

WHAT IS SEA? HOW CAN IT HELP?

Benefits of SEA: Helps to

- Identifying better opportunities
- Prevent costly mistakes
- Build cooperation & stakeholder commitment
- Reduce poverty more effectively
- Prevent conflicts
- Do cheaper and more effective EIA

Definition:

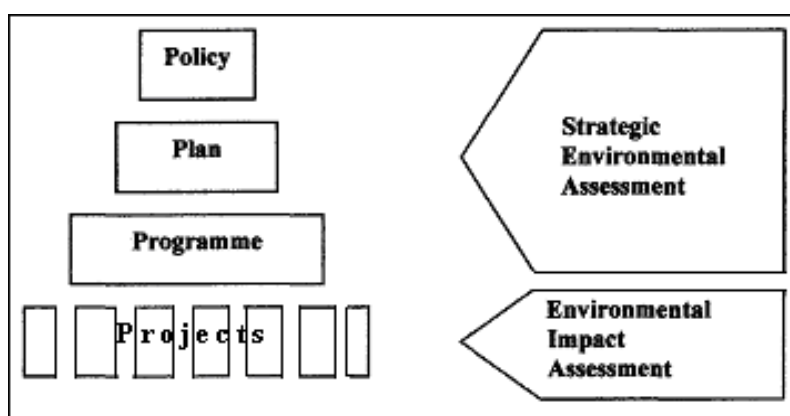
Analytical and participatory approaches to strategic decision-making that aim to integrate environmental considerations into policies, plans and programmes and evaluate the inter-linkages with economic and social considerations

SEA is an environmental mainstreaming and planning tool - a process to improve strategic decision-making [best undertaken at the start of planning to help/improve it, and look at the big picture]

SEA complements planning with:

- Knowledge of environment and poverty
 - Solid analysis and assessment of environmental issues and their linkage with socio-economic issues
- Dialogue on these issues
 - Well structured government and public debate
- Influence on institutions and governance
 - A mechanism to take the results of assessment and debate into account

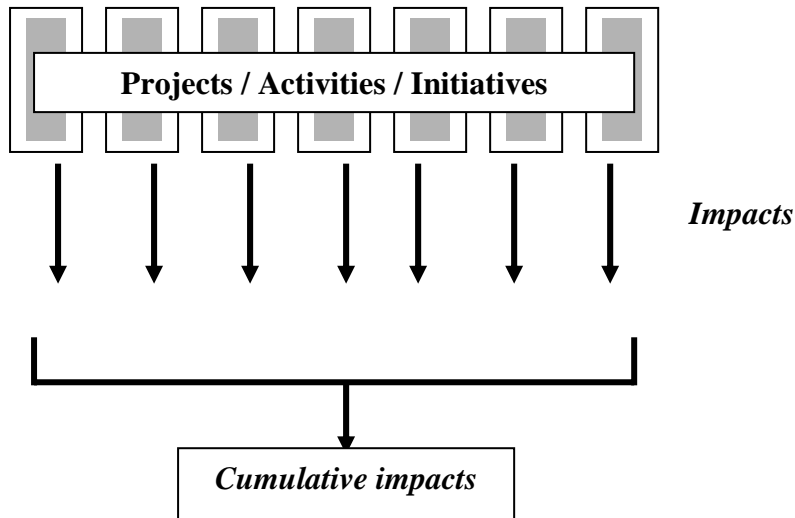
How SEA relates to EIA



SEA is needed to address the bigger picture, interactions with other sectors, trans-boundary issues, cumulative effects, to provide a focus for EIAs, increase efficiency, etc,

SEA addresses alternatives and scenarios

SEA should consider cumulative effects



How to do SEA

- Many forms and ways of doing SEA (no one approach for all situations/purposes)
- SEA must be tailored to the context: eg
 - Abstract policy or concrete plan?
 - Time available?
 - Data available?
 - Environment only? Integrated? or sustainability assessment?

Basic steps in SEA for plans

- **Establish context**
 - Screen the need for the SEA
 - Set objectives
 - Identify stakeholders and develop a communication plan
- **Implement the SEA process**
 - Collect baseline data [use available data]
 - Scope in dialogue with stakeholders
 - Identify alternatives and their impacts
 - Identify options for mitigation and compensation
 - Arrange quality assurance (review/audit) of the assessment
- **Inform/influence decision making**
 - Make recommendations in dialogue with stakeholders
- **Monitoring & evaluation**

Key principles of SEA

- Be ***integrated*** with existing policy, planning & decision-making structures
- Be ***customised*** to context
- Analyse potential ***effects and risks*** of policy, plan, programme and its alternatives
- Identify environmental and other ***opportunities and constraints***
- Address the ***linkages and trade-offs*** between environmental, social and economic considerations
- Be ***transparent***
- Build ***capacity*** for both undertaking and using SEA

Further information is available at:

www.iaia.org (website of the International Association for Impact Assessment)

www.seataskteam.net (website of the OEC DAC Task Tea on SEA)