



SEA as a Process and Applicability for Future Projects

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SEA dilemma

SEA is a process that aims to integrate environmental and sustainability considerations in strategic decision making. It has the potential to make the world a greener and more liveable place. It also has the potential to be a dreary and resource-intensive formality, applied in a grudging minimalist fashion by people who just hate having to do it, adding still further to some great useless administrative burden paid for by hapless taxpayers.

Quote from Riki Therivel, *Strategic Environmental Assessment in Action* (2004)

Agenda

- Definition
- Principles
- Benefits
- Challenges
- Public Involvement
- Lessons Learned
- Critical Success Factors



What is an SEA?

- Assesses impacts of proposed development policies, plans and programs;
- Promotes public participation in broad environmental policy-making;
- Identifies and predicts cumulative impacts of broad governmental programs;
- Applied early in the formulation of proposals when major alternatives and options are still open.

Project-Specific EA vs. SEA

Project Specific:

- Usually focused on the biophysical environment
- Often proponent led
- Subject to review by the regulator
- Extent of public consultation dependent on level of assessment
- Assessment relying on inadequate (regional) baseline data
- Consideration of cumulative environmental effects is weak
- Loss of mitigation opportunities- too late

SEA

- Undertaken earlier in the overall planning
- Broader stakeholder engagement
- Earlier identification of sensitive areas
- Establishment of development thresholds
- Streamlining of project-specific EA and regulatory processes
- Regulator or government led
- Public consultation and industry input (to identify activities and mitigation measures, and to provide existing baseline data).

Principles of SEA

- Integrated
- Sustainability-led
- Focused
- Accountable
- Participative
- Iterative



Benefits of SEA

- Advances our sustainability agenda;
- Strengthens decision-making processes;
- Considers cumulative effects;
- Facilitates the implementation of more environmentally sustainable projects;

Benefits of SEA

- Increased efficiency for project based assessment;
- Regional baseline and monitoring support;
- Framework for public involvement and broader public debate;
- Futures oriented approach;
- Encourages consideration of alternatives.

Challenges of SEA

- Strength is biggest weakness
- Often Complex
- Broad Scope
- Costly



Public Involvement

- Strengthens Credibility
- Addresses concerns at early stage
- Important source of local and traditional knowledge
- Helps develop trust
- Helps communicate process and decisions to stakeholders

Bay of Fundy SEA- Lessons Learned

- Clearly define roles and responsibilities of parties
- Clear Terms of Reference and Scope
- Agree on nature and extent of public participation
- Stakeholder buy-in required
- Need independence in design of SEA

Lessons Learned cont..

- Capacity building amongst various stakeholders
- Capacity building for implementation of SEA recommendations



Critical Success Factors- for future projects

- Strong leadership
- Defined objectives
- Committed resources –long term
- Stakeholder buy-in and support
- Flexible
- Considers cumulative effects

Thank-you

