

Module 1: Introduction to SEA

- What is SEA?
- Benefits and costs of SEA

What is SEA?

Why is SEA important?

- Decision-makers have to increasingly consider cumulative and long-term impacts of multiple proposals
- Attention widens from env. effects to optimal use of shrinking natural resources and to concerns related to long-term sustainable development
- EIA of projects is important but insufficient tool to systematically address the above issues
- SEA of PP(P)s (i.e. plans, programmes and as appropriate of policies) can effectively address these issues - its conclusions strengthen and streamline project-level EIA

What is SEA?

- Systematic and transparent process...
- ...to assess and consider environmental issues...
- ...at the same time when economic and social issues are addressed,
- when all options are open in elaboration of PP(P)s.

- Based on philosophy of project-level EIA;
- is more flexible and diversified process...
- ...to reflect the nature of strategic decision-making.

Definition in the UNECE SEA Protocol


Article 2.6:

SEA means the evaluation of the likely environmental, including health, effects, which comprises:

- the determination of the scope of an environmental report and its preparation,
- the carrying-out public participation and consultations, and
- taking into account the environmental report and the results of the public participation and consultations in a plan or programme.


Features	SEA	EIA
Key alternatives	Development directions (objectives and scenarios) and multiple actions to achieve them	Locations and technologies
Impacts	Long-term trends (often related to env/SD objectives) – local impacts only if PP contains specific project proposals	Specific impacts on the local state of environment
Assessment	More qualitative (expert judgements)	More quantitative
Decision making	Comparison against env./SD objectives	Comparison with local env. quality
Public concerned	Mainly organized “publics” – interest groups, think-tanks	Affected public and organized groups
Quality review	Process management, quality of assessments and their use in the PP	Quality of EIA report and process management

Benefits and costs of SEA


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SEA saves time and money

- SEA helps to avoid costs that may be associated with environmentally problematic strategic decisions
- SEA helps to eliminate unfeasible development proposals (thus saving resources that would be otherwise “wasted” on their elaboration).
- SEA provides (free of charge) inputs to the planning process from the concerned public (that may include persons with high expertise)
- SEA helps to focus and streamline EIA for projects (again costs and time savings)


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SEA improves governance

- SEA increases coherency in strategic planning
- SEA enables early resolution of conflicts that may later slow down implementations of strategic decisions
- Proper SEA may even mobilize support of key stakeholders for implementation of optimized P/Ps.
- It supports a gradual shift of economic planning towards sustainable development.


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Costs of SEA

- SEA may add 5-15% to the total costs of drafting the PP
- SEA costs relate to:
 - Designing SEA approach and selecting appropriate tools
 - Carrying out analyses and consultations
 - Discussions with the planning team and contributions to elaboration of alternative solutions (alternative objectives, scenarios, proposed actions and measures to mitigate their negative effects)
- Fully integrated SEAs into elaboration of PPs tend to be less costly than separate "ex-post" SEAs



Costs of SEA are not static

- Main costs associated with SEA occur during the first applications of SEA when the appropriate approaches and tools (SEA "software") are developed.
- Subsequent SEAs can build on the previous experience and costs decrease to standard analytical work and process management (SEA "hardware").



SEA benefits in Estonia

Ms. Kerli Lorvi, Ministry of Finance, Estonia

- SEA is not a complicated and theoretical tool. It was a flexible mechanism that gave us feedback from environmental experts.
- It ran in parallel to the elaboration of the Estonian Single Programming Document and provided operative and practical inputs.



SEA benefits in Poland

Piotr Zuber, Ministry of Economy, Labour and Social Policy,

- The SEA for the first National Development Plan of Poland provided us with useful recommendations for improved consideration of environmental issues.
- The SEA has a wider applicability and can also be used in elaboration of other documents. We will be able to use the lessons learned and methodology developed in the future.



SEA benefits in Hungary

Ms. Ágnes Somfai, Prime Minister's Office, Hungary

- The SEA team identified the main relevant environmental issues and helped us to consider this information throughout the entire planning process.
- SEA also facilitated our cooperation with the Ministry of Environment, other sectoral ministries and regional authorities during environmental optimising of the programme.



SEA benefits in Czech Republic

Mr. Tomas Nejd, Ministry of Regional Development, CR

- SEA was very useful experience in elaboration of the Czech National Development Plan. It had benefits that went beyond its original purpose of ensuring full consideration of sustainable development during the planning process.
- SEA helped us to improve openness of the entire programming process and established a "bridge" between the planning team and the public. This turned out to be very positive feature that we later very much appreciated.