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Introduction to Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

Mr. Michal Musil, International SEA Consultant to UNECE

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What is SEA?

SEA is a systematic & anticipatory process, undertaken to analyze environmental effects of proposed plans, programmes & other strategic actions and to integrate findings into decision-making

Key principles:

- Undertaken by the authority responsible for the given Plan/Programme (e.g. sectorial, spatial)
- Applied as early as possible in decision-making process
- Focused on key issues
- Evaluates reasonable range of alternatives
- Provides appropriate opportunities for involvement of key stakeholders & the public
- Carried out with appropriate, cost-effective methods & techniques of analysis

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International Legal Framework

EU SEA Directive

- An SEA is mandatory for plans/programmes which are:
 - are prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste/ water management, telecommunications, tourism, town & country planning or land use **and** which set the framework for future development consent of projects listed in the EIA Directive.
- Defines topics to be assessed: roughly 4: environment, nature, human health and cultural heritage

Protocol to the so-called Espoo Convention (Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context), also known as „Kyiv“ Protocol

- Signatories: 38; Parties: 25, Signed in 2003 in Kyiv, entry into force July 2010

Similar to SEA Directive, but additional focus on:

- Impacts on human health
- Public consultation

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What is SEA?

SEA Protocol	SEA Directive(2001/42/EC)
<p><u>evaluation</u> of the likely environmental, including health, effects, which comprises the determination of the scope of an environmental report and its preparation, the <u>carrying-out of public participation and consultations</u>, and the <u>taking into account</u> of the environmental report and the results of the public participation and consultations <u>in a plan or programme</u></p>	<p>The <u>preparation of an environmental report</u>, the <u>carrying out of consultations</u>, the <u>taking into account</u> of the environmental report and the results of the consultations <u>in decision-making</u> and the provision of information on the decision</p>

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Typical / Generic SEA Steps

0. Screening: to determine if SEA is required for the specific policy or planning document

Scoping / Baseline Analysis

Determination of key issues that should be considered within the SEA process

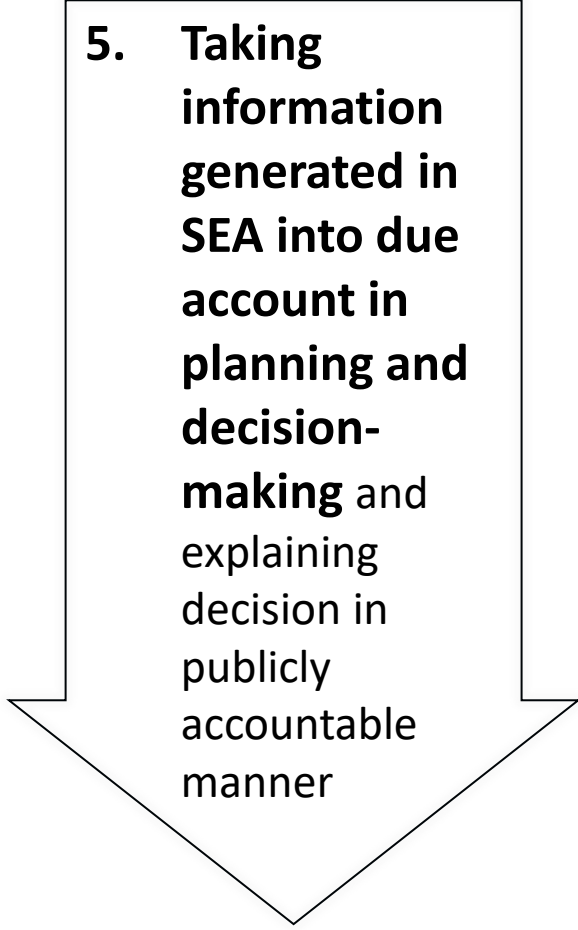
Analysis of key issues i.e. past evolution, current situation and likely future evolution if the policy or planning document is not implemented

1. Assessment of effects of the policy or planning document on the key issues and development of mitigation measures (including monitoring scheme)

2. Compilation of the SEA Report and its submission for consultations with environmental and health authorities and the public



4. Consultations



5. Taking information generated in SEA into due account in planning and decision-making and explaining decision in publicly accountable manner



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SEA: What does it take?

- SEA runs in parallel with Planning (drafting of the policy or planning document)
- SEA team of environmental specialists looks into the draft policy or planning document and provide comments to planning (drafting) team about:
 - Potential impacts(risks) from the proposed actions to the environment, and
 - Measures to prevent, mitigate, and minimize identified risks
 - Measures to enhance likely positive effects
- SEA team put together Environmental Report summarizing its findings and recommendations
- Planning institution (i.e. initiator) takes the SEA findings (Environmental Report) into consideration when finalizing and approving the draft policy or planning document

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SEA: Key tangible deliverables

1. Scoping Report, which outlines the scope of assessment and suggests further analyses – submitted to the governmental authorities and other stakeholders for consultations to determine of the scope and focus of the future SEA Report.
2. SEA Report summarizing all environmental expert analyses, assessment findings and recommendations – subject of stakeholder consultations and basis for SEA conclusion.

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SEA Guiding principles

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Why do we need SEA ?

- To support the preparation (i.e. planning) and implementation of good quality planning documents
- To ensure that sustainability considerations inform & are integrated into planning and decision-making
- To ensure that economic planning is consistent with environmental obligations and policies (e.g. regarding climate change, air quality, biodiversity)
- To address strategic issues of concern that cannot be effectively addressed through project-level decision-making (SEA is not a mega-EIA!)

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EIA vs SEA differences

EIA of Projects	SEA of Policies, Plans and Programmes
Takes place near the end of decision-making cycle: aims to minimise impacts	Takes place at earlier stages of decision-making cycle: aims to prevent impacts
Reactive approach to development proposal	Pro-active approach to development proposals
Considers limited number of feasible alternatives	Considers broad range of potential alternatives
Limited review of cumulative effects	Cumulative effects assessment is key to SEA
Emphasis on mitigating and minimizing impacts	Emphasis on meeting environmental objectives, maintaining natural systems
Narrow perspective, high level of detail	Broad perspective, lower level of detail to provide a vision and overall framework
Well-defined process, clear beginning and end	Multi-stage process, overlapping components, policy level is continuing, iterative
Focuses on standard agenda, treats systems of environmental deterioration	Focuses on sustainability agenda, gets at sources of environmental deterioration

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Thank you for your attention!

Michal Musil

michal.musil@integracons.com

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