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Environmental Impact Assessment and Environmental Management System Act¹

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RT I 2005, 15, 87

Entry into force 03.04.2005, , in part in accordance with § 71

Amended by the following acts

Passed	Published	Entry into force
07.12.2006	RT I 2006, 58, 439	01.01.2007
21.02.2007	RT I 2007, 25, 131	01.04.2007
19.06.2008	RT I 2008, 34, 209	01.08.2008
18.12.2008	RT I 2009, 3, 15	01.02.2009
27.01.2010	RT I 2010, 8, 37	27.02.2010
22.04.2010	RT I 2010, 22, 108	01.01.2011, will enter into force on the date specified in the decision of the Council of the European Union regarding the abrogation of the derogation established in favour of the Republic of Estonia on the ground provided for in Article 140(2) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, Decision No. 2010/416/EU of the Council of the European Union of 13 July 2010 (OJ L 196, 28.07.2010, pp. 24-26).
26.10.2010	RT I, 16.11.2010, 1	26.11.2010
06.12.2011	RT I, 21.12.2011, 1	31.12.2011
19.02.2014	RT I, 13.03.2014, 2	23.03.2014
19.06.2014	RT I, 29.06.2014, 109	01.07.2014, the ministers' official titles have been replaced on the basis of subsection 107 ³ (4) of the Government of the Republic Act starting from the wording in force as of 1 July 2014.
18.02.2015	RT I, 23.03.2015, 3	01.07.2015
19.02.2015	RT I, 23.03.2015, 6	01.07.2015, in part 01.02.2016
11.06.2015	RT I, 30.06.2015, 4	01.09.2015, on the basis of subsection 107 ⁴ (2) of the Government of the Republic Act the words 'Ministry of Agriculture' have been replaced with the words 'Ministry of Rural Affairs' in the appropriate case form.
29.10.2015	RT I, 10.11.2015, 2	01.12.2015
09.12.2015	RT I, 30.12.2015, 1	18.01.2016

Chapter 1

GENERAL PROVISIONS

§ 1. Scope of application of Act

(1) This Act provides legal grounds and procedure for the assessment of likely environmental impact, organisation of the environmental management and audit scheme and legal grounds for awarding the eco-label in order to prevent environmental damage and establishes liability for violation of the requirements of this Act.

(2) The provisions of the Administrative Procedure Act apply to the administrative proceedings specified in this Act, taking into account the specifications provided for in this Act.

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

(3) The following is excluded from the scope of this Act:

1) a strategic planning document the sole purpose of which is national defence or civil emergency;
2) financial or budget plans, programmes and strategies;
3) a strategic planning document if the activity proposed on the basis thereof are co-financed from the Structural Funds of the European Union or the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund between 2004 and 2006;

4) the strategic environmental assessment of a spatial plan to the extent regulated in the Planning Act.

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 3 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

§ 2. Purpose of environmental impact assessment and strategic environmental assessment

[Repealed – RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

§ 2¹. Environmental impact

For the purposes of this Act, ‘environmental impact’ means any potential direct or indirect effect of a proposed activity or implementation of a strategic planning document on the environment, human health and well-being, cultural heritage or property.

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

§ 2². Significant environmental impact

Environmental impact is significant if it is likely to exceed the environmental capacity of the impact area, cause irreversible changes to the environment, endanger human health and well-being, the environment, cultural heritage or property.

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

§ 2³. Authorities concerned

(1) The authorities concerned are authorities that are likely to be concerned by the environmental impact presumably arising from a strategic planning document or a proposed activity or that may have a reasoned interest in the potential environmental impact. Depending on the nature of the strategic planning document or the proposed activity, the authorities specified in the previous sentence include, among others, the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of the Environment, the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications, the Ministry of Rural Affairs, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Social Affairs and governmental authorities in their area of government, the county government, the local authority, and other authorities concerned.

(2) The Ministry of the Environment is considered an authority concerned in the event of environmental impact assessment in a transboundary context or strategic environmental assessment in a transboundary context or if the authority who established the strategic planning document or the issuer of the development consent is the *Riigikogu*, the Government of the Republic or a ministry. In other events, the Environmental Board is considered an authority concerned.

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

§ 2⁴. Extension of time limits of proceedings

The time limits specified in subsections 15¹(2), (4) and (5), subsection 17 (3), subsections 18 (2) and (4), subsections 22 (3), (5) and (7), subsections 36¹(2), (4) and (5), subsection 37 (6), subsections 39 (2) and (4), and subsections 42 (3), (5) and (7) may, in a justified case such as the volume of the documents or the complexity of the proposed activity or strategic planning document, be extended by setting a new time limit for taking the procedural step.

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

Chapter 2

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Division 1

Environmental Impact Assessment of Proposed Activity

§ 3. Mandatory environmental impact assessment

Environmental impact is assessed:

- 1) upon applying for development consent or for amending development consent whereby the proposed activity which is the reason for applying for or amending the development consent potentially results in significant environmental impact;
- 2) if an activity is planned whereby, according to objective information, it cannot be precluded that the activity alone or in conjunction with other activities may potentially significantly and adversely affect the protection purpose of a Natura 2000 site, and which is not directly related to or necessary for the protection procedure of the site.

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

§ 3¹. Purpose of environmental impact assessment

The purpose of environmental impact assessment is to give to the issuer of the development consent information on the environmental impact of the proposed activity and its reasonable alternatives and regarding the choice of the most suitable solution for the proposed activity, which makes it possible to prevent or minimise adverse impact on the environment and to promote sustainable development.

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

§ 4. Environmental impact

[Repealed – RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

§ 5. Significant environmental impact

[Repealed – RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

§ 6. Activities with significant environmental impact

(1) An activity with significant environmental impact is:

- 1) oil processing, except the manufacture of only lubricants from oil;
- 2) gasification and liquefaction of coal or bituminous shale, if the amount of raw material used per day is 500 tons or more;
- 3) construction of a thermal power station or other combustion plant with a nominal thermal input equal to or greater than 300 MW_{th};
- 4) construction, dismantling or decommissioning of a nuclear power station or other nuclear reactors, except research installations for the production and conversion of fissionable and fertile materials, whose maximum power does not exceed 1 kilowatt continuous thermal load;
- 5) installation of wind farms in water bodies;
- 6) production or enrichment of nuclear fuel, processing or handling or final disposal of used nuclear fuel or disposal of used nuclear fuel for over ten years on a site other than the place of generation thereof;

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

- 7) handling high-activity radioactive waste, final disposal of merely radioactive waste or disposal thereof for over ten years on a site other than the place of generation;

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

- 8) initial smelting of pig iron or steel;
- 9) production of non-ferrous crude metals from ore, concentrates or secondary raw materials by metallurgical or chemical or electrolytic processes;
- 10) production of asbestos and processing or transformation of asbestos or products containing asbestos: for asbestos-cement, with annual production of more than 20 000 tons of finished products per year, for friction material, with annual production of more than 50 tons of finished products per year, and for other uses of asbestos, with annual production of more than 200 tons of finished products per year;
- 11) manufacture on an industrial scale of substances using chemical conversion processes, in which several units are juxtaposed and are functionally linked to one another and which are for the production of basic organic chemicals, basic inorganic chemicals, phosphorous-, nitrogen- or potassium-based fertilizers (simple or compound fertilizers), plant protection products and biocidal products, basic pharmaceutical products using a chemical or biological process, or explosives;
- 12) manufacture of paper or board with a production capacity of at least 200 tons per one twenty four hour period, or production of pulp from timber or similar fibrous materials;

[RT I 2008, 34, 209 – entry into force 01.08.2008]

13) construction of express roads, construction of lines for airports with a basic runway length of 2100 m or more and construction of a new road of four or more lanes, or realignment and/or widening of an existing road of two lanes or less so as to provide four or more lanes, where such new road, or realigned and/or widened section of road would be over 10 kilometres in a continuous length;

14) construction of a new line for long-distance railway traffic or construction of a new railway station, if, in the case of a single-track railway line, there are at least four depot sidings and, in the case of a double-track railway line, there are at least five depot sidings, or extension of an existent railway station if, as a result of the extension, there are at least four depot sidings in the case of a single-track railway line and at least five depot sidings in the case of a double-track railway line, or extension of the tracks of the existent railway station to the length of 1000 meters or more if, in the case of a single-track railway line, there are at least four depot sidings and, in the case of a double-track railway line, there are at least five depot sidings in the railway station;

15) construction of inland waterways and ports for inland-waterway traffic which permit the passage of vessels of over 1350 tons;

16) construction of trading ports, piers for loading and unloading connected to land and outside ports which can take vessels of over 1350 tons;

17) marine dredging and the dredging of Lake Peipus, Lake Lämmijärv and Lake Pskov, starting from the soil volume of 10 000 cubic metres or the dredging of another water body starting from the soil volume of 500 cubic metres;

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

17¹) sinking of solid substances into the seabed and into Lake Peipus, Lake Lämmijärv and Lake Pskov, starting from the soil volume of 10 000 cubic metres, or sinking of solid substances into a watercourse, starting from the substance mass of 2000 cubic metres, or sinking of solid substances in another water body, starting from the substance mass of 500 cubic metres;

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

18) groundwater abstraction where the annual volume of water abstracted is at least 10 million cubic metres;

[RT I 2008, 34, 209 – entry into force 01.08.2008]

19) construction of works for the transfer of water resources where the average amount of water transferred exceeds 100 million cubic metres per year, or where the average flow of the basin of abstraction exceeds 2000 million cubic metres per year and where the amount of water transferred through such works exceeds five per cent of the average annual flow of the basin of abstraction;

20) waste water treatment plants with a capacity exceeding 150 000 population equivalent;

21) installation or reconstruction of hydro-electric stations, barrages, dams or reservoirs in a sensitive receiving water body;

22) incineration, chemical treatment or landfill of hazardous waste;

23) incineration or chemical treatment of more than 100 tons of non-hazardous waste per day, or construction of non-hazardous waste landfills with a capacity of more than 25 000 tons of waste;

24) closure of a landfill with an area of at least 1.5 hectares;

25) construction of a pipeline for the transport of gas, petroleum or chemicals, with a diameter of more than 800 mm and a length of more than 40 km;

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

25¹) construction of a pipeline with a diameter of more than 800 mm and a length of more than 40 km as well as related pumping stations for the transport of geologically stored carbon dioxide;

[RT I, 21.12.2011, 1 – entry into force 31.12.2011]

26) extraction of more than 500 tons of oil or more than 500 000 cubic metres of natural gas from the seabed or land per day;

27) construction of installations for the intensive rearing of poultry, pigs or bovine animals with more than 60 000 places for poultry, 3000 places for pigs (with a body mass of over 30 kg), 900 places for sows, 600 places for dairy cows, 800 places for suckler cows or 1200 places for young bovine animals, i.e. heifers that are over eight months old until giving birth and bulls that are over eight months old;

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

28) open-cast mining where the surface of the site exceeds 25 hectares, underground mining or mechanised peat extraction;

[RT I 2008, 34, 209 – entry into force 01.08.2008]

29) restoration of land damaged by open-cast mining in an area exceeding 25 hectares, restoration of land damaged by underground mining or mechanised peat extraction;

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

30) construction of an overhead electrical power line with a voltage of 220 kV or more and a length of more than 15 km;

31) construction of a new draining system in forest land or wetland with a total area of more than 100 hectares;

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

31¹) deforestation of forest land with a total area of over 100 hectares;

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

32) construction of a facility or facilities with a total capacity of more than 100 000 cubic metres for storing petroleum, petrochemicals or chemical products;

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

33) construction of an establishment that handles hazardous chemicals, provided that it is a category A enterprise with a major hazard under the Chemicals Act;

[RT I, 10.11.2015, 2 - entry into force 01.12.2015]

34) an activity for which the obligation to carry out environmental impact assessment arises from a strategic planning document which is the basis for the activity;

34¹) construction of buildings for collecting carbon dioxide generated by the activities, installations or buildings specified in clauses 1) to 34) of this subsection for the purpose of storing it geologically or if the annual volume of carbon dioxide collected for the purpose of geological storage is at least 1.5 megatons per installation;

[RT I, 21.12.2011, 1 – entry into force 31.12.2011]

35) changes in an activity or installation or the expansion of a building specified in clauses 1) to 34¹) of this subsection, provided that the change of the activity or installation or the expansion of the building is in compliance with the possible thresholds set out in this subsection.

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

(2) If the proposed activity is not included among the activities specified in subsection (1), the decision-maker will make a preliminary estimate as to whether the activities of the following areas have significant environmental impact:

[RT I 2008, 34, 209 – entry into force 01.08.2008]

1) agriculture, silviculture, aquaculture and land improvement;

[RT I 2008, 34, 209 – entry into force 01.08.2008]

2) mining of mineral resources or enrichment of ore, geological explorations, general geological surveys or termination of mining of mineral resources;

3) energy industry;

4) production, processing and storage of metals, including storage of end-of-life vehicles;

5) processing of mineral materials;

6) chemical industry;

7) food industry;

8) cellulose, paper, timber or textile industry, or tanning of skins or hides;

9) rubber industry;

10) construction or use of infrastructure;

11) waste management;

[RT I 2008, 34, 209 – entry into force 01.08.2008]

12) tourism;

13) surface treatment or finishing by using organic solvents;

14) production of plywood or fibreboard;

15) production of graphite (hard-burnt coal) or electrographite by way of incineration or graphitisation;

16) storage of hazardous chemicals, including fuel;

17) disposal and recovery of animal carcasses or animal waste;

18) special use of water;

19) construction of recreation areas, sports areas or leisure areas;

20) ceramics or glass industry;

21) handling of waste water and sediments;

[RT I 2008, 34, 209 – entry into force 01.08.2008]

22) another activity which may result in significant environmental impact.

(2¹) If an activity or installation specified in clauses 1) to 34¹) of this subsection is changed or a building specified in clauses 1) to 34¹) of this subsection is expanded, the decision-maker must make a preliminary estimate of whether the proposed activity has a significant environmental impact.

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

(2²) The need to assess the environmental impact of activities in the fields specified in subsection (2) of this section and of the activity specified in subsection (2¹) is decided on the basis of the results of a preliminary estimate in accordance with subsection (3) of this section and the opinion of the authority concerned specified in subsection (3¹) of this section.

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

(3) The decision-maker will make a preliminary estimate specified in subsections (2) and (2¹) of this section on the basis of all the following criteria:

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

1) the environmental conditions of the site of the activity and its vicinity, e.g. the existing land use, the natural resources present in the site, the characteristics and regeneration capability of such resources and the absorption capacity of the natural environment. Assessment of the absorption capacity of the natural environment must, above all, be based on the absorption capacity of wetlands, shores, banks of water-bodies, reeves, forests, protected natural objects, including Natura 2000 sites, sites where the requirements established by legislation are already exceeded, densely populated areas within the meaning of the Land Reform Act and sites of historical, cultural or archaeological value;

[RT I 2007, 25, 131 – entry into force 01.04.2007]

2) the nature of the activity, including its technological level, use of natural resources, waste and energy intensity, and other activities in the vicinity;

- 3) the consequences associated with the activity, e.g. water, soil or air pollution, waste generation, noise, vibration, light, heat, radiation and smell;
- 4) the possibility that emergency situations arise from the activity;
- 4¹) the presumed impact of the proposed activity on a Natura 2000 site or any other protected natural object; [RT I 2008, 34, 209 – entry into force 01.08.2008]
- 5) the magnitude, spatial extent, duration, frequency and reversibility, effect and cumulativeness of the impact resulting from that specified in clauses 1) to 4¹) of this subsection and the transboundary impact and the probability of the impact. [RT I 2008, 34, 209 – entry into force 01.08.2008]

(3¹) Upon deciding on the need for the assessment of the environmental impact of the activities in the fields specified in subsection (2) and of the activity specified in subsection (2¹), the decision-maker must, before making a decision, ask all the authorities concerned for an opinion by submitting a draft decision made on the basis of the criteria specified in subsection (3) of this section so that they could formulate their opinion. [RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

(4) A detailed list of areas of activity specified in subsection (2) of this section will be established by a regulation of the Government of the Republic.

§ 7. Development consent

For the purposes of this Act, ‘development consent’ means:

- 1) a building permit or a permit of use of a building;
- 2) an integrated environmental permit or an environmental permit within the meaning of the General Part of the Environmental Code Act or a superficies licence; [RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]
- 3) a geological exploration permit or a permit for general geological survey; [RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]
- 4) other documents not specified in this section permitting the proposed activity with potentially significant environmental impact.

§ 8. Developer

(1) For the purposes of this Act, ‘developer’ means a person who proposes an activity and intends to carry it out. [RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

(2) The developer covers the expenses related to environmental impact assessment.

§ 9. Decision-maker

The decision-maker is the issuer of development consent.

§ 10. Supervisor of environmental impact assessment

[Repealed – RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

§ 11. Initiation of and refusal to initiate environmental impact assessment

(1) The developer will submit to the decision-maker an application for development consent in the events and in accordance with the procedure provided for in legislation.

(2) The decision-maker will review an application and make a decision to initiate or refuse to initiate environmental impact assessment of the proposed activity within the statutory time limit established for application proceedings.

(2¹) If a decision to initiate or refuse to initiate the environmental impact assessment of a proposed activity is made on the basis of subsection 6 (2) or (2¹) of this Act, the statutory time limit established for application proceedings may be extended for the purpose of making a preliminary estimate by up to 30 days. [RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

(3) In the event of an activity specified in subsection 6 (1) of this Act, environmental impact assessment of the proposed activity will be initiated without providing the reasons therefor.

(4) If a decision to initiate or refuse to initiate environmental impact assessment of the proposed activity is made on the basis of subsection 6 (2) or (2¹) of this Act, the results of the preliminary estimate concerning all the criteria listed in subsection 6 (3) of this Act will be appended to the decision. [RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

(5) [Repealed – RT I, 16.11.2010, 1 – entry into force 26.11.2010]

(6) If the proposed activity potentially results in significant environmental impact, the decision-maker will not initiate the environmental impact assessment of the proposed activity if, according to an estimate based on the criteria set out in subsection 6 (3) of this Act, it becomes evident that the environmental impact of the proposed activity has already been adequately assessed in the course of environmental impact assessment or strategic environmental assessment and the decision-maker has sufficient information for granting the development consent.

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

(6¹) [Repealed – RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

(7) If an application for two or more development consents required for the proposed activity is submitted to one decision-maker, the decision-maker may join the proceedings regarding environmental impact assessment of the proposed activity with the consent of the developer, unless this violates the rights of third parties.

(7¹) Only one environmental impact assessment is initiated in the proceedings of an application for the same development consent.

[RT I, 16.11.2010, 1 – entry into force 26.11.2010]

(8) A decision to initiate or refuse to initiate environmental impact assessment of the proposed activity must set out:

- 1) the name and details of the decision-maker;
- 2) the name and purpose of the proposed activity;
- 3) the reasons for initiation of or refusal to initiate environmental impact assessment of the proposed activity;
- 4) upon initiation of environmental impact assessment in a transboundary context, information on initiation of environmental impact assessment in a transboundary context;
- 5) information on joining proceedings regarding environmental impact assessment of the proposed activity;
- 6) information on the necessary environmental research.

(9) The decision-maker may submit a decision to refuse initiation of environmental impact assessment of the proposed activity as a part of the decision to grant or refuse to grant development consent.

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

(10) If the proposed activity may potentially affect a Natura 2000 site, protected area, special conservation area, habitat of a protected species or individual protected natural object, the decision-maker will obtain approval for the draft decision to refuse initiation of environmental impact assessment of the proposed activity with the manager of the specified protected natural feature.

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

(11) If environmental impact assessment of the proposed activity is initiated, the application proceedings of development consent will be suspended until giving notice in the official publication *Ametlikud Teadaanded* in accordance with subsection 22 (7) of this Act.

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

(12) Before the submission of an application for development consent, the developer may address the decision-maker to obtain an opinion concerning the type of information the developer must submit in the course of the environmental impact assessment. Before providing an opinion, the decision-maker whom the developer addressed must consult with the developer as well as with the authorities concerned. Provision of an opinion does not prevent the decision-maker from demanding further information in the course of the environmental impact assessment.

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

§ 12. Notification of initiation and refusal to initiate environmental impact assessment

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

(1) The decision-maker will inform the persons specified in subsection 46 (1) of the General Part of the Environmental Code Act and other parties to the proceedings about the initiation of the environmental impact assessment of the proposed activity by electronic means, by regular mail or by registered mail and inform the public by publishing a notice in the official publication *Ametlikud Teadaanded* within 14 days after making a relevant decision.

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

(1¹) The decision-maker will:

- 1) inform about the refusal to initiate the environmental impact assessment of the proposed activity along with the notice of the granting of or refusal to grant development consent, provided that the notification of the parties to the proceedings and the public is ensured, or

2) inform the persons specified in subsection 46 (1) of the General Part of the Environmental Code Act, other parties to the proceedings and the public about the refusal to initiate the environmental impact assessment of the proposed activity by publishing a notice in the official publication *Ametlikud Teadaanded* within 14 days after making a relevant decision.

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015](2) Upon granting a building permit or a permit of use of a building, a notice of refusal to initiate environmental impact assessment will be given via the national register of construction works.

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

(3) A notice of initiation of or refusal to initiate environmental impact assessment of the proposed activity must set out at least:

1) the name of the decision-maker and the name and details of the contact person of the decision-maker;

2) the name of the developer, the short description and purpose of the proposed activity;

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

3) information on initiation of or refusal to initiate environmental impact assessment of the proposed activity;

4) information on the basis of clauses 11 (8) 4) to 6) of this Act;

5) the time and place for accessing the decision to initiate or refuse to initiate environmental impact assessment of the proposed activity.

§ 13. Environmental impact assessment programme

After making a decision to initiate the environmental impact assessment of a proposed activity, the leading expert or, an expert group under the supervision of the leading expert (hereinafter *expert group*), will, jointly with the developer, prepare an environmental impact assessment programme which sets out:

1) the purpose and exact location of the proposed activity;

2) a brief description of the proposed activity and reasonable alternatives therefor;

3) a description of the environment likely to be affected;

4) the connection between the proposed activity and strategic planning documents;

5) information on the likely significant environmental impact of the proposed activity and reasonable alternatives therefore as well as information on the potential sources of impact, the size of the impact area and the affected environmental elements;

6) a description of the methods of assessment used upon environmental impact assessment, including information on surveys required for environmental impact assessment;

7) a schedule of environmental impact assessment of the proposed activity and reasonable alternatives therefor and the schedule for the publication of the results of the assessment;

8) information on the developer and the name of the leading expert or the composition of the expert group, indicating the areas and the impact that each member of the group will assess and stating the reasons thereof;

9) the list of the authorities concerned along with the reasons of involving them in the proceedings.

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

§ 14. Leading expert

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

(1) Environmental impact will be assessed or environmental impact assessment will be directed by a natural person who holds a licence for environmental impact assessment, or a legal person through an employee holding a relevant licence (hereinafter *leading expert*).

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

(2) If environmental impact is assessed or environmental impact assessment is directed by a legal person through an employee holding a relevant licence, the legal person will be responsible for compliance with the requirements for environmental impact assessment and the results of environmental impact assessment.

(3) The leading expert has the right to form an expert group for environmental impact assessment, which may comprise competent persons without a relevant licence.

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

(4) The leading expert must involve specialists in environmental impact assessment if the qualifications of the leading expert are not sufficient for environmental impact assessment.

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

(4¹) A person who has acquired foreign professional qualifications may act as a leading expert if their professional qualifications have been recognised in accordance with the Recognition of Foreign Professional Qualifications Act. The competent authority provided for in subsection 7 (2) of the Recognition of Foreign Professional Qualifications Act is the Ministry of the Environment.

[RT I, 30.12.2015, 1 - entry into force 18.01.2016]

(5) The leading expert and the members of the expert group must be impartial and independent upon assessment of the environmental impact of the proposed activity, reflecting in the environmental impact assessment report all the circumstances that are relevant from the point of view of the purpose of the environmental impact assessment.

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

(6) The decision-maker will verify whether the leading expert holds a licence.
[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

§ 15. Licence for environmental impact assessment

(1) The Ministry of the Environment will issue a licence for environmental impact assessment (hereinafter *licence*) to a natural person who:

- 1) has obtained a Master's degree or equivalent qualifications under a curriculum in the field of natural science or environmental protection;
- 2) has at least five years of professional experience in a field related to natural science or environmental protection;
- 3) to the extent of at least 60 hours, has undergone training in environmental impact assessment, which covers the making of estimates of, among other things, at least the aspects listed in subsection 20 (1) of this Act, and has passed a corresponding examination;
- 4) to the extent of at least 60 hours, has undergone management training and has the experience of managing at least two projects;
- 5) has participated in the work of an expert group as a substantive expert at least four times in the last five years;
- 6) has passed an environmental impact assessment test in front of the environmental impact assessment licence committee;
- 7) has paid the state fee.

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

(2) In order to obtain a licence, an applicant for the licence must submit the following to the Ministry of the Environment:

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

- 1) an application for the licence;
- 2) documents certifying education;
- 3) documents certifying prior work experience;
- 4) a confirmation that training related to environmental impact assessment has been completed and an examination in environmental impact assessment has been passed and a confirmation regarding participation in the work of an expert group;
- 5) a certificate of completion of management training and of having project management experience.

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

(3) An application for a licence must set out:

- 1) the given name, surname, personal identification code, address of permanent residence and contact details of the applicant;
- 2) the place of employment and the address and contact details of the place of employment;
- 3) information on the qualifications specified in clauses 1) to 6) of subsection (1) of this section;
- 4) [Repealed – RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]
- 5) a signature of the applicant proving that information provided in the application is correct;
- 6) the date.

(4) The Ministry of the Environment will grant a licence to the applicant for five years. The period of validity of the licence begins on the date of granting the licence.

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

(5) Before application for the licence or application for the extension of the licence, an applicant for the licence must pay the state fee in the amount provided by the State Fees Act.

[RT I 2006, 58, 439 – entry into force 01.01.2007]

(6) A licence must set out:

- 1) the name of the document – “*Keskkonnamõju hindamise litsents*” [Licence for Environmental Impact Assessment];
- 2) the registration number, date of issue and period of validity of the licence;
- 3) the given name and surname and the personal identification code of the licence holder;
- 4) [Repealed – RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]
- 5) the name and signature of the issuer of the licence;
- 6) the seal of the Ministry of the Environment bearing the small national coat of arms.

(7) The granting of a licence will be refused if the applicant does not comply with the qualification requirements specified in clauses 1) to 6) of subsection (1) of this section or has failed to pay the state fee.

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

(7¹) Information on licensed leading experts, including on revoked licences, is published on the website of the Ministry of the Environment.
[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

(8) In order to extend the validity of a licence, a person must submit a written application in a free form. The validity of a licence will be extended if the applicant has participated as the leading expert in an environmental impact assessment or in a strategic assessment of the environmental impact of a detailed plan at least four times during the term of the licence.
[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

(8¹) If during the term of validity of the licence of the leading expert any complaints have been submitted regarding their activities, the environmental impact assessment committee will have the right to demand that the applicant take an environmental impact assessment examination.
[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

(9) The Ministry of the Environment may, on its own initiative or on a proposal of the decision-maker, revoke a licence or refuse to renew a licence if:
[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

- 1) the applicant has submitted false information upon applying for the licence;
[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]
- 2) the holder of the licence fails to comply with the requirements for environmental impact assessment;
- 3) the holder of the licence has submitted false information in the environmental impact assessment report;
- 4) the holder of the licence has knowingly provided an incorrect assessment in the environmental impact assessment report, and also if the results of the ex-post evaluation of environmental impact assessment significantly differ from the assessment provided in the environmental impact assessment report.
[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

(9¹) A licence does not need to be revoked or the validity of a licence may be extended if the irregularities specified in clause 1) or 3) of subsection (9) of this section could not have influenced the granting of or refusal to grant the licence or the development consent.
[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

(9²) The Ministry of the Environment will inform the licence holder about the initiation of the proceedings for the revocation of the licence within 14 days after the initiation of the proceedings. Along with a notice of initiation of the proceedings, a written summary of the circumstances due which the proceedings for the revocation of the licence were initiated will be sent to the licence holder and a time limit will be set to the licence holder for giving written explanations. The time limit must not be shorter than 21 days.
[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

(9³) Before making a decision to revoke a licence or to refuse to renew a licence, the licence holder will be heard orally. The time and place of the hearing will be communicated to the licence holder in writing at least 14 days before the oral hearing. If the licence holder does not attend the oral hearing, the Ministry of the Environment may make a decision without orally hearing the person.
[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

(9⁴) The Ministry of the Environment decides the revocation or non-revocation of a licence within 60 days from the initiation of the proceedings. In reasoned events, the Ministry of the Environment may extend the decision-making time limit. The licence holder must be informed thereof immediately.
[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

(10) The Ministry of the Environment will inform the licence holder by registered mail about the revocation or non-renewal of the licence and publish the notice in the official publication *Ametlikud Teadaanded*. The notice must set out the name of the leading expert, the number of the revoked or non-renewed licence, and the date of the revocation or non-renewal decision.
[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

(11) If the licence is revoked on the basis of clause 1), 2) or 3) of subsection (9) of this section, the person must undergo supplementary training in environmental impact assessment at least to the extent of 60 hours and pass a corresponding examination.
[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

(11¹) If the licence is revoked or not renewed on the basis of clause 4) of subsection (9) of this section and the making of a knowingly false assessment in the environmental impact assessment report significantly influenced the making of the decision to grant the development consent, the person does not have the right to apply for the licence again.
[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

(12) [Repealed – RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

(13) If the licence of the leading expert assessing the environmental impact or leading the assessment is revoked or the licence is not renewed or another circumstance that brings about such a consequence exists in the environmental impact assessment proceedings, the decision-maker will, on a proposal of the developer, appoint a new leading expert for the unfinished environmental impact assessment. In environmental impact assessment proceedings, the appointment of a new leading expert is notified of in accordance with subsection 12 (1) of this Act.

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

(14) The licence form and the application form will be established by a regulation of the minister responsible for the field.

§ 15¹. Asking for opinion on environmental impact assessment programme

(1) Before the publication of an environmental impact assessment programme in accordance with § 16 of this Act, the decision-maker must ask for an opinion on the content of the programme from all the authorities concerned. To ask for the opinions, the developer must submit the environmental impact assessment programme to the decision-maker.

(2) The decision-maker will check the compliance of the programme with the requirements provided for in § 13 of this Act within 14 days as of the receipt of the environmental impact assessment programme and submit it to the authorities concerned for the submission of an opinion.

(3) If the environmental impact assessment programme does not comply with the requirements provided for in § 13 of this Act, the decision-maker will return it to the developer along with the reasons and correction proposals.

(4) Within 30 days from the receipt of the environmental impact assessment programme, the authority concerned will, based on its field of competence, submit to the decision-maker an opinion, among other things, on the adequacy and sufficiency of the programme. Upon examination of the documentation, the authority must verify the sufficiency of the composition of the expert group.

(5) The decision-maker will examine the opinions within 14 days as of the receipt of the opinions of the authorities concerned and submit to the developer and to the leading expert its opinion on the adequacy and sufficiency of the environmental impact assessment programme, taking into account the opinions submitted by the authorities concerned.

(6) The leading expert or the expert group, jointly with the developer, will correct and modify the programme on the basis of subsection (5) of this section and explain why the opinions were taken into account or disregarded. The developer will submit to the decision-maker a modified environmental impact assessment programme. Copies of the letters of the authorities concerned will be added to the programme.

(7) The decision-maker examines the corrected and modified environmental impact assessment programme, including whether the opinions of the authorities concerned have been taken into account or not, thereby involving in the proceedings the authority concerned whose position was not taken into account, where necessary.

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

§ 16. Publication of environmental impact assessment programme

(1) The decision-maker will organise a public display of an environmental impact assessment programme with the duration of not less than 14 days. Thereafter the developer will organise a public consultation of the environmental impact assessment programme in cooperation with the decision-maker.

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

(2) The decision-maker will give notice of the public display of and public consultation regarding an environmental impact assessment programme within 14 days after the receipt of the programme at least:

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

1) in the official publication *Ametlikud Teadaanded*;

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

2) at the expense of the developer, in one national newspaper or one local or county newspaper;

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

3) in at least one public building or place of the location of the proposed activity (e.g. shop, library, school, bus stop).

[RT I 2008, 34, 209 – entry into force 01.08.2008]

(3) Within 14 days after the receipt of the programme, the decision-maker will by electronic means, by regular mail or by registered mail give notice of the public display of and public consultation regarding an environmental impact assessment programme to:

- 1) the county governments and local authorities into the territory of which the environmental impact of the proposed activity may extend;
 - 2) the authorities concerned;
 - 3) the Environmental Inspectorate;
 - 4) the manager of the protected natural object that is potentially significantly affected by the proposed activity;
 - 5) non-governmental environmental organisations through organisations uniting them;
 - 6) the persons specified in subsection 46 (1) of the General Part of the Environmental Code Act;
 - 7) other parties to the proceedings.
- [RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

(4) A notice regarding the publication of an environmental impact assessment programme must set out at least the following:

- 1) the names of the developer and decision-maker and the names and contact details of their contact persons;
 - 2) a brief description, purpose and exact location of the proposed activity;
- [RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]
- 3) the time and place for accessing the programme and other relevant documents;
 - 4) the time and manner for the submission of proposals, objections and questions regarding the programme;
 - 5) the time and place for the public consultation regarding the programme.

(5) Everyone has the right to access an environmental impact assessment programme and other relevant documents at the time of the public display of and the public consultation regarding the programme, submit proposals, objections and questions regarding the programme and obtain responses thereto.

(5¹) Among other things, the opinions submitted by the authorities concerned and received in the course of the public consultation are introduced and the reasons of taking into account or disregarding proposals and objections are explained at the public consultation of an environmental impact assessment programme.

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

(6) The decision-maker will publish an environmental impact assessment programme, inter alia, on its webpage and ensure to the public the possibility to examine the programme at least until the end of the term for submission of proposals, objections and questions.

§ 17. Taking account of results of public display of and public consultation regarding environmental impact assessment programme

(1) An agency to whom, during the public display of an environmental impact assessment programme, proposals, objections and questions were submitted regarding the programme will forward the specified proposals, objections and questions to the developer.

(2) Jointly with the developer, the leading expert or, under the supervision of the leading expert, an expert group will, on the basis of the proposals and objections submitted regarding the environmental impact assessment programme during the public display of the programme, make the necessary amendments to the programme, explain why proposals and objections are taken into account and state the reasons why they are not taken into account and respond to the questions.

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

(3) Within 30 days after the public consultation, the developer will by electronic means, by regular mail or by registered mail send an explanation or state the reasons as to why the proposals or objections regarding the environmental impact assessment programme were taken into account or disregarded and respond to the questions of the persons:

- 1) who submitted their proposal, objection or question in writing;
- 2) whose proposal, objection or question submitted at the public consultation remained unanswered at the public consultation.

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

§ 18. Verification of compliance of environmental impact assessment programme with requirements

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

(1) After the public consultation regarding an environmental impact assessment programme, the developer will submit the programme along with the proposals, objections and questions submitted regarding the programme, copies of letters specified in subsection 17 (3) of this Act and report of the public consultation to the decision-maker for verification of its compliance with the requirements.

(2) Based on the opinions of the authorities concerned, which were submitted in accordance with § 15¹ of this Act, the decision-maker will verify the following within 30 days as of the receipt of the environmental impact assessment programme:

- 1) the compliance of the programme with the requirements provided for in § 13 of this Act;
- 2) the adequacy and sufficiency of the programme for assessing the environmental impact of the proposed activity;
- 3) the taking into account or disregarding of proposals and objections submitted regarding the programme.

(3) The decision-maker will make a decision to declare the environmental impact assessment programme compliant with the requirements on the basis of subsection (2) of this section.

(4) The decision-maker will inform the persons specified in subsection 46 (1) of the General Part of the Environmental Code Act and other parties to the proceedings and publish a notice in the official publication *Ametlikud Teadaanded* within 14 days after making a decision specified in subsection (3) of this section.

(5) The notice specified in subsection (4) of this section must set out at least the following:

- 1) the name of the decision-maker as well as the name and details of the contact person of the decision-maker;
- 2) a brief description and the purpose of the proposed activity;
- 3) the time and place of accessing the environmental impact assessment programme and the decision specified in subsection (3) of this section.

(6) If the decision-maker finds that the environmental impact assessment programme does not comply with the requirements verified in accordance with subsection (2) of this section, the developer must submit to the decision-maker a modified programme for the purpose of verifying compliance with the requirements.

(7) If the developer has not, within six months from the initiation of the environmental impact assessment, submitted to the decision-maker the environmental impact assessment programme for the purpose of verifying compliance with the requirements, the decision-maker will not review the development consent application serving as the basis for the initiation of the environmental impact assessment and will return it to the developer.

(8) If the developer fails to submit an environmental impact assessment report specified in § 20 of this Act to the decision-maker for a public display within two years after the making of the decision specified in subsection (3) of this section, the programme will expire and a new programme must be prepared in order to assess the environmental impact.

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

§ 19. Notification of approval of environmental impact assessment programme

[Repealed – RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

§ 20. Environmental impact assessment report

(1) The leading expert or an expert group will, on the basis of the compliant environmental impact assessment programme, prepare the environmental impact assessment report in which the leading expert or the expert group:

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

- 1) describes the purpose of and the need for the proposed activity;
- 2) sets out a description of the proposed activity and reasonable alternatives therefor;
- 3) sets out a description of the environment potentially significantly affected by the proposed activity and reasonable alternatives therefor and assesses the state of the environment of the region;

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

- 4) evaluates the potential consequences associated with the proposed activity and reasonable alternatives therefor, e.g. water, soil or air pollution, waste generation, noise, vibration, light, heat, radiation and smell;
- 5) sets out a description of the methods to predict potential significant environmental impact of the proposed activity and reasonable alternatives therefor;

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

6) analyses the potential significant environmental impact of the proposed activity and its reasonable alternatives, including the indirect impact and combined impact with other types of activity on the state of the environment, impact on the health, well-being and property of persons, on plants, animals, soil, landscape, mineral resources, quality of air and water, climate, on protected natural objects, including Natura 2000 sites, their purposes of protection and integrity, and on cultural heritage, and the interaction of the factors specified in this subsection;

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

7) assesses the potential effect of significant environmental impact and describes the measures to prevent or minimise the adverse environmental impact involved and assesses the potential efficiency of the measures;

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

¹) presents, if necessary, an overview of the actual compensatory measures within the meaning of § 70¹ of the Nature Conservation Act to compensate for the potential damage caused by the adverse environmental impact potentially resulting from the proposed activity, and an assessment of the efficiency and the necessary volume of application of the measures;

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

²) on the basis of the results of environmental impact assessment of the proposed activity and reasonable alternatives therefor makes a reasoned proposal for the establishment of the conditions of environmental monitoring;

[RT I 2008, 34, 209 – entry into force 01.08.2008]

- 8) assesses the purposefulness of the use of natural resources and the compliance of the proposed activity and reasonable alternatives therefor with the principles of sustainable development;
- 9) compares the proposed activity with reasonable alternatives;
[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]
- 10) sets out an overview of the results of consultations upon assessment of environmental impact, involvement of the public and assessment of environmental impact in transboundary context;
- 11) discusses, if necessary, the difficulties which became evident upon environmental impact assessment and preparation of the report;
- 12) submits a summary of information specified in clauses 1) to 11) of this subsection;
- 13) submits information on sources used upon environmental impact assessment;
- 14) discusses the proposals, objections and questions submitted regarding the report the copies of which are appended to the report and submits copies of the letters sent to person who submitted the proposals, objections and questions, which explain why the proposals and objections submitted regarding the report are taken account of and state the reasons why they are not taken account of and respond to the questions;
- 15) discusses minutes of the public consultation regarding the report and appends the copy of the minutes to the report;
- 16) discusses the sketch maps and maps of the area of the proposed activities and reasonable alternatives therefor and appends the sketch maps and maps to the report;
- 16¹) discusses the environmental impact assessment programme and appends it to the report;
[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]
- 16²) discusses the composition of the expert group if additional members have been involved in comparison with the programme and explains which impact has been assessed by each member of the group;
[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]
- 17) discusses other appendices, if necessary.

(1¹) In the event of emergence of additional circumstances in the course of preparation of the environmental impact assessment report, the environmental impact assessment programme declared compliant with the requirements in accordance with subsection 18 (3) of this Act may be deviated from in a reasoned event stated in the report. Respective reasons must be set out in the environmental impact assessment report and if the decision-maker or the authority concerned who gives its opinion on the report does not accept deviation from the programme, the report must be modified in accordance with the programme.
[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

(2) If necessary, detailed requirements for an environmental impact assessment report may be established by a regulation of the minister responsible for the field.
[RT I, 29.06.2014, 109 – entry into force 01.07.2014, based on subsection 107³ (4) of the Government of the Republic Act the words ‘Minister of the Environment’ have been replaced with the words ‘minister responsible for the field’ starting from the wording in force as of 1 July 2014.]

(3) Upon assessment of environmental impact, the recognised knowledge of environmental impact assessment and methods of assessment must be taken account of.

§ 20¹. Asking for opinion on environmental impact assessment report

(1) The opinion of the authorities concerned is asked on the environmental impact assessment report in accordance with the procedure set out in § 15¹ of this Act.

(2) Within 21 days from the receipt of the environmental impact assessment report, the decision-maker will verify the compliance of the report with the requirements provided for in § 20 of this Act and the adequacy and sufficiency of the report.
[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

§ 21. Publication of environmental impact assessment report and taking account of results of publication of report

An environmental impact assessment report is published and the results of publication are taken into account in accordance with the procedure provided for in §§ 16 and 17 of this Act, except for the time limit of the public display of the report, which must be at least 21 days.
[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

§ 22. Verification of compliance of environmental impact assessment report with requirements

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

(1) After the public consultation of an environmental impact assessment report, the developer will submit the report to the decision-maker for verification of the compliance with the requirements.

(2) The decision-maker will submit the environmental impact assessment report to the authorities concerned for approval.

(3) The authority concerned, based on its field of competence, will approve or refuse to approve the environmental impact assessment report within 30 days from the receipt of the report. The authority specified in subsection 23 (2) of this Act will assess, among other things, the compliance of the report with the requirements of subsection 20 (1) of this Act.

(4) The authority concerned will not approve an environmental impact assessment report if:

- 1) there is a direct conflict with a legal instrument;
- 2) the report contains insufficient information that influences the final conclusions of the report and, as a result thereof, a significant adverse environmental impact may arise from the implementation of the proposed activity.

(5) Based on the approvals of the authorities concerned, the decision-maker will verify the following within 30 days from the receipt of the environmental impact assessment approvals:

- 1) the compliance of the report with the environmental impact assessment programme;
- 2) the compliance of the report with the requirements provided for in § 20 of this Act;
- 3) the adequacy and sufficiency of the report for granting development consent;
- 4) the taking into account or disregarding of proposals and objections submitted regarding the report.

(6) The decision-maker will make a decision to declare the environmental impact assessment report compliant with the requirements on the basis of subsection (5) of this section.

(7) The decision-maker will inform the persons specified in subsection 46 (1) of the General Part of the Environmental Code Act and other parties to the proceedings and publish a notice in the official publication *Ametlikud Teadaanded* within 14 days after making a decision specified in subsection (6) of this section.

(8) The notice specified in subsection (7) of this section must set out at least the following:

- 1) the name of the decision-maker as well as the name and details of the contact person of the decision-maker;
- 2) the name of the developer, a short description and purpose of the proposed activity;
- 3) the time and place of accessing the environmental impact assessment report and the decision specified in subsection (5) of this section.

(9) If the decision-maker finds that the environmental impact assessment report does not comply with the requirements set out in subsection (5) of this section, the developer must submit to the decision-maker a modified report for the purpose of verifying compliance with the requirements.

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

§ 23. Notification of approval of environmental impact assessment report and of determination of environmental requirements

[Repealed – RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

§ 24. Grant of development consent and refusal to grant development consent

(1) Upon making a decision to grant or refuse to grant development consent, the decision-maker must take into account the results of the environmental impact assessment and the measures of prevention or minimisation of adverse environmental impact contained in the report.

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

(2) If, upon making a decision to grant or refuse to grant development consent, the decision-maker fails to take into account the results of environmental impact assessment or the measures of prevention or minimisation of adverse environmental impact, the decision-maker must give a reasoned justification in the decision to grant or refuse grant the development consent.

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

(3) The decision-maker will refuse to grant development consent if the developer is not able to comply with the measures of prevention or minimisation of adverse environmental impact, which are determined upon granting the development consent.

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

§ 25. Ex-post evaluation of environmental impact assessment

(1) The Environmental Board carries out the ex-post evaluation of environmental impact assessment on the basis of the results of environmental monitoring.

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

(2) The decision-maker is required to forward the results of environmental monitoring within 30 days after receipt of the results to the Environmental Board for ex-post evaluation.

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

(3) If it becomes evident in the course of ex-post evaluation that the results of environmental monitoring refer to a violation of the requirements provided for in legislation or in the development consent, the decision-maker will, on a proposal of the Environmental Board, initiate proceedings for the amendment of the conditions of the development consent.

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

§ 26. Specifications for environmental impact assessment related to preparation of building design documentation

(1) In addition to the provisions of § 3 of this Act, the environmental impact of the proposed activity may be assessed in the course of preparation of building design documentation in accordance with the procedure provided for in this Act, taking account of the specifications arising from this section.

(2) For the purposes of this Act, the decision-maker is the issuer of development consent upon application for which building design documentation specified in subsection (1) of this section must, inter alia, be submitted.

(3) The developer will notify the decision-maker of the intention to assess environmental impact of the proposed activities in the course of preparation of building design documentation, after which the decision-maker will initiate the environmental impact assessment of the proposed activity.

(4) An environmental impact assessment report is a separate part of building design documentation.

§ 27. Specifications for assessment of environmental impact of restoration of land damaged by mining mineral resources

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

(1) In addition to the aspects specified in § 3 of this Act, the environmental impact is assessed in the course of preparation of a project for the restoration of land damaged by mining mineral resources.

(2) For the purposes of this section, the developer is the holder of an environmental permit for extraction of mineral resources.

(3) For the purposes of this section, the decision-maker is the Environmental Board.

(4) An environmental impact assessment report is a separate part of a project for the restoration of land damaged by mining.

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

§ 28. Specifications for assessment of environmental impact of closure of landfill

(1) In addition to the provisions of subsection (3) of this section, the environmental impact of the closure of a landfill may be assessed in the course of preparation of the project to close the landfill in accordance with the procedure provided for in this Act, taking account of the specifications arising from this section.

(2) For the purposes of this section, the developer is the operator of a landfill to be closed.

(3) For the purposes of this section, the decision-maker is the Environmental Board.

[RT I 2009, 3, 15 – entry into force 01.02.2009]

(4) The developer will forward an application for the closure of a landfill to the decision-maker on the basis of which the decision-maker will decide to initiate or refuse to initiate the environmental impact assessment of the closure of the landfill in accordance with the procedure provided for in § 11 of this Act.

(5) Upon preparing a project for the closure of a landfill, the results of the environmental impact assessment must be taken into account.

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

§ 29. Specifications for environmental impact assessment of activities affecting Natura 2000 site

(1) If the impact on a Natura 2000 site is being assessed:

1) the purpose of protection and the integrity of the site must be particularly taken into account upon environmental impact assessment;

2) the decision-maker will send the environmental impact assessment report to the manager of the protected natural object for approval before verifying compliance with the requirements in accordance with § 22 of this Act.

(2) Development consent may be granted if permitted by the protection procedure of the Natura 2000 site and the decision-maker is convinced that the proposed activity does not have an adverse impact on the integrity of the Natura 2000 site or on the purpose of protection thereof.

(3) If, regardless of the potential significant adverse impact of the proposed activity on a Natura 2000 site, the activity is still necessary for the public for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature, and due to the lack of alternative solutions, development consent may be granted with the consent of the Government of the Republic.

(4) In the event specified in subsection (3) of this section, the obligation to take compensatory measures must be imposed upon granting development consent, in order to ensure the protection of the overall cohesiveness of the Natura 2000 network. The Ministry of the Environment will inform the European Commission of the established compensatory measures immediately after the development consent has been granted. The activities specified in the development consent must not be commenced before the compensatory measures have been taken.

(5) If the proposed activity potentially impacts a priority natural habitat type or priority species present within a Natura 2000 site within the meaning of Council Directive 92/43/EEC (OJ L 206, 22.07.1992, pp. 7–50) on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora, the Government of the Republic may grant development consent only if the proposed activity is related to human health, public safety or a significant positive impact on the state of the environment. In the event of other imperative reasons of overriding public interest, development consent may be granted only after obtaining the opinion of the European Commission. The activity specified in the development consent must not be commenced before the compensatory measures have been taken.

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

§ 30. Specifications for environmental impact assessment in transboundary context

(1) The Republic of Estonia will participate in environmental impact assessment in transboundary context originating in the territory of another state and environmental impact assessment in transboundary context originating in the territory of the Republic of Estonia will be organised in accordance with the procedure provided for in international agreements, Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in Transboundary Context (RT II 2000, 28, 169) and this Act, taking account of the specifications arising from this section.

(2) If the proposed activity potentially results in significant environmental impact which may be transboundary and the decision-maker initiates environmental impact assessment, the decision-maker must immediately notify the Ministry of the Environment thereof.

(3) If the potentially significant environmental impact of a proposed activity is likely to be transboundary or if the affected state so requests, the Ministry of the Environment will give the affected state, as soon as possible, but no later than when the decision-maker gives a notice of the initiation of the environmental impact assessment in Estonia, a notice concerning the initiation of environmental impact assessment along with a description of the proposed activity and information concerning the transboundary impact potentially accompanying the proposed activity. The affected state will be given at least 30 days as of the date of receipt of the notice concerning the initiation of environmental impact assessment to respond to the notice.

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

(4) If, after the receipt of the notice specified in subsection (3) of this section, the affected state notifies of its wish to participate in the environmental impact assessment, the affected state will be sent the following materials, unless such materials were sent before:

- 1) an application for development consent;
- 2) data concerning the decision-maker, specifying the person who may be addressed with questions and comments;

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

- 3) information concerning the assessment of the environmental impact of the proposed activity and the processing of the application for development consent.

[RT I 2007, 25, 131 – entry into force 01.04.2007]

(4¹) Subsections (5) to (8) of this section do not apply upon assessment of environmental impact if the affected state fails to respond to the notice concerning the initiation of the environmental impact assessment during the term specified in subsection (3) of this section, or does not wish to participate in the procedure for assessing the environmental impact.

[RT I 2007, 25, 131 – entry into force 01.04.2007]

(5) If the affected state so requests, the Ministry of the Environment will forward the draft environmental impact assessment programme and report to the affected state as soon as possible but not later than when the public display of the programme or report commences in the Republic of Estonia. The notice on making the programme or report public must contain at least the information specified in subsection 16 (4) of this Act.

[RT I 2007, 25, 131 – entry into force 01.04.2007]

(6) At the request of the affected state, its representative is permitted to participate in environmental impact assessment proceedings and consultations will be commenced concerning environmental impact resulting from proposed activities and the measures for the mitigation or prevention of such impact.

(7) The Ministry of the Environment and the affected state will agree on:

- 1) the procedure and actual schedule of the consultations;
 - 2) provision of information to the public and agencies of the affected state and allowing them sufficient time for the submission of opinions on the environmental impact assessment programme and report;
 - 3) the time when the proposals, objections and questions received in the course of the environmental impact assessment will be submitted to the affected state for obtaining an opinion;
 - 4) the drafts of the decisions which must be submitted to the affected state for obtaining an opinion.
- [RT I 2007, 25, 131 – entry into force 01.04.2007]

(7¹) If the Ministry of the Environment and the affected state agree that also the drafts for the decisions to grant or refuse to grant development consent and the draft of the development consent must be submitted to the affected state for obtaining an opinion, the decision-maker will send the drafts of such documents after preparation thereof to the Ministry of the Environment who will forward them to the affected state for obtaining an opinion. The affected state will be given at least 30 days to express an opinion. In making the decision, the decision-maker must consider the opinion of the affected state.

[RT I 2007, 25, 131 – entry into force 01.04.2007]

(8) The decision-maker must promptly inform the Ministry of the Environment of granting or refusing to grant development consent necessary for the activities with transboundary environmental impact. The Ministry of the Environment will notify the state which participated in environmental impact assessment in a transboundary context of granting or refusing to grant development consent necessary for the activities with significant transboundary environmental impact and will forward the decision to grant or refuse to grant the development consent to the state.

(9) The Ministry of the Environment will notify the state in which the transboundary environmental impact originates of its intention to participate in environmental impact assessment in a transboundary context and of the need for consultations by the time prescribed by the state in which the transboundary environmental impact originates. The Ministry of the Environment will give notice of the publication of the documents on environmental impact assessment in the manner specified in subsections 16 (2) and (3) of this Act. The Ministry of the Environment will send the proposals and objections submitted regarding the documents on environmental impact assessment to the state in which the transboundary environmental impact originates.

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

Division 2

Strategic Environmental Assessment of Strategic Planning Document

§ 31. Strategic planning document

For the purposes of this Act, 'strategic planning document' means:

- 1) a national, county, comprehensive or detailed plan or a special plan of the state or local authority for the purposes of the Planning Act;
[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]
- 2) a sectoral development plan for the purposes of the State Budget Act, except for a spatial plan, programme and strategy specified in clause 1 (3) 2) of this Act;
[RT I, 13.03.2014, 2 – entry into force 23.03.2014]
- 3) a spatial plan, programme or strategy the obligation of drawing up of which arises from a law or another legislative act issued on the basis of an authority-delegating provision contained in a law and which is drawn up or established by an administrative authority or drawn up by an administrative authority and adopted by the *Riigikogu*, the Government of the Republic or another administrative authority.
[RT I, 16.11.2010, 1 – entry into force 26.11.2010]

§ 31¹. Purpose of strategic environmental assessment

The purpose of strategic environmental assessment is to:

- 1) contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of strategic planning documents;
 - 2) provide for a high level of protection of the environment;
 - 3) promote sustainable development.
- [RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

§ 32. Strategic environmental assessment

For the purposes of this Act, 'strategic environmental assessment' means assessment arranged with the participation of the public and the authorities concerned for the purpose of identifying the significant

environmental impact arising from the implementation of a strategic planning document, identification of alternatives and finding measures minimising the adverse impact, the results of which are taken into account upon preparing the strategic planning document and on which a proper report is drawn up.
[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

§ 33. Mandatoriness of strategic environmental assessment

(1) Strategic environmental assessment must be initiated if a strategic planning document:

- 1) is prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications or tourism and on the basis thereof an activity specified in subsection 6 (1) of this Act is proposed or the proposed activity is likely to have a significant environmental impact, on the basis of the provisions of subsections 6 (2) to (4) of this Act;
- 2) is a national plan, a special plan of the state or local authority, a county plan or a comprehensive plan;
- 3) is a detailed plan on the basis of which an activity specified in subsection 6 (1) of this Act is proposed;
- 4) serves as the basis for an activity which, according to objective information, may alone or in conjunction with other activities potentially significantly adversely affect the protection purpose of a Natura 2000 site and which is not directly related to or necessary for the protection procedure of the site.

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

(2) The need for the initiation of strategic environmental assessment must be considered and a preliminary estimate thereof must be given if:

- 1) amendments are made to the strategic planning document specified in subsection (1) of this section;
- 2) a county plan or a comprehensive plan is drawn up as a thematic plan;
- 3) a detailed plan is drawn up in an event specified in clause 142 (1) 1) or 3) of the Planning Act;
- 4) a detailed plan regulating an activity that belongs to the field specified in subsection 6 (2) of this Act and that is specified in a regulation established on the basis of subsection 6 (4) of this Act is drawn up.

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

(2¹) A spatial plan for the purposes of the Planning Act is subject to strategic environmental impact in accordance with the procedure established in the Planning Act.

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

(3) The need to carry out the strategic environmental impact assessment of a strategic planning document specified in subsection (2) of this section is decided on the basis of:

- 1) the characteristics and content of the strategic planning document;
- 2) the environmental impact resulting from the implementation of the strategic planning document and the likely affected area;
- 3) the opinion of the authority specified in subsection (6) of this section.

[RT I, 16.11.2010, 1 – entry into force 26.11.2010]

(4) The circumstances specified in clause 1) of subsection (3) of this section are assessed on the basis of the following criteria:

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

- 1) the degree to which the strategic planning document sets a framework for the proposed activities, either with regard to the location, nature and operating conditions or by allocating resources;
- 2) the degree to which the strategic planning document influences other strategic planning documents, taking account of the hierarchy of establishing these;
- 3) the relevance of the strategic planning document for the integration of environmental considerations into other sectors;
- 4) environmental problems relevant to the implementation of the strategic planning document;
- 5) the relevance of the strategic planning document, including a strategic planning document relating to waste management and water protection, for the implementation of EU legislation on the environment.

(5) Upon assessment of the circumstances specified in clause 2) of subsection (3) of this section, the following criteria are relied on:

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

- 1) the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact, including cumulative and transboundary nature of the impact;
- 2) the risks to human health or the environment, including the probability of accidents;
- 3) the magnitude and spatial extent of the impact, including the geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected;
- 4) the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to special natural characteristics, cultural heritage and intensive land-use;
- 5) the impact on protected natural objects;
- 6) the potential impact on a Natura 2000 site.

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

(6) Upon deciding on the need for the strategic environmental assessment in the events specified in subsection (2) of this section, all the authorities concerned must be asked for an opinion before making a decision, submitting to them the draft decision drawn up on the basis of the criteria set out in clauses 1) and 2) of subsection (3) and in subsections (4) and (5) of this section so that they could formulate an opinion.
[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

§ 34. Parties to strategic environmental assessment

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

(1) The coordinator of preparation of the strategic planning document is responsible for carrying out strategic environmental assessment and covers the expenses related thereto.

(2) The initiator of the preparation of a strategic planning document initiates or refuses to initiate a strategic environmental assessment. If the initiator of the preparation of a strategic planning document and the coordinator of preparation thereof do not overlap, the coordinator of preparation of the strategic planning document may initiate the strategic environmental assessment.

(3) The public displays of the strategic environmental assessment programme and report and, thereafter, public consultations are organised by the coordinator of preparation of the strategic planning document.

(4) Strategic environmental assessment related to the implementation of a strategic planning document may be led by a leading expert who:

- 1) has obtained a Master's degree or equivalent qualifications;
- 2) has at least five years of work experience in a field related to environmental protection or in a field specified in clause 40 (4) 6) of this Act;
- 3) to the extent of at least 60 hours, has undergone training in strategic environmental assessment, which covers the making of estimates of, among other things, at least the aspects listed in subsection 40 (4) of this Act, and has passed a corresponding examination;
[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.02.2016]
- 4) has participated in the work of an expert group of strategic environmental assessment as a substantive expert at least four times in the last five years;
- 5) to the extent of at least 60 hours, has undergone management training and has the experience of managing at least two projects;
- 6) has submitted to the coordinator of preparation of the strategic planning document a signed confirmation that the leading expert complies with the requirements established in clauses 1) to 5) of this subsection, knows the principles of strategic environmental assessment, procedure and assessment-related legislation, and is impartial and objective upon strategic environmental assessment.

(5) The environmental impact arising from the implementation of a detailed plan may be assessed by or the assessment may be led by a leading expert who complies with subsection 14 (1) of this Act.

(6) If the qualifications of the leading expert are not sufficient for the strategic assessment of a certain environmental impact, the leading expert must involve specialists of the respective field in the strategic environmental assessment.

(7) The compliance of the leading expert with the requirements specified in subsection (4) or (5) of this section is verified by the coordinator of preparation of the strategic planning document.

(8) The leading expert will prepare the strategic environmental assessment programme and report in cooperation with the author of the strategic planning document.

(9) The author of the strategic planning document may perform the functions of leading expert if the person complies with the qualification requirements for leading experts.
[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

§ 35. Initiation of and not requiring strategic environmental assessment

(1) If strategic environmental assessment is initiated on the basis of subsection 33 (1) of this Act, the initiation of or refusal to initiate the strategic environmental assessment will be decided simultaneously with the initiation of the preparation of the strategic planning document. If the initiator of the preparation of the strategic planning document and the coordinator of preparation thereof do not overlap, strategic environmental assessment may be initiated by the coordinator of preparation of the strategic planning document after the initiation of the preparation of the document.
[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

(1¹) If the need for strategic environmental assessment becomes evident only in the course of preparation of the strategic planning document, strategic environmental assessment will be initiated immediately.
[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

(2) A strategic environmental assessment will be initiated without providing justification therefor upon initiation of the preparation of a strategic planning document specified in subsection 33 (1) of this Act.

(3) If strategic environmental assessment is initiated or not initiated upon initiation of preparation of a strategic planning document specified in subsection 33 (2) of this Act, a relevant justification will be appended to the decision.

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

(4) [Repealed – RT I, 16.11.2010, 1 – entry into force 26.11.2010]

(5) A decision to initiate or not require a strategic environmental assessment must set out at least:

1) the name and purpose of the strategic planning document;

2) the name and contact details of the initiator of preparation, the coordinator of preparation, the author and the person who adopted the strategic planning document;

3) [Repealed – RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

4) [Repealed – RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

5) the reasons for initiation of or not requiring the strategic environmental assessment;

6) the date and place for accessing the decision to initiate the preparation of the strategic planning document and the decision to initiate or not require the strategic environmental assessment.

(6) A decision to initiate or not to initiate strategic environmental assessment will, within 14 days after making the decision, be given notice of in the official publication *Ametlikud Teadaanded* and in at least one national newspaper or one local newspaper as well as by electronic means, by regular mail or by registered mail to an authority specified in subsection 33 (6) of this section.

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

(7) A notice of initiation of or not requiring the strategic environmental assessment must set out at least the information specified in subsection (5) of this section.

§ 36. Strategic environmental assessment programme

(1) After strategic environmental assessment is initiated, the leading expert of strategic environmental assessment will, in cooperation with the author of the strategic planning document, prepare a strategic environmental assessment programme.

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

(2) A strategic environmental assessment programme must:

1) determine the extent of the strategic environmental assessment on the basis of the characteristics and content of the strategic planning document;

2) contain a description of the environment likely to be affected;

3) contain links between the strategic planning document and other strategic planning documents;

4) explain the likely significant environmental impact potentially arising from the implementation of the strategic planning document, including impact on human health, the likelihood of occurrence of a transboundary environmental impact, and the potential impact on a Natura 2000 site;

5) describe the assessment methodology used upon strategic environmental assessment;

6) specify the persons and authorities which may be affected or which may have a reasoned interest in the strategic planning document;

7) contain a schedule of the strategic environmental assessment and a schedule for the publication of the results of the assessment, arising from the schedule for preparation of the strategic planning document;

8) contain information on the author of the strategic planning document and the name of the leading expert who prepared the programme, including the signed confirmation of the leading expert in accordance with clause 34 (4) 6) of this Act, and the composition of the expert group, indicating which fields and which impact will be assessed by each member of the expert group;

9) describe the opinions submitted by the authorities concerned in accordance with § 36¹ of this Act.

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

(3) [Repealed – RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

§ 36¹. Asking for opinion on strategic environmental assessment programme

(1) Before the publication of a strategic environmental assessment programme in accordance with § 37 of this Act, the coordinator of preparation of the strategic planning document must ask for an opinion on the content of the programme from all the authorities concerned. To ask for the opinions, the author of the strategic planning document will submit the strategic environmental assessment programme to the coordinator of preparation of the strategic planning document.

(2) The coordinator of preparation of the strategic planning document will check the compliance of the programme with the requirements provided for in subsection 36 (2) of this Act within 14 days as of the receipt of the strategic environmental assessment programme and submit it to the relevant authorities for the submission of an opinion.

(3) If the strategic environmental assessment programme does not comply with the requirements provided for in subsection 36 (2) of this Act, the coordinator of preparation of the strategic planning document will return to the author of the strategic planning document along with reasons and correction proposals.

(4) Within 30 days from the receipt of the strategic environmental assessment programme, the authority concerned will, based on its field of competence, submit to the coordinator of preparation of the strategic planning document an opinion, among other things, on the adequacy and sufficiency of the programme. Upon examination of the documentation, the authority must verify the sufficiency of the composition of the expert group.

(5) The coordinator of preparation of the strategic planning document will examine the opinions of the authorities concerned within 14 days as of the receipt of the opinions and submit to the author of the strategic planning document and to the leading expert its opinion on the adequacy and sufficiency of the strategic environmental assessment programme, taking into account the opinions submitted by the authorities concerned.

(6) The leading expert or the expert group, jointly with the author of the strategic planning document, will correct and modify the programme on the basis of subsection (5) of this section and explain the why the opinions were taken into account or disregarded. The author of the strategic planning document will submit the modified strategic environmental assessment programme to the coordinator of preparation of the strategic planning document. Copies of the letters of the authorities concerned will be added to the programme.

(7) The coordinator of preparation of the strategic planning document examines the corrected and modified strategic environmental assessment programme, including whether the opinions of the authorities concerned have been taken into account or not, thereby involving in the proceedings the authority concerned whose position was not taken into account, where necessary.

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

§ 37. Publication of strategic environmental assessment programme

(1) Within 14 days from the receipt of the programme, the coordinator of preparation of the strategic planning document will notify of a public display of the strategic environmental assessment programme and of the holding of a public consultation in the official publication *Ametlikud Teadaanded*, in a newspaper and on its website as well as by electronic means, by regular mail or by registered mail inform the authorities and persons specified in clause 36 (2) 6) of this Act, the organisation uniting non-governmental environmental organisations and the authorities specified in subsection 36¹(1) of this Act.

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

(2) A notice regarding the publication of a strategic environmental assessment programme must set out at least the following:

- 1) the name and purpose of the strategic planning document;
- 2) information on the initiator of preparation of, the coordinator of preparation of, the author of and the person who adopted the strategic planning document;
- 3) the time and manner of accessing the terms of references or draft strategic planning document;
- 4) the time and place for accessing the strategic environmental assessment programme;
- 5) the term and manner for the submission of proposals, objections and questions regarding the strategic environmental assessment programme;
- 6) the time and place for the public consultation regarding the strategic environmental assessment programme;
- 7) the prognosis as to whether transboundary environmental impact could exist.

(3) The public display of a strategic environmental assessment programme and the public consultation regarding the programme thereafter will be organised by the coordinator of preparation of the strategic planning document. The public display must last for no less than 14 days.

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

(3¹) Among other things, the opinions submitted by the authorities concerned and received in the course of the public consultation are introduced and the reasons of taking into account or disregarding of proposals and objections are explained at the public consultation of the strategic environmental assessment programme.

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

(4) Everyone has the right to access a strategic environmental assessment programme and other documents on the environmental impact resulting from the implementation of the strategic planning document at the time of the public display of and the public consultation regarding the programme, to submit proposals, objections and questions regarding the programme and obtain responses thereto.

(5) The author of the strategic planning document will, in cooperation with the leading expert, make the necessary corrections and modifications to the strategic environmental assessment programme on the basis of the proposals and objections submitted at the time of the public display and public consultation. Taking proposals and objections into account will be described and refusal to take proposals and objections into account will be justified in the modified programme or an annex thereto.

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

(6) Within 30 days after the public consultation, the author of the strategic planning document or the coordinator of preparation of the strategic planning document will by electronic means, by regular mail or by registered mail send an explanation or state the reasons as to why the proposals or objections regarding the strategic environmental assessment programme were taken into account or disregarded and respond to the questions of the persons:

- 1) who submitted their proposal, objection or question in writing;
- 2) whose proposal, objection or question submitted at the public consultation remained unanswered at the public consultation.

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

§ 38. Supervisor of strategic environmental assessment

[Repealed – RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

§ 39. Verification of compliance of strategic environmental assessment programme with requirements

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

(1) After the public consultation regarding a strategic environmental assessment programme, the author of the strategic planning document will submit the programme along with the proposals, objections and questions submitted regarding the programme, copies of letters specified in subsection 37 (6) of this Act and report of the public consultation to the coordinator of preparation of the strategic planning document for verification of its compliance with the requirements.

(2) Based on the opinions of the authorities concerned, which were submitted in accordance with § 36¹ of this Act, the coordinator of preparation of the strategic planning document will verify the following within 30 days as of the receipt of the strategic environmental assessment programme:

- 1) the compliance of the programme with the requirements provided for in subsection 36 (2) of this Act;
- 2) the adequacy and sufficiency of the programme for assessing the environmental impact arising from the implementation of the strategic planning document;
- 3) the taking into account or disregarding of proposals and objections submitted regarding the programme.

(3) The coordinator of preparation of the strategic planning document will make a decision to declare the strategic environmental assessment programme compliant with the requirements on the basis of subsection (2) of this section.

(4) Within 14 days after making a decision specified in subsection (3) of this section, the coordinator of preparation of the strategic planning document will inform the parties to the proceedings and the persons who are likely to be affected by the activity proposed on the basis of the strategic planning document or who may have a reasoned interest therein about the making of the decision and publish a notice in the official publication *Ametlikud Teadaanded*.

(5) The notice specified in subsection (4) of this section must set out at least the following:

- 1) the name of the coordinator of preparation and adoption of the strategic planning document as well as the name and contact details of its contact person;
- 2) a short description and the purpose of the activity proposed in the strategic planning document;
- 3) the time and place of accessing the strategic environmental assessment programme and the decision specified in subsection (3) of this section.

(6) If the coordinator of preparation of the strategic planning document identifies that the strategic environmental assessment programme does not comply with the requirements verified in accordance with subsection (2) of this section, the person will return the programme to the author of the strategic planning document and the latter will modify the programme and thereafter submit it to the coordinator of preparation of the strategic planning document for verifying compliance with the requirements.

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

§ 40. Strategic environmental assessment report

(1) A strategic environmental assessment report is a document that forms a part of the strategic planning document and contains information specified in subsections (2) to (4) of this section.

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

(2) Upon strategic environmental assessment, it is required to explain, describe and assess the significant environmental impact resulting from implementation of the strategic planning document and the main alternative measures, activities and tasks, having regard to the objectives and territory of the strategic planning document.

(3) Upon preparation of a strategic environmental assessment report, the following must be taken into account:

- 1) current knowledge and recognised methods of assessment;
- 2) the content and level of establishment of the strategic planning document;
- 3) the extent to which certain matters are more appropriately assessed at different levels of strategic planning in order to avoid duplication of the assessment.

(4) Based on the compliant strategic environmental assessment programme, the strategic environmental assessment report must contain:

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

- 1) an outline of the contents and the main purposes of the strategic planning document;
- 2) the relationship of the strategic planning document with other relevant strategic planning documents;
- 3) a description of the potentially significantly affected environment during preparation of the strategic planning document and in the case of realisation alternative development scenarios, including the comparison of alternatives and the probable development if the strategic planning document is not implemented;

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

- 4) environmental problems arising from the implementation of the strategic planning document, in particular those related to protected natural objects, including Natura 2000 sites;

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

- 5) the environmental protection objectives, established at international, European Union or Member State level, which are relevant to the strategic planning document and a description of the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during preparation of the strategic planning document;

- 6) an assessment of the potential significant direct, indirect, cumulative, synergistic, short and long-term, positive and adverse environmental impact, including impact on human health and social needs and property, biological diversity, populations, flora, fauna, soil, water and air quality, climate change, cultural heritage and the landscape, an assessment of the possibilities of waste generation and a description of the methods for impact prognosis;

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

- 7) the interconnection between different impacts and the transboundary environmental impact;
- 8) the measures planned for the prevention and mitigation of significant adverse environmental impact arising from the implementation of the strategic planning document and an assessment of the presumable effectiveness of the measures;

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

- 8¹) if necessary, an overview of the actual compensatory measures within the meaning of § 70¹ of the Nature Conservation Act to compensate for the potential damage caused by the adverse environmental impact potentially resulting from the implementation of the strategic planning document, and an assessment of the efficiency and the necessary volume of application of the measures;

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

- 9) an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternative development scenarios dealt with;
- 10) an overview of how the best alternative development scenario was achieved;
- 11) an overview of carrying out the strategic environmental assessment, the results of public involvement and transboundary consultations;
- 12) an overview of the difficulties which became evident upon preparation of the strategic environmental assessment report;
- 13) a description of the measures proposed for the monitoring of significant environmental impact resulting from the implementation of the strategic planning document and of the measurable indicators;
- 14) a summary of information specified in clauses 1) to 13) of this subsection;
- 15) the strategic environmental assessment programme and the minutes of the public consultation regarding the programme;
- 16) the minutes of the public consultation regarding the strategic environmental assessment report;
- 17) the proposals, objections and questions of authorities and persons, and an overview of the reasons for taking account of or refusal to take account of the proposals, objections and questions.

(5) In the event of emergence of additional circumstances in the course of preparation of the strategic environmental assessment report, the strategic environmental impact assessment programme declared compliant with the requirements in accordance with subsection 39 (3) of this Act may be deviated from in a reasoned event stated in the report. Respective reasons must be set out in the strategic environmental assessment report and if the coordinator of preparation of the strategic planning document or the authority concerned who gives its opinion in the report does not consent to deviation from the programme, the report must be modified in accordance with the programme.

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

§ 40¹. Asking for opinion on strategic environmental assessment report

(1) The opinion of the authorities concerned is asked on the strategic environmental assessment report in accordance with the procedure set out in § 36¹ of this Act.

(2) Within 21 days from the receipt of the strategic environmental assessment report, the coordinator of preparation of the strategic planning document will verify the compliance of the report with the requirements provided for in § 40 of this Act and the adequacy and sufficiency of the report.

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

§ 41. Publication of strategic environmental assessment report

The strategic environmental assessment report will be published and the results of the publication will be taken into account in accordance with § 37 of this Act, except for the time limit of a public display of the report, which is as long as that of a public display of the draft strategic planning document, but not shorter than 21 days. [RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

§ 42. Verification of compliance of strategic environmental assessment report with requirements and establishment of monitoring measures

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

(1) After the public consultation of the strategic environmental assessment report, the author of the strategic planning document will submit the report to the coordinator of preparation of the strategic planning document for verification of the compliance of the report with the requirements.

(2) The coordinator of preparation of the strategic planning document will send the strategic environmental impact assessment report to the authorities concerned for approval.

(3) The authority concerned, based on its field of competence, will approve or refuse to approve the environmental impact assessment report within 30 days from the receipt of the report. The authority specified in subsection 23 (2) of this Act will assess, among other things, the compliance of the report with the requirements of subsection 40 (4) of this Act.

(4) The authority concerned will not approve the strategic environmental assessment report if:

- 1) there is a direct conflict with a legal instrument;
- 2) the report contains insufficient information that affects the final conclusions of the report and, as a result thereof, a significant adverse environmental impact may arise from the implementation of the strategic planning document.

(5) Based on the approvals of the authorities concerned, the coordinator of preparation of the strategic planning document will verify the following within 30 days from the receipt of the approvals:

- 1) the compliance of the report with the strategic environmental assessment programme that has been declared compliant with the requirements in accordance with subsection 39 (3) of this Act;
- 2) the compliance of the report with the requirements provided for in § 40 of this Act;
- 3) the adequacy and sufficiency of the report for the adoption of the strategic planning document;
- 4) the taking into account or disregarding of proposals and objections submitted regarding the report.

(6) The coordinator of preparation of the strategic planning document will make a decision to declare the strategic environmental assessment report compliant with the requirements on the basis of subsection (5) of this section.

(7) Within 14 days after making a decision specified in subsection (6) of this section, the coordinator of preparation of the strategic planning document will inform the parties to the proceedings and the persons who are likely to be affected by the activity proposed on the basis of the strategic planning document or who may have a reasoned interest therein about the making of the decision and publish a notice in the official publication *Ametlikud Teadaanded*.

(8) The notice specified in subsection (7) of this section must set out at least the following:

- 1) the name of the coordinator of preparation of and the person who adopted the strategic planning document as well as the name and contact details of its contact person;
- 2) a short description and the purpose of the activity proposed in the strategic planning document;
- 3) the time and place of accessing the strategic environmental assessment report and the decision specified in subsection (6) of this section.

(9) If the coordinator of preparation of the strategic planning document finds that the strategic environmental assessment report does not comply with the requirements provided for in subsection (5) of this section, the author of the strategic planning document must submit a modified report to the coordinator of preparation of the strategic planning document for the purpose of verification of compliance.

(10) If the coordinator of preparation of the strategic planning document finds that the strategic environmental assessment report complies with the requirements, the coordinator will make a proposal on the monitoring measures in the decision specified in subsection (6) of this section. The purpose of the monitoring measures is to identify at an early stage whether significant environmental impact arises from the implementation of the strategic planning document and to take measures that prevent and mitigate adverse environmental impact.

(11) The person who adopted the strategic planning document must establish the monitoring measures along with the establishment of the strategic planning document or submit upon the establishment of the strategic

planning document the reasons why the monitoring measures developed in the course of strategic environmental assessment are not established.

(12) The established monitoring measures are mandatory to the person implementing the strategic planning document. Upon carrying out monitoring, the existing environmental monitoring system or monitoring proposed for monitoring the environmental impact arising from the implementation of the strategic planning document may be used. Monitoring may be carried out in the course of the activities proposed on the basis of one or several strategic planning documents.

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

§ 43. Taking account of results of strategic environmental assessment

Upon preparation of a strategic planning document, the following must be taken account of:

- 1) the results of strategic environmental assessment;
[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]
- 2) the opinions submitted by authorities and persons to the extent possible;
- 3) the results of transboundary consultations.

§ 44. Notification of adoption of strategic planning document

(1) The coordinator of preparation of the strategic planning document will give notice of the establishment of the strategic planning document by electronic means or by regular mail or by registered mail within 14 days after the decision on the establishment is made to:

- 1) the authorities and persons likely to be affected by the environmental impact potentially arising from the implementation of the strategic planning document or who may have a reasoned interest in the potential environmental impact;
- 2) the affected state that participated in transboundary consultations.

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

(2) Upon giving notice of the establishment of the strategic planning document, it must be ensured that the following is available to the authorities concerned, the public and the affected state that participated in transboundary consultations:

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

- 1) adopted strategic planning document;
- 2) an overview of how environmental considerations have been taken into account in the strategic planning document;
- 3) an overview of how the results of the strategic environmental assessment have been taken into account in the strategic planning document;
- 4) an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with;
- 5) a description of the measures proposed for the monitoring of potential significant environmental impact resulting from implementation of the strategic planning document.

§ 45. Specifications for strategic environmental assessment in Natura 2000 site

(1) If the impact on a Natura 2000 site is being assessed:

- 1) the purpose of protection and the integrity of the site must be particularly taken into account upon strategic environmental assessment;
- 2) the coordinator of preparation of the strategic planning document will send the strategic environmental assessment report to the manager of the protected natural object for approval before verifying compliance with the requirements in accordance with § 42 of this Act.

(2) A strategic planning document may be established if permitted by the protection procedure of the Natura 2000 site and the person who adopted the strategic planning document is convinced that the proposed activities do not have an adverse impact on the integrity of the Natura 2000 site or on the purpose of protection thereof.

(3) If, regardless of the potential adverse impact resulting from implementation of a strategic planning document on a Natura 2000 site, the activity is still necessary for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature, and due to the lack of alternative solutions, the strategic planning document may be established with the consent of the Government of the Republic.

(4) Upon establishment of a strategic planning document in the event specified in subsection (3) of this Act, the obligation to take compensatory measures must be imposed in order to ensure the protection of the overall cohesion of the Natura 2000 network. The Ministry of the Environment will inform the European Commission of the established compensatory measures immediately after the establishment of the strategic planning document. The activity proposed by the strategic planning document must not be commenced before the compensatory measures have been taken.

(5) If the strategic planning document is likely to have an adverse impact on a priority natural habitat type or priority species present in a Natura 2000 site within the meaning of Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora, the Government of the Republic may grant consent only if it is related to human health, public safety or a significant positive impact on the state of the environment. In the event of other public priority and extremely compelling reasons, the planning document

may be established only after obtaining the opinion of the European Commission. The activity proposed by the strategic planning document must not be commenced before the compensatory measures have been taken.
[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

§ 46. Strategic environmental assessment in transboundary context resulting from implementation of strategic planning document

(1) This section will be applied if:

- 1) the implementation of the strategic planning document is likely to result in a significant environmental impact on the environment of another state;
- 2) it is requested by the state that is likely to be significantly affected;
- 3) the Republic of Estonia participates in the strategic environmental assessment of transboundary environmental impact originating from the territory of another state.

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

(2) If strategic environmental assessment is initiated regarding a strategic planning document whose implementation is likely to result in a significant environmental impact on the environment of another state or if the likelihood of occurrence of significant environmental impact in a transboundary context becomes evident upon preparation of a strategic environmental assessment programme or report, the coordinator of preparation of the strategic planning document must immediately inform the Ministry of the Environment thereof.

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

(2¹) In the event specified in subsection (2) of this section, the Ministry of the Environment will send to the state that is likely to be significantly affected a notice as soon as possible, but not later than as of the notification of the commencement of strategic environmental assessment in the Republic of Estonia. If the Ministry of the Environment is informed of the possibility of occurrence of significant environmental impact in a transboundary context at the time of preparation of the strategic environmental assessment programme or report, the Ministry of the Environment will send to the state that is likely to be significantly affected a notice as soon as possible, but not later than at the time of publication of the programme or report in the Republic of Estonia.

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

(3) The notice specified in subsection (2¹) of this section must set out at least the following:

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

- 1) the name and brief description of the strategic planning document;
- 2) information on the author of and on the person who adopted the strategic planning document;
- 3) a schedule for preparation of the strategic planning document and carrying out the strategic environmental assessment and a brief description of the likely environmental impact resulting from the implementation of the document;
- 4) the term for responding to the notice and submission of comments.

(4) [Repealed – RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

(5) If an affected state wishes to participate in a strategic environmental assessment in a transboundary context:

- 1) the Ministry of the Environment will send to the affected state the draft strategic planning document before its establishment and the strategic environmental assessment report before the verification of the compliance thereof under § 42 of this Act;

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

- 2) the affected state is allowed to participate in the strategic environmental assessment in a transboundary context, and consultations on the environmental impact and the measures for the mitigation and offsetting of such impact are commenced before the establishment of the strategic planning document.

(6) During consultations specified in subsection (5) of this section, the competent authorities of states will ensure that the public and authorities of the state which is likely to be significantly affected are notified and allow them sufficient time for the submission of opinions and agree on all the necessary procedures and an actual schedule for relevant consultations.

(6¹) If the state in which the transboundary environmental impact originates sends to the Ministry of the Environment a notice of the environmental impact resulting from the implementation of the strategic planning document on the environment of the other state, the Ministry of the Environment will submit to the state of origin its position on participating in strategic environmental assessment in a transboundary context and on the need for consultations by the time set by the state in which the transboundary environmental impact originates.

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

(6²) In the event of participating in strategic environmental assessment in a transboundary context, the Ministry of the Environment will give notice of the publication of the documents on strategic environmental assessment in a transboundary context in the manner specified in subsection 37 (1) of this Act and will send the proposals

and objections submitted regarding the documents on the strategic environmental assessment to the state in which the transboundary environmental impact originates.
[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

(7) The strategic assessment of transboundary environmental impact originating in the territory of the Republic of Estonia will be organised and the Republic of Estonia participates in the strategic assessment of transboundary environmental impact originating in the territory of another state in accordance with the procedure provided for in international agreements.

Chapter 3

ORGANISATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT AND AUDIT SCHEME AND AWARDING OF ECOLABELS

Division 1

Organisation of Voluntary Environmental Management and Audit Scheme

§ 47. Environmental management and audit scheme

(1) The environmental management and environmental audit scheme has been established by Regulation (EC) No 1221/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the voluntary participation by organisations in a Community eco-management and audit scheme (EMAS), repealing Regulation (EC) No 761/2001 and Commission Decisions 2001/681/EC and 2006/193/EC (OJ L 342, 22.12.2009, pp. 1–45)
[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

(2) In this Act, the definitions ‘environmental verifier’ and ‘organisation’ have the meaning given in Articles 2(20) and 2(21) of Regulation (EC) No 1221/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council.
[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

(3) Verification means organisational assessment conducted by a verifier to ensure that the environmental policy, the environmental management system and auditing procedures comply with the requirements of Regulation (EC) No 1221/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council.
[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

(4) ‘Approval’ means assessment of the environmental report by a verifier to verify whether the information and data submitted in the environmental report of the organisation are reliable, credible, correct and comply with the requirements of Regulation (EC) No 1221/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council.
[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

§ 48. Registration of organisations and competent body

(1) In accordance with the requirements of Regulation (EC) No 1221/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council, the competent body to register organisations is the Ministry of the Environment having the right to delegate authority to an authority within the area of government of the Ministry of the Environment.
[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

(2) Organisations are registered in accordance with the procedure provided for in Regulation (EC) No 1221/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council.
[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

(3) The list of information contained in the registration certificate of organisations and the form of the certificates will be established by a regulation of the minister responsible for the field.

(4) Expenses relating to the verification of an organisation specified in subsection 47 (3) of this Act will be paid by the organisation applying for verification.

§ 49. Accreditation of environmental verifier

(1) The environmental verifier is accredited by the Estonian Accreditation Centre or by an internationally acknowledged accreditation organisation.
[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

(1¹) The minister responsible for the field may by a public law contract delegate the task of the supervision of the accreditation of environmental verifiers and steps taken by environmental verifiers to a legal person in private law specified in subsection (1) of this section. The public law contract will be concluded by the minister responsible for the field in accordance with the procedure established in the Administrative Cooperation Act.
[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

(1²) The Ministry of the Environment exercises supervision over the performance of a public law contract concluded on the basis of subsection (1¹) of this section.
[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

(1³) If a public law contract is terminated unilaterally or there is another reason that prevents the performance of the administrative function specified in the contract, the Ministry of the Environment will organise further performance of the administrative function.
[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

(2) The requirements for the qualifications and accreditation of environmental verifiers arise from Regulation (EC) No 1221/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council.
[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

(3) An assessment concerning activities which affect or may affect the impartiality of a verifier will be provided by the accreditation body on the basis of an application of verifier.

(4) The decision of the accreditation body is binding on the verifier and remains in force until the circumstances on which the decision was based change or cease to exist. If the circumstances change or cease to exist, the accreditation body will revoke its decision.

(5) Without the consent of the verifying organisation, a verifier will not disclose information obtained in the course of verification to third parties or use such information against the verifying organisation, unless otherwise provided by law.

§ 50. Promotion of environmental management and audit scheme

(1) In order to promote the environmental management and audit scheme and to organise the necessary awareness raising campaign and training, the Ministry of the Environment will prepare a strategy and an activity plan for the promotion of the environmental management and audit scheme.

(2) The strategy for the promotion of environmental management and audit scheme and an environmental audit system will be approved by the Government of the Republic.

Division 2 Ecolabel Award Scheme

§ 51. Awarding ecolabel to product

(1) The voluntary Community ecolabel (hereinafter *ecolabel*) award scheme has been established by Regulation (EC) No 66/2010 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the EU Ecolabel (OJ L, 30.01.2010, pp. 1–19).
[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

(2) In accordance with Regulation (EC) No 66/2010 of the European Parliament and of the Council, the competent body is the Ministry of the Environment with the right to delegate authority to an authority within the area of government of the Ministry of the Environment.
[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

(3) If necessary, the minister responsible for the field may establish a list of information to be submitted in an application for eco-label and the form of applications by each product group separately on the basis of the corresponding instructions from the European Commission.

§ 52. State fee for review of application for use of ecolabel and use of ecolabel

(1) An applicant for the ecolabel will pay a state fee in the amount provided by the State Fees Act for the review of the application for the use of the ecolabel.

(2) A person holding the right to use the ecolabel will pay a state fee in the amount specified in the State fees Act for the use of the ecolabel on its products.

(3) If a person holding the right to use an ecolabel fails to pay the state fee for the use of the ecolabel on time, the competent body will have the right to suspend the right to use the ecolabel until the state fee has been paid.
[RT I 2006, 58, 439 – entry into force 01.01.2007]

Chapter 4

LIABILITY

§ 53. Violation of requirement for environmental impact assessment and strategic environmental assessment

(1) Violation of the requirement for environmental impact assessment or strategic environmental assessment is punishable by a fine of up to 300 fine units.

(2) The same act, if committed by a legal person, is punishable by a fine of up to 3200 euros.
[RT I 2010, 22, 108 – entry into force 01.01.2011]

§ 54. Violation of conditions for use of Community environmental management and environmental audit scheme logo and Community eco-label

(1) Violation of conditions for the use of the Community environmental management and environmental audit scheme logo or the Community eco-label is punishable by a fine of up to 300 fine units.

(2) The same act, if committed by a legal person, is punishable by a fine of up to 3200 euros.
[RT I 2010, 22, 108 – entry into force 01.01.2011]

§ 55. Proceedings

(1) The provisions of the General Part of the Penal Code and of the Code of Misdemeanour Procedure apply to proceedings regarding the misdemeanours provided for in §§ 53 and 54 of this Act.

(2) The Environmental Inspectorate will conduct extra-judicial proceedings in the misdemeanour cases provided for in § 53 of this Act.

(3) The Consumer Protection Board will conduct extra-judicial proceedings in the misdemeanour cases provided for in § 54 of this Act.

Chapter 5 IMPLEMENTING PROVISIONS

§ 56. Implementation of Act

(1) Environmental impact assessment of proposed activities initiated in accordance with the Environmental Impact Assessment and Environmental Auditing Act, which was effective until the entry into force of this Act, will be completed in accordance with the Environmental Impact Assessment and Environmental Auditing Act.

(2) The licences for environmental impact assessment and environmental auditor's certificates issued in accordance with the Environmental Impact Assessment and Environmental Auditing Act remain in force until the date of expiry indicated therein or until revocation thereof.

(3) Licence holders who have not submitted to the Ministry of the Environment an application for the determination of the fields of activity and areas of impact the environmental impact of which the applicant has the right to assess must submit the corresponding application in a free form by 30 November 2008.
[RT I 2008, 34, 209 – entry into force 01.08.2008]

(4) This Act applies to the preparation of a strategic planning document which is initiated after the entry into force of this Act.

(5) This Act applies to the preparation of a strategic planning document which is initiated before the entry into force of this Act if the strategic planning document is adopted after 21 July 2006.

(6) Strategic environmental assessment initiated in accordance with the Environmental Impact Assessment and Environmental Auditing Act in force until the entry into force of his Act will be completed in accordance with the Environmental Impact Assessment and Environmental Auditing Act.

(7) If the leading expert has failed to submit an application by the date specified in subsection (3) of this section, the Minister of the Environment will revoke the licence of the leading expert.
[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

(8) An environmental impact assessment or a strategic environmental assessment initiated before the entry into force of this provision will be completed in accordance with the Environmental Impact Assessment and Environmental Management System Act in force at the time of initiation thereof. If the environmental impact assessment or strategic environmental assessment proceedings specified in the preceding sentence are not completed within three years as of the entry into force of this provision, further proceedings will be completed

in accordance with the Environmental Impact Assessment and Environmental Management System Act in force during the proceedings.

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

(9) Environmental impact assessment licences granted before the entry into force of this provision are considered to be leading expert licences and the fields of activity and areas of impact specified therein will remain in force until the expiry of the licence. Upon renewal of the term of validity of an environmental impact assessment licence issued before the entry into force of this provision, the fields of activity or areas of impact will not be indicated in the licence. The validity of an environmental impact assessment licence granted before the entry into force of this provision will not be renewed with regard to a person who does not comply with the requirements provided for in subsection 15 (1) of this Act as of 1 January 2019.

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 – entry into force 01.07.2015]

§ 57.–§ 70.[Omitted from this text.]

§ 71. Entry into force of Act

(1) Subsection 15 (14) of this Act will enter into force on 1 June 2005.

(2) Subsections 6 (4) and 22 (4) of this Act will enter into force on 1 July 2005.

(3) Subsection 12 (2) of this Act will enter into force on 1 September 2005.

¹ Directive 2011/92/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment (OJ L 26, 28.01.2012, pp. 1–21), amended by Directive 2014/52/EU (OJ L 124, 25.04.2014, pp. 1–18); Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment (OJ L 197, 21.07.2001, pp. 30–37); Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (OJ L 206, 22.07.1992, pp. 7–50), last amended by Directive 2013/17/EC (OJ L 158, 10.06.2013, pp. 193–229).

[RT I, 23.03.2015, 6 - entry into force 01.07.2015]