaire from the EEA to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of national assessments. The interviews and the initial analysis were carried out by Zoï field staff in Kyiv for Ukraine. Attempts were also made to collect data about the dissemination and use of environmental assessments, both directly and through the available channels. The work was coordinated with and to the extent possible assisted by the national focal points for the ENI SEIS II project in Ukraine.

The integrated and thematic environmental assessments used for review are described below.

[National state-of-the-environment report of Ukraine](#), 2014, in Ukrainian. This 350-page document contains 15 chapters describing the state of the art, trends and measures in air pollution, water and land resources, biodiversity, waste and climate change; the impacts of industry, energy and transport on the environment; and the state system of environmental management. The report has some visuals, but includes no summary or clearly formulated recommendations.

[Fifth National Report of Ukraine to the Convention on Biological Diversity](#), 2015, in Ukrainian. This 65-page document contains an executive summary, information about the

national biodiversity strategy and plan, progress towards the Millennium Development Goals and Aichi Biodiversity Targets, and annexes. The report has some visuals. The conclusions and recommendations are not clearly highlighted.

[Sixth National Communication of Ukraine to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change](#), 2013, in Russian. This 323-page document contains a summary; baseline information on emissions and the GHG inventory; policies and measures to reduce emissions and their projected effects; a vulnerability assessment and adaptation measures; financial resources; transfer of technologies; and education. The biennial report is also a part of this document. Each chapter has conclusions and some recommendations.

The Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources of Ukraine has overall responsibility for preparation of the reports. The 2014 SoE report was prepared by the State Ecological Academy for Post-Graduate Education under the MENR with EU financial support. The 2015 Fifth CBD report was prepared by the Ministry following the questions posed by the CBD Secretariat. The 2013 Sixth National Communication to the UNFCCC was prepared by the Ministry, the State Emergency Service of Ukraine, National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, and Ukrainian Hydrometeorological Institute.

The intended respondents included policy-makers from the environmental as well as non-environmental sectors of the government, selected representatives of research, academia and business as well as civil society (Annex 1).

In Ukraine, the invitation to an interview was sent to 26 organisations / potential respondents. Of these, two organisations responded that the questions posed in the questionnaire did not fall under the scope of the organisations’ tasks and activities, and three more organisations never responded in spite of numerous communications.

Representatives of 21 organisations were interviewed and completed the questionnaire. Some respondents provided an integrated evaluation of the three assessments, and others provided separate evaluations of some or all of the reports.

2 Findings and key messages

This section analyses the cumulative responses of all the reviewed assessments. More detailed data are presented in the Annex 2.

Effectiveness

Key messages

- Assessments moderately meet the needs of stakeholders and environmental policy
- Impact on policy was rated as medium or low

According to 70 per cent of the responses of stakeholders, the reviewed environmental assessments do or probably do meet **stakeholder needs**. About 20 per cent of the responses stated that the assessments do not meet those needs.

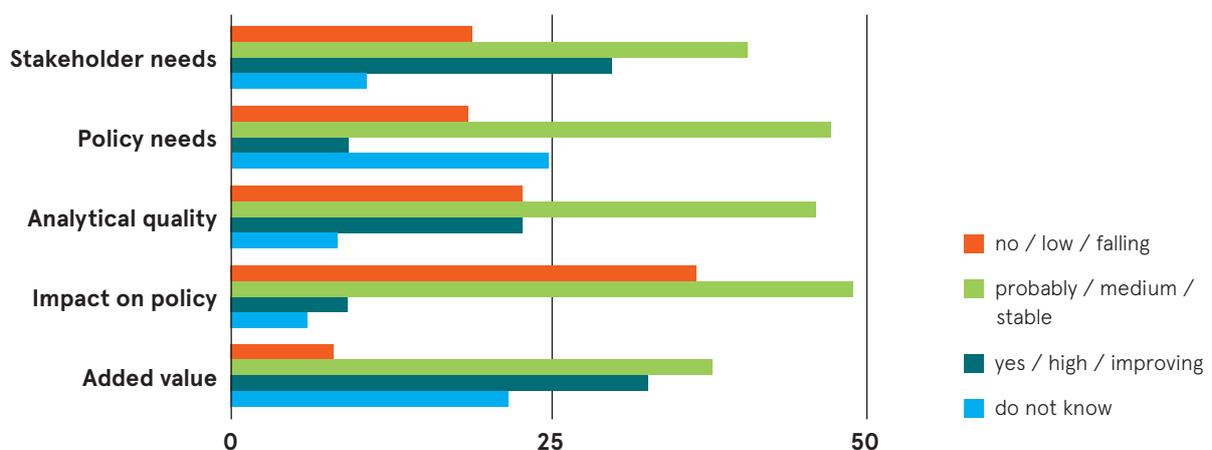
Fifty-five per cent of the responses indicated that the assessments probably or do adequately respond to the **environmental policy needs**, while 20 per cent stated they do not respond and 25 per cent were not able to answer.

The environmental assessments are rated as being or probably being of high **analytical quality** by 70 per cent of the responses. More than 20 per cent indicated low analytical quality.

More than half of the responses stated that the assessments have or probably have an impact on **environmental policy-making**, while about 40 per cent of the responses disagreed. One user commented that such assessments may have more impact after the full implementation of EU environmental acquis.

Almost all responses indicated that the documents probably or do provide **added value** at the national level. More than 20 per cent were not able to answer this question.

Figure 1. Effectiveness – key indicators (% of responses)



Quality

Key messages

- Overall quality and sufficiency of the assessments is medium to high, and is improving over time
- Timeliness is low
- Reliability, independence and communication is medium with room for improvements

Overall **quality** and **sufficiency** of the reports is evaluated as medium (60 per cent of the responses) to high (25 per cent of the responses). Users who provided lower scores (about 15 per cent of the responses) commented on the need to improve the quality of data, referencing and analysis. Some respondents commented that information presented in the state-of-the-environment report was too broad and of common knowledge, called for strengthening the analysis of links between the environment and economic processes, and suggested downscaling to local information on air, water quality, waste management and climate change. Local and regional authorities and organisations should be involved for downscale regional assessments.

Timeliness was rated as low in 65 per cent of the responses. One suggestion was to improve the timeline for the development and publication of reports to ensure up-to-date information for decision-making. Some respondents

considered the 2014 state-of-the-environment report and the report to CBD as already outdated: the 2015 report to CBD is based on data collected in 2010 – 2013.

Topical coverage was rated medium (55 per cent of the responses) to high (40 per cent), but one respondent commented that the CBD report lacks concrete data on biodiversity.

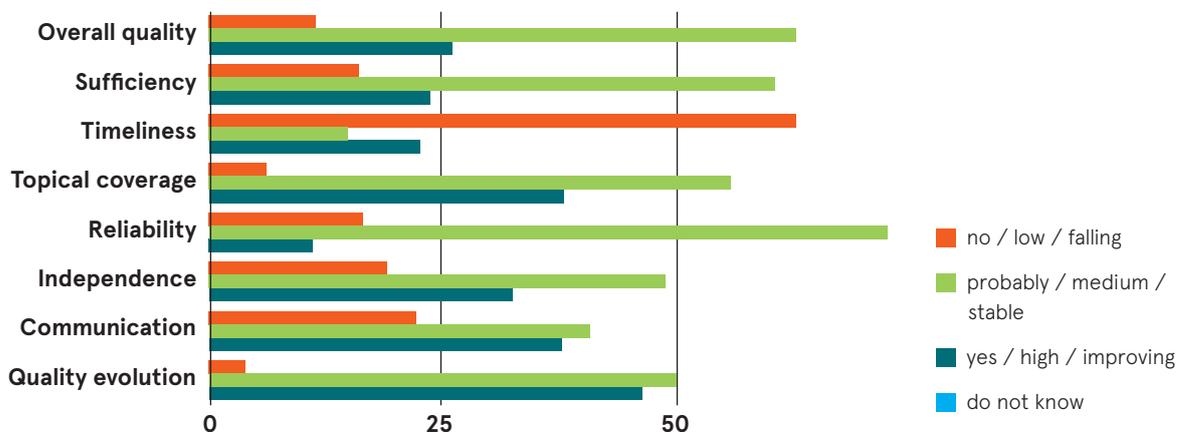
Reliability was rated medium in about 80 per cent of the responses. Issues with data collection and analysis were noted. Another problem that was also mentioned is that information is often based on a limited number of sources or that the sources are not known, so verifying data is difficult.

Eighty per cent of the responses ranked **independence** as medium to high, and 20 per cent as low.

In about 80 per cent of the responses the quality of **communication** was rated as medium to high. Some noted that the assessments often lack summarised information, and that the visuals in some of the reports are of low quality. In contrast, another comment praised the visuals in Ukraine's National Communication to UNFCCC. In all, about 20 per cent of the responses commented on weak communication.

Almost half of the respondents believe that the **quality of reports over time** remains stable while another half considers that it is improving.

Figure 2. Quality of assessments (% of responses)



Efficiency

Key messages

- Assessments provide relevant information, but the role in policy-making is not high
- The use of methods and tools is medium
- Most stakeholders are not aware of the relationship between the benefits and costs of the reports
- There is a potential for optimization, including with using the innovative technologies

According to 90 per cent of the responses, the assessments probably or do deliver **relevant information**.

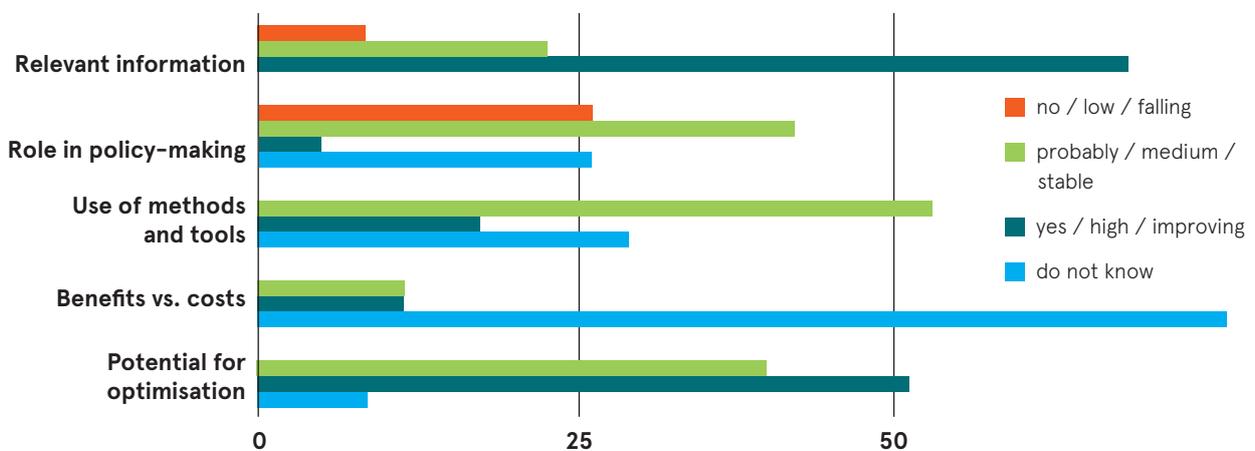
About 30 per cent of the responses stated that they do not **play a role in environmental policy-making**, and the same percentage of responses was uncertain.

According to 70 per cent of the responses, the use of **analytical methods and tools** is probably appropriate and sufficient; about 30 per cent did not know.

In almost 75 per cent of the responses the stakeholders did not know whether the **benefits** of the reports justified the **costs** as they had no information about the financial and human resources allocated to produce the assessments.

Almost all responses showed that there is or probably is **potential for optimisation** of the reports, including through improving the quality of data by upgrading monitoring, and through a wider use of innovative technologies.

Figure 3. Efficiency – key indicators (% of responses)



Policy impact

Key messages

- These and similar environmental assessment reports are needed
- Assessments moderately to significantly help in identifying policy interventions, their scope and scale
- The role of the assessments in choosing and developing policy instruments is moderate to very insignificant
- Assessments moderately help in policy implementation and evaluation

There is a wide and relatively even spread of user opinions concerning the impact of environmental assessments at the various phases of the policy cycle. Sixty per cent of respondents consistently suggest that the assessments moderately or significantly **help to identify policy interventions**, and others state that the assessments do not. One comment

suggested that at any rate the reports are unique and valuable sources of environmental information, and they do set a baseline for a broad spectrum of environmental policies from nature conservation to resource management and environmental monitoring.

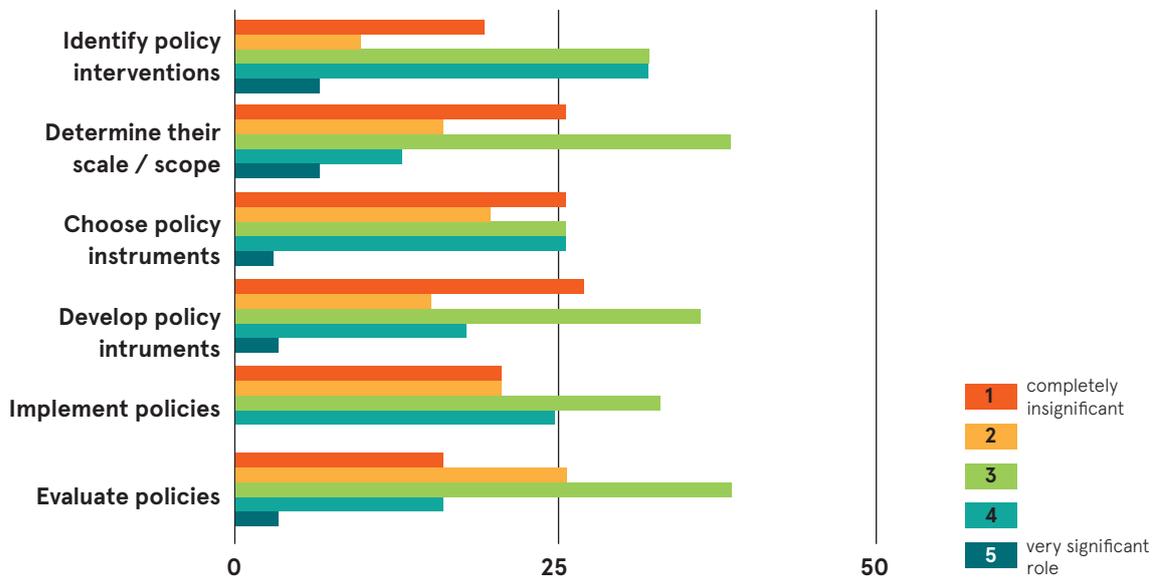
About 40 per cent of the respondents declared that the assessments moderately **determine the scale and scope** of policy, while 25 per cent indicated a completely insignificant role.

Opinion on the issue of the relevance of the assessments in **choosing policy instruments** was equally divided.

About 55 per cent of the responses indicated that the assessments moderately to very significantly help in **developing policy instruments**, and 30 per cent indicated that they do not help.

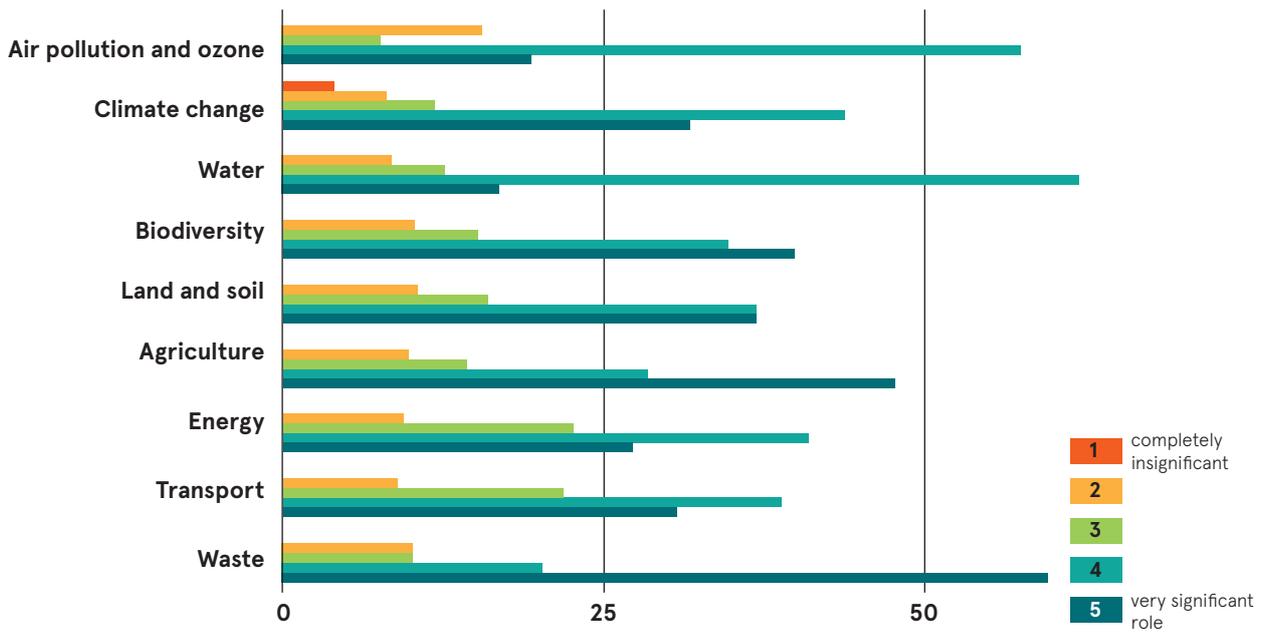
The opinions of interviewees were split about whether the environmental assessments help in **implementing** and **evaluating policies**.

Figure 4. Policy relevance and impact (% of responses)



Overall there is very high demand for these kinds of reports. The respondents believe that **these and similar environmental assessment reports are needed** to a high or very high extent in order to help improve the country's environmental performance with respect to all areas in the questionnaire.

Figure 5. Future demand for assessments (% of responses)



Awareness and outreach

Key messages

- Assessments are available on the Ministry and/or convention (CBD) websites
- The Ministry regularly receives public inquiries regarding environmental assessments
- There is room for improvement in the dissemination of the assessment, including via NGO networks

Data on the distribution and awareness of environmental assessments were provided by the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources and the Aarhus centre in Kyiv, and collected via direct search on the Internet.

Out of 150 environmental NGOs active in Ukraine, though not many of them are aware of the assessments and regularly refer to them.

Since August 2013 the Ministry's page with all annual reports was visited 34,041 times, and in 2016 the 2014 state-of-the-environment report was downloaded 49 times. The Ministry regularly receives public inquiries regarding environmental assessments.

A Google search for report titles returned 2 – 3 (SoE), 9 (CBD) and 6 (UNFCCC) entries per title.

These findings, albeit limited in scope, nonetheless suggest that the assessments are communicated, but there is much room for stronger outreach, at least through NGO capacities to spread and popularise the publications.

3 Conclusions and considerations

Overall the assessments meet the needs of stakeholders and policy-makers. The quality of the assessments is evaluated as medium, but several issues show the necessity for improvement in the assessments' quality.

Considerations

- The quality of data, presentation and analysis should be improved
- Thematic coverage and chapter descriptions should be improved, and energy-related and biodiversity issues should be better introduced
- Linkages between economic processes, sectoral strategies and actual use of natural resources should be strengthened

The impact on environmental policy-making by the assessments was not rated as high, partly due to the recommendations chapters in the documents being weak or too general. Thus, the chapter on recommendations in each report should be improved, present clear steps for solving the issues, and be sector-oriented and policy relevant.

Considerations

- Recommendations and implementation methods should be better and more concretely formulated
- Conclusions and recommendations should be included after each chapter

With modern trends in the presentation and communication of environmental information, there is an obvious need to shift to more visual reports with less text. Absent or low quality of maps and graphs, visual explanations and communication of key messages to different levels of stakeholders

(including decision makers), long reader-unfriendly text-only chapters make assessments less attractive to users.

Considerations

- More visuals (maps, graphs, diagrams) should be produced and their quality should be improved
- Text that presents key messages should be short and compact

It is unclear if the benefits of the assessments outweigh the costs, as the respondents are generally unaware of the relevant costs.

Considerations

- Proactive dissemination of the available information about using funds for the preparation of the state-of-the-environment report could be considered
- Stable (preferably state) and sufficient budgets for SoE report preparation and involvement of good sectoral experts should be ensured

To improve the quality of the environmental assessments, a wider circle of stakeholders, scientists, NGOs and international organisations should be involved in development and/or commenting on draft documents. Local and regional authorities and organisations should be involved for downscale regional assessments.

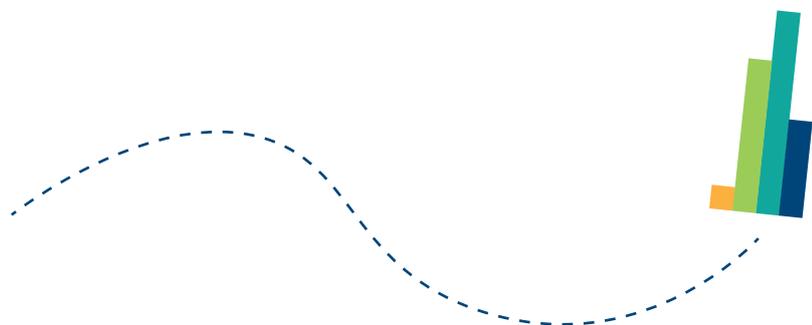
Consideration

- Involvement of all the experts, scientists, and NGOs should be ensured

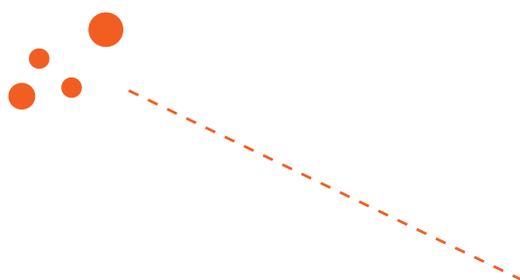
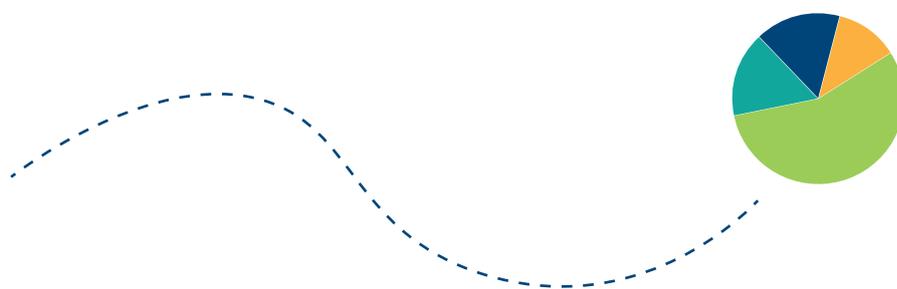
Generally, awareness of the assessments and their distribution is not very high and they have low interest among the decision makers.

→ **Considerations**

- Information campaigns should be conducted: press conferences, press releases, communicating with principal national mass media, developing and distributing summaries of findings
- Communication strategies should be developed and implemented
- Better communication and information exchange with local authorities should be considered



ANNEXES



Annex 1 Interviewed organisations

Parliamentary Committee on Environmental Policy, Resource Use, Chernobyl Accident Management
National Security and Defence Council
Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources, Department for Strategic Environmental Policy
Ministry for Economic Development and Trade
Ministry of Agrarian Policy and Food
Ministry of Infrastructure
Public State Enterprise "Ukrainian Hydropower" (under Ministry of Energy and Coal)
Ministry of Healthcare
State Service for Emergency Situations
State Agency for Forest Resources of Ukraine (under Ministry of Agricultural Policy and Food)
State Fish Inspectorate of Ukraine (under Ministry of Agricultural Policy and Food)
State Agency for Water Resources of Ukraine (under Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources)
Kyiv City Administration
Ukrainian Hydrometeorological Institute (under State Emergency Situations Service)
State Ecological Academy for Post-Graduate Education (under Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources)
Institute of Zoology of the Academy of Science
Kyiv National University after Taras Shevchenko / Institute for Biology and Medicine, Ecology and Environment Faculty
Arhus Centre in Kyiv (under State Ecological Academy for Post-Graduate Education)
Razumkov Analytical Centre
National Institute for Strategic Studies
European Business Association (member of the Eastern Partnership)

Annex 2 Summary of responses to the survey

I. Effectiveness

1 Key indicators of effectiveness

	Yes	Probably	Do not know	No
1.1 Did the EA match the needs and requirements of the stakeholder?	11	15	4	7
1.2 Did the EA respond adequately to environmental policy needs?	3	15	8	6
1.3 Is the EA's analysis of consistently high quality?	8	16	3	8
1.4 Do the EA findings have an impact on environmental policy-making or likely to have such impact in the future?	3	16	2	12
1.5 Did the EA provide added value at the national level?	12	14	8	3

2 Overall quality of the Environmental Assessment reports

	Low	Medium	High
2.1 How would you evaluate the overall quality of Environmental Assessment reports	4	22	9

3 Overall, how would you rate the quality of the information provided in the Environmental Assessment reports by the following criteria?

	Low	Medium	High
3.1 Sufficiency	6	23	9
3.2 Timeliness	17	14	6
3.3 Topical coverage	2	19	13
3.4 Reliability	6	27	4
3.5 Independence	7	18	12
3.6 Well-communicated	7	13	12

4 Development of the Environmental Assessment reports quality

	Falling	Stable	Improving
4.1 How would you evaluate the development of quality of the Environmental Assessment reports in recent years?	1	14	13

II. Efficiency

1 Key indicators of efficiency

	Yes	Probably	Do not know	No
1.1 Did the EA deliver relevant information?	24	8	0	3
1.2 Did the EA play a role in environmental policy-making in the country?	2	16	10	10
1.3 Is the use of analytical methods and tools in the EA appropriate and sufficient?	6	18	10	0
1.4 Did the EA represent value for money comparing the costs and benefits?	4	4	26	0
1.5 Is there any potential for optimisation of the EA with regard to a modern and efficiently operational work flow?	18	14	3	0

2 Did the EA reports deliver information to...

	Completely insignificant role (1)	2	3	4	Very significant role (5)
2.1 help identify necessary policy interventions?	6	3	10	10	2
2.2. help determine the scale and scope of policy interventions?	8	5	12	4	2
2.3 help choose policy instruments (legal, awareness raising etc.)?	9	7	9	9	1
2.4 help develop policy instruments (including setting their targets and indicators)?	9	5	12	6	1
2.5 help implement policies?	5	5	8	6	0
2.6 help evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of environmental policies?	5	8	12	5	1

3 These and similar Environmental Assessment reports are particularly needed in order to help improve the country's environmental performance with respect to

	Completely insignificant role (1)	2	3	4	Very significant role (5)
3.1. Air pollution and ozone depletion	0	4	2	15	5
3.2. Climate change	1	2	3	11	8
3.3 Water	0	2	3	15	4
3.4 Biodiversity	0	2	3	7	8
3.5 Land and soil	0	2	3	7	7
3.6 Agriculture	0	2	3	6	10
3.7 Energy	0	2	5	9	6
3.8 Transport	0	2	5	9	7
3.9 Waste	0	2	2	4	12

Annex 3 Evaluation tool (the questionnaire)

EEA Evaluation tool:

Scope and key questions of the evaluation of recent national Environmental Assessments (EA)

NOTE: the tables below are to be filled for all the publications selected for review. Please put publication symbols in cells corresponding to the respondent's opinion about these publications. Example:

	Low	Medium	High	Comment
2.1 How would you evaluate the overall quality of Environmental Assessment reports	B	S	W, A	

S: SoE report; **W:** Thematic reports on water; **A:** Thematic reports on air / climate; **B:** Thematic reports on biodiversity

Effectiveness and efficiency – the two dimensions of the evaluation:

✓ I. Effectiveness

1 Key indicators of effectiveness

	Yes	Probably	Do not know	No	Comment
1.1 Did the EA match the needs and requirements of the stakeholder?					
1.2 Did the EA respond adequately to environmental policy needs?					
1.3 Is the EA's analysis of consistently high quality?					
1.4 Do the EA findings have an impact on environmental policy-making or likely to have such impact in the future?					
1.5 Did the EA provide added value at the national level?					

2 Overall quality of the Environmental Assessment reports

	Low	Medium	High	Comment
2.1 How would you evaluate the overall quality of Environmental Assessment reports				

3 Overall, how would you rate the quality of the information provided in the Environmental Assessment reports by the following criteria?

	Low	Medium	High	Comment
3.1 Sufficiency				
3.2 Timeliness				
3.3 Topical coverage				
3.4 Reliability				
3.5 Independence				
3.6 Well-communicated				

4 Development of the Environmental Assessment reports quality

	Falling	Stable	Improving
4.1 How would you evaluate the development of quality of the Environmental Assessment reports in recent years?			

✓ II. Efficiency

1 Key indicators of efficiency

	Yes	Probably	Do not know	No	Comment
1.1 Did the EA deliver relevant information?					
1.2 Did the EA play a role in environmental policy-making in the country?					
1.3 Is the use of analytical methods and tools in the EA appropriate and sufficient?					
1.4 Did the EA represent value for money comparing the costs and benefits?					
1.5 Is there any potential for optimisation of the EA with regard to a modern and efficiently operational work flow?					

2 Did the EA reports deliver information to...

	Completely insignificant role (1)	2	3	4	Very significant role (5)
2.1 help identify necessary policy interventions?					
2.2. help determine the scale and scope of policy interventions?					
2.3 help choose policy instruments (legal, awareness raising etc.)?					
2.4 help develop policy instruments (including setting their targets and indicators)?					
2.5 help implement policies?					
2.6 help evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of environmental policies?					

3 These and similar Environmental Assessment reports are particularly needed in order to help improve the country's environmental performance with respect to

	Completely insignificant role (1)	2	3	4	Very significant role (5)
3.1. Air pollution and ozone depletion					
3.2. Climate change					
3.3 Water					
3.4 Biodiversity					
3.5 Land and soil					
3.6 Agriculture					
3.7 Energy					
3.8 Transport					
3.9 Waste					

