

Module 1: Basics of SEA

SEA – Main Characteristics and Linkages to EIA

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SEA, EIA and Sustainable Development

- **SEA and EIA are complementary instruments to help countries mainstream sustainability into their development strategies**
- **SEA is key to help countries achieve the Millenium Development Goals, notably by “..integrating the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programs and reversing the losses of environmental resources.”**

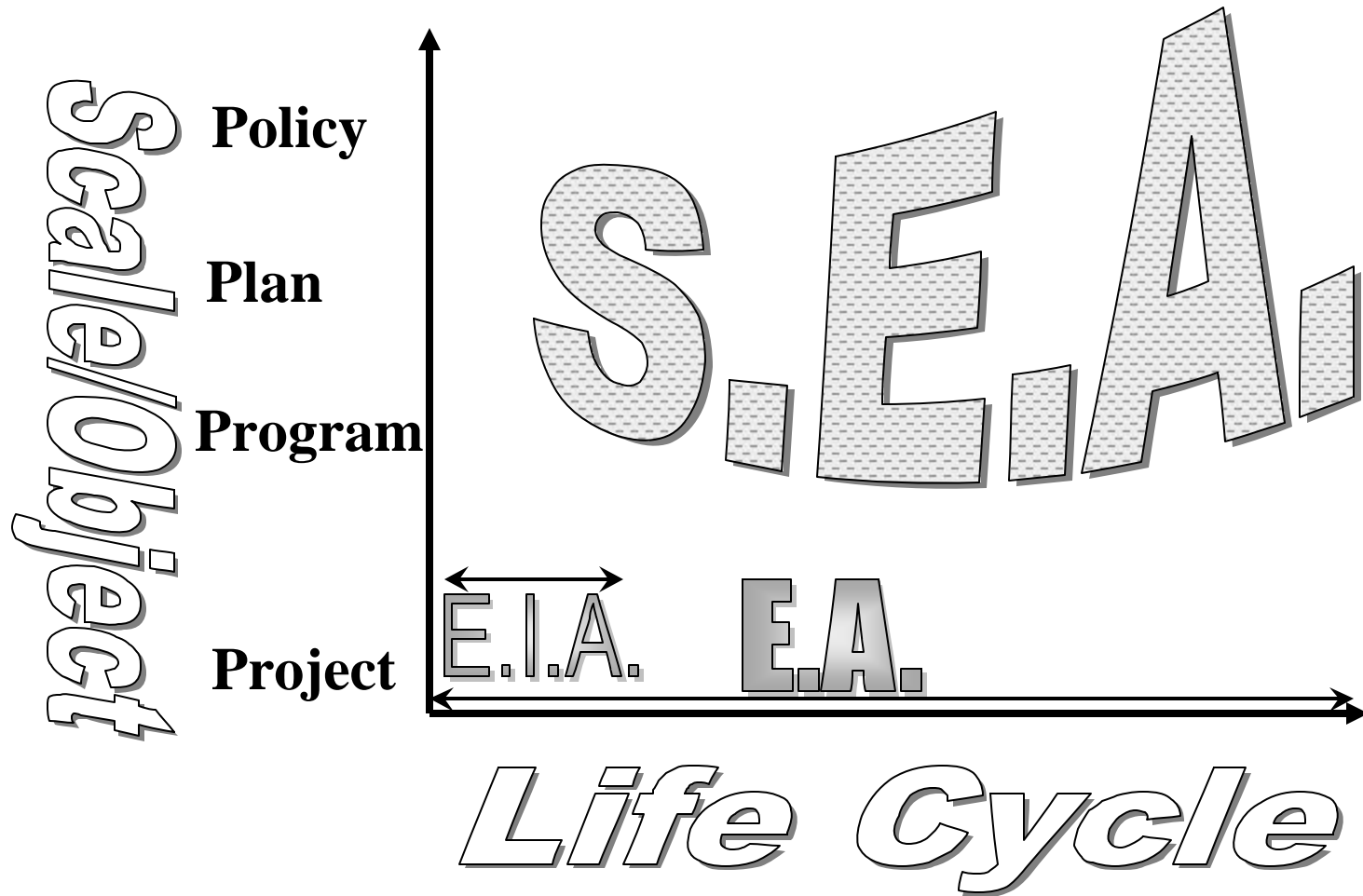
How Does SEA Influence Decision?

- **Provision of additional knowledge into the decision-making process:**
 - **in a timely manner**
 - **using data and a rational approach**
 - **providing in-depth analyzing of the PPPs**
- **Access to more stakeholders through public consultation**
- **A cooperative process between scientists and decision-makers**

What if SEA Does Not Influence Decision?

- **Then most of the value of SEA has been lost and the corresponding efforts wasted**
- **While many experts disagree on fine (and less fine) methodological points of SEA, they all agree on the absolute necessity of the impact of SEA on decision-making**
- **Sometimes, a “bad” SEA can influence decision, because the process matters much.**

Trying a Graphic Representation



SEA is More than EIA Applied to PPPs

- **EIA applies to projects, usually defined as a physical investments**
- **SEA applies to programs, plans and policies**
- **Thus, the two apply to different objects**
- **Other major differences: SEA involves a greater variety of skills and institutions, SEA utilizes a much broader set of techniques and approaches**

SEA Can Be Used to Prevent and Mitigate Impacts

- **EIA is a linear sequence of analyses, going from the measurement of the baseline conditions all the way to impact prevention, mitigation and monitoring**
- **SEA can indeed utilize the same approach, and take a program, a plan or a policy and “green” it**
- **The more the focus moves to policy, the more difficult it becomes to predict the impacts, let alone to safeguard them**

SEA Can Be Used to Achieve Environmental Objectives

- **Another growing field of SEA application is the so-called “objective-led” approach where an environmental management objective is the starting point of SEA**
- **It is especially well adapted to policy making, and especially well to dovetailing into multiple sector planning (e.g. intervening in the agricultural, forestry and transport sectors to combat deforestation)**

SEA as Part of Planning and Policy-making

- **Lastly, SEA can be fully integrated into the planning and policy-making processes in such a way that the outcome is influenced, even if there is no stand-alone environmental assessment report produced.**
- **Several examples (e.g. Hong Kong urban planning) illustrate the relevance of this integrated approach**

The Institutional Setup for SEA and EIA

- **Institutions are key to sustainable development**
- **EIA implementation tends to be a reasonably simple regulator-regulated model**
- **SEA tends to involve more and “out of the box” institutional players**
- **Networks are essential for SEA development**

How Do SEA and EIA Interplay?

- **SEA is not just a solution to problems that EIA has not solved**
- **EIA has solved problems and increases its effectiveness as it sharpens its focus and as more science becomes available**
- **SEA can enhance the EIA under certain conditions (these conditions need to be identified and built into the linkage; they do not appear magically)**

Example of SEA-EIA linkages (Nootebom)

- **SEA proposes alternatives which may not be appropriate at EIA level**
- **SEA assesses impacts which EIA may not be able to assess**
- **SEA and EIA can be vertically integrated**
- **SEA has the potential to reduce the resources (time, cost) requirements for EIA**

Highlights of the Session

- **SEA is substantially and institutionally different from EIA**
- **SEA can help prepare better EIAs, but this needs specific attention to SEA design & preparation**
- **The selection of the appropriate form of SEA should be based on a sound comparison of the three main forms available (impact-based, objective-led, integrated)**
- **If SEA does not influence decision, it should not be undertaken**