



# Executive Summary Report

## Project on Mainstreaming Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

Present

Office of the National Economics and Social Development Council

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The Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council of Thailand (NESDC) had implemented Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Mainstreaming Project during March 2019 - January 2020. The objectives of the project are:

- 1) to review and collect SEA related studies; in Thailand and abroad, in order to learn caseworks and experiences on system, process, guideline, and indicators relevant to SEA. The review embraces economic, social and environmental development context for SEA-required plan and program (either sectoral or area-based),
- 2) to build capacity on SEA knowledge and a better understanding for all relevant organizations by provision of SEA technical trainings and workshops, and
- 3) to propose implementation of SEA mechanisms and tools as well as to update the SEA National Guideline.

The expected outcomes are; 1) to collect a list of SEA indicators for all aspects (economic, social and environmental indicators) for SEA-required plan and program (either sectoral or area-based). They will be compiled in preliminary SEA database to support SEA study; 2) to formulate SEA technical training contents and materials be standard curriculum for all levels; including policy makers, practitioners (of relevant line agencies), academic and consultants; 3) to deliver such SEA technical trainings throughout the country (750 participants), and also to organize and facilitate SEA brainstorming at 4 focus group meetings (80 participants), together with two SEA dissemination workshops (200 participants) for relevant organizations including policy makers, practitioners, academic and consultants; 4) to propose the implementation of mechanisms and tools as well as to update the SEA National Guideline as mainstreaming tool and; 5) to publish SEA handbook for public communication (10,000 copies).

## **1 Project outcomes**

To accomplish the objectives and expected outcomes, the project has conducted successfully the following activities:

### **1.1 SEA technical training activities:**

SEA technical training activities involved a formulation of training contents and curriculum. In detail, a sequence of activities were:

#### **1) two focus group meetings for training curriculum formulation**

The meetings on May 7, 2019 and June 6, 2019 aimed to obtain stakeholder views, expectation and suggestion on what and how SEA training contents and curriculum should meet their needs. The target groups of these meetings consisted of government agencies/ state enterprises whose roles and responsibilities are on policy, plan and program formulation, agencies whose mandate are direct responsibilities on SEA, private firms with large development projects, private organizations on environmental protection, non- governmental organizations, academic, institutions and consultants. There was a total of 199 participants for the two meetings. The key remarks and recommendations were summarized as following detail:

##### **(1) stakeholder views obtained from the focus group meetings**

At the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> focus group meetings with relevant agencies, the participants addressed some concerns on the clarity, difficulty, practicality and applicability of training curriculum. The curriculum should explain the definition of Policy, Plan and Program (PPP) and the relationship with SEA process. It should also include lessons learnt from case studies in foreign countries. Moreover, it should explain clearly the difference between Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). The target group for each training, should be specified clearly while the curriculum shall be adjusted in accordance with such target group, for instance, short-term curriculum for executives and curriculum for practitioners. The time period for training should be adjusted in accordance with each subject.

##### **(2) design and contents of SEA technical training curriculum**

The SEA technical training contents are designed on basis of the Strategic Environmental Assessment Guideline (NCSD, 2018). They are substantially improved based on training-of-the-trainers workshop input by the international SEA expert. The training program has been devised as a participatory training with a concept of design thinking and state-of-the-

art of SEA process, methodology and references. Also, it takes into account of stakeholders views obtained at focus group meetings. This SEA academic training module contains 11 chapters of five-days training course.

**Chapter 1: Basic understanding on SEA:** The chapter provides basic, definition, importance, model, and benefits of SEA.

**Chapter 2: SEA good principles and practices:** The chapter provides good principles, methodology, linkage between SEA process and plan and program, and considerations for an effective use of SEA.

**Chapter 3: SEA screening and preparation:** This chapter starts the 1<sup>st</sup> procedural step of SEA what screening and preparation task should be.

**Chapter 4: SEA scoping and determination of strategic issues:** This chapter provides how to perform SEA scoping stepwise, and how to determine strategic issues.

**Chapter 5: Baseline assessment:** This chapter entails what and how to assess baseline status and trend in the past.

**Chapter 6: Effective public participation through SEA process:** This chapter entails principles of public participation through SEA process, stakeholder analysis and ranking, benefits of public participation and techniques for public participation.

**Chapter 7: Alternative development and assessment for sustainability:** This chapter explains how to develop alternatives and assessment for sustainability, identification of alternatives, assessing the sustainability of alternatives and good alternative characteristics.

**Chapter 8: Tools for alternative assessment:** This chapter provides what tools and methodology choices for alternative assessment.

**Chapter 9: Measures for sustainability:** This chapter defines what and how to determine different measures for sustainability of alternatives.

**Chapter 10: SEA Integration into plan and program formulation:** This chapter addresses the importance of the integration SEA result to plan and program formulation.

**Chapter 11: Quality control and reporting:** This chapter entails quality control criteria and checklist for SEA process, the context of SEA study report and eventually how to prepare the Terms of Reference (TOR) for SEA study.

**2) SEA training-for-the-trainers workshop by the international SEA expert**

Prior to the design and formulation of SEA technical training throughout the country, the project initiated to organize training-for-the-trainers workshop. The workshop was delivered by the international SEA expert; Professor Maria Rosario Partidario, University of Lisbon, Portugal, who has over 20 years experiences in SEA theory and training. The workshop aimed to share common platform and harmonize Thai trainers and experts' knowledge on basic principle, SEA evolution, discussion on concept and approaches of SEA for Thailand, and strategic-thinking SEA. There were 25 Thai experts and trainers attending this training workshop. Learning from this training workshop, the trainers agreed and shared knowledge delivered by the international SEA expert to design and formulate SEA participatory training program throughout the country.

**3) SEA technical training activities throughout the country**

Five-days participatory technical trainings were repeatedly delivered for six events throughout the country (covering five regions); Bangkok and metropolitan region, Central region, Northeastern region, Southern region and Northern region. The six training events longed for the period of July-October 2019. The objectives were to provide knowledge, understanding and skills on SEA to relevant stakeholders (trainees) who were involved with policy, plan and program formulation and SEA study. Furthermore, trainees could learn, participate and experiment on SEA process and take part of brainstorming for improving SEA mechanism and tools including the revision of the SEA National Guideline. A total of 900 participants from governmental agencies, agencies being responsible for the development planning and SEA study, academicals and consultant agencies, joined the training.

The training program was designed by using a variety of techniques, platforms and tools in order to stimulate a participatory learning process by alternating the plenary and group sessions through stepwise chapters. The plenary sessions described and summarized the main content of each chapter for the participants to understand. The group sessions provided opportunity for each to participate and exchange inherent knowledge and

experiences and obtain new pieces of knowledge. The training was designed for participants in order to share and discuss inherent and experiences in plan development and SEA study. For each group session, participants/ trainees learned step-by-step SEA procedural process via the case study which was tailored made to suit for participatory training. Moreover, several games/ group activities were supplemented to learn the key messages related to SEA. The games such as Egg Drop, Nut Game and Drawing Bricks helped to lift the moods of the training together while delivering tips and enhancing public communication and systematic thinking.

### **Evaluation of SEA training activities**

Regarding the evaluation of all training events, the understanding and knowledge on SEA rose from 43.3 percent to 82.2 percent, respectively. The evaluation of each topic were summarized as follows:

The participants had knowledge on the theory and concept of SEA raised to 85.7 from 45.7 percent; relevance in SEA process raised to 81.5 from 41.3 percent; SEA reporting raised to 76.2 from 35.6 percent; strategic planning raised to 81.2 from 46.7 percent; impact assessment raised to 83.4 from 47.6 percent; using SEA as the management tool raised to 83.0 from 38.4 percent; applying SEA as participatory tool raised to 82.3 from 37.9; strategic thinking raised to 84.1 from 48.3 percent, and preparation and training of the team work raised to 82.3 from 48.3 percent.

In addition, the success of the training program was supported by an increase of average score during the pre-test and post-test. The SEA technical training curriculum was accepted from all participants as shown through smiley evaluation at the end of each training day. The daily emotion evaluation was gradually positive from day 1 to day 5 when the trainees learned more and more training chapter. Moreover, it could be indicated by an increasing number of participants owing to word of mouth of the participants which attracted more participants than the target and guaranteed the effectiveness of the training.

The participants' feedback after the training on what key knowledge and understanding on SEA so as to use for policy, plan and program development were;

- definition and importance of SEA including what the difference between SEA and EIA,

- basic on SEA purposes, importance and benefits of Strategic Environmental Assessment including good SEA principles,
- understanding of SEA procedural steps; namely scoping, identification of strategic issues and indicators; appropriate alternative development including reporting and communicating with relevant stakeholders
- integration of SEA process with policy, plan and program, and
- SEA helps strengthening systematic thinking including a visualization of public participation to render the public their ownership of plan and program.

Also, the participants' feedback on how to apply SEA knowledge gained at the training for:

**For personal application:**

- be able to apply the concept and principles of SEA for every aspect of work resulting in more systematic process, raising the efficiency and prudence in both sit-down and fieldwork.
- gain good knowledge on principles and processes in SEA study.
- widening vision and broadening perspectives. Also, assist on better management and improve decision-making qualitatively. Enhance capacity for work.
- able to use techniques/ tools/ mechanism to support SEA implementation effectively and efficiency.

**For organizations:**

- use to improve the planning process and mission of organizations in order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for policy formulation and management of natural resources and environment.
- to use the knowledge and skills in analyzing and implementing systematically in the mainstreaming of policy, plan and program of the organization, in order to maximize the benefits and to ensure public participation of all stakeholders.

## 1.2 Improvement of the draft SEA Implementation Proposal and the SEA National Guideline through following activities;

The draft SEA Implementation Proposal and the SEA National Guideline have been developed and improved by collecting concerns and opinions through many important activities as follows:

### 1) two focus group meetings for the draft SEA Implementation Proposal and the SEA National Guideline

Two focus group meetings were conducted aiming to develop the SEA curriculum by brainstorming meeting with relevant agencies. The objectives of these focus group discussions were to brainstorm ideas and recommendations of relevant agencies aiming to improve the draft SEA implementation proposal (including Draft Regulation of the Official Prime Minister on Strategic Environmental Assessment B.E. ....) There were 274 participants (Table 1.2-1)

**Table 1.2-1 Summary of the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> focus group meetings**

Number	Activity	Date Month Year	Target Groups	Numbers of participants
1	3 <sup>rd</sup> focus group meeting of the relevant agencies	Friday 2 August 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Government agencies/ state enterprises consisting of central and regional administration whose roles and duties are in specifying policy, plan, program.</li> <li>● Agencies with direct roles and duties on conducting SEA</li> </ul>	125
2	4 <sup>th</sup> focus group meeting of the relevant agencies	Tuesday 3 September 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Private agencies with large development projects</li> <li>● Private organizations on environmental protection, non- governmental organizations, educational institutes and independent academics in the area</li> </ul>	149
<b>Total numbers of participants</b>				<b>274</b>

In this regard, the opinions and recommendations obtained from two focus groups meetings were considered to improve the draft SEA Implementation Proposal and the SEA National Guideline. The main issues of consideration were as follows:

- appending the definition of “environment” for SEA,
- improving the content on the good principles of SEA and appending clearer explanation,
- revising the content under “SEA benefits” of which are tangible output and clear benefits for each sector, and
- revising the details in Chapter 3: SEA procedural steps to ensure that they are clearer including a provision of examples for core procedural step.

#### **Remark on the outcomes of the focus group meetings of relevant agencies**

Major recommendations from the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> focus group meetings were; the language used shall be easily understandable, and should be presented visually in different formats (such as figure and table), not only in descriptive format. As well as, the clear definitions should be provided together with each distinctive complementary example within each step because Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is a new concept. Moreover, Draft Regulation of the Official Prime Minister on Strategic Environmental Assessment B.E. .... should clearly determine the criteria of policy, plan and program requiring SEA as well as support the legal mechanism. It should describe mission of relevant agencies on their responsibilities and the qualification of SEA consultants. Furthermore, it should determine whether plan and program implementing agencies is able to prepare SEA without consulting agencies.

## **2) Recommendations for improvement of the draft SEA Implementation Proposal and the SEA National Guideline**

### **(1) Improvement of the SEA Implementation Proposal**

The project had collected all outcomes from all activities implemented, including data review, and recommendations in order to improve the draft SEA Implementation Proposal and the SEA National Guideline. In principle, the draft SEA Implementation Proposal is not proposed to be change, but to be improve and update in consistent with the revised SEA National Guideline. The issues revised were as follows:

- to revise the correct and up-to-date definitions and glossary of terms relating to SEA,

- to revise the context on monitoring and evaluation, to state clearly the roles and responsibilities of agencies or sectors in overseeing the monitoring and evaluation procedures of SEA, and
- to revise the main content which should have been included in the SEA report in accordance with the details in the revised SEA National Guideline.

All the details of the Draft SEA Implementation Proposal have been revised in accordance National Guideline on Strategic Environmental Assessment B.E. 2563. The details of the draft SEA Implementation Proposal consist of two main sections as follows:

### **1) Principles and Rationales**

- (1) Background,
- (2) Definition and glossary of terms, and
- (3) Conceptual framework for Strategic Environmental Assessment.

### **2) Recommendations for implementation of SEA**

- (1) Principles and rationales for categorization of plan, program, and project requiring SEA,
- (2) Categorization of plan, program and project requiring SEA,
- (3) Process, criteria and methods of SEA preparation,
- (4) Institution, mechanism including relevant regulation for SEA implementation in Thailand, and
- (5) Guideline for enhancement knowledge and capacity, including dissemination of SEA criteria and process to relevant organizations

### **(2) Improvement of Draft Regulation of the Official Prime Minister on Strategic Environmental Assessment B.E. ....**

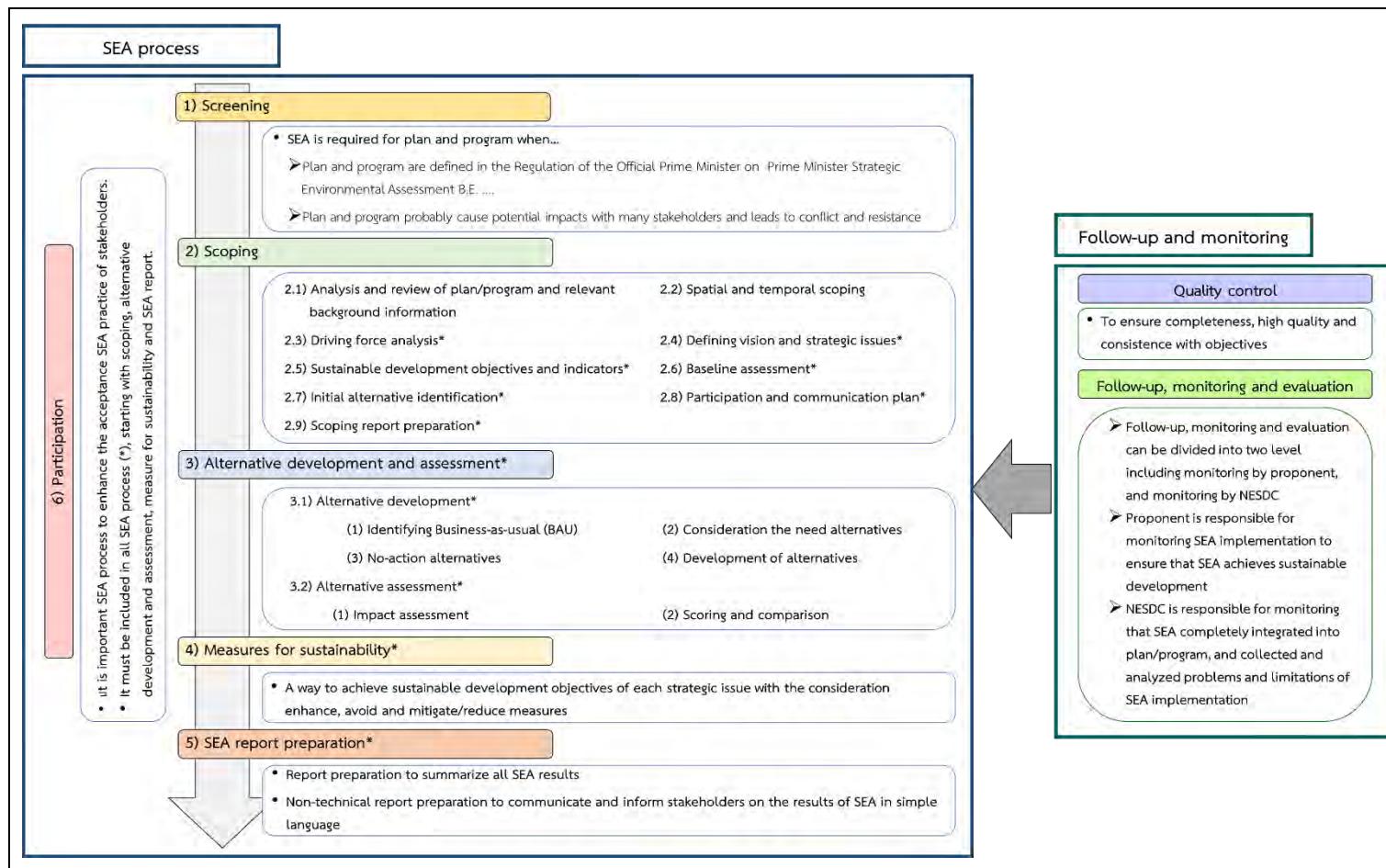
Draft Regulation of the Official Prime Minister on Strategic Environmental Assessment B.E. .... was improved including two main parts. There are 1) the principles and rationale of Draft Regulation of the Official Prime Minister on Strategic Environmental

Assessment B.E. .... and 2) Draft Regulation of the Official Prime Minister on Strategic Environmental Assessment B.E. ....

### **(3) Preparation of the SEA National Guideline**

The SEA National Guideline (as January 2020) has been improved on the basic Strategic Environmental Assessment Guideline (NCSD, B.E. 2561) which was approved by the National Committee on Sustainable Development and National Sub-committee on Strategic Environmental Assessment in particular of SEA processes, SEA indicators in cooperation of comments and recommendations from focus group meetings and in consistent with Thailand's context.

SEA procedural steps consist of the following main steps: screening, scoping, alternative development and assessment, measure for sustainability, SEA report preparation, public participation, quality control and follow-up, monitoring and evaluation. They are summarized as shown in **Figure 1.2-1**. Moreover, the integration of SEA and plan and program has been interrelated in each other in order to combine of both results through public participation. The relationship between SEA and plan and program are showed in **Figure 1.2-2**



\* Public participation is a process which a person/ organization participates in the decision making process by exchanging information, interested comments, concerning issues and consultation which providing the recommendations and reviews to the reports, particularly from the public.

Participation in various process of strategic environmental assessment can be changed as appropriate.

**Figure 1.2-1 Procedural steps of SEA process**

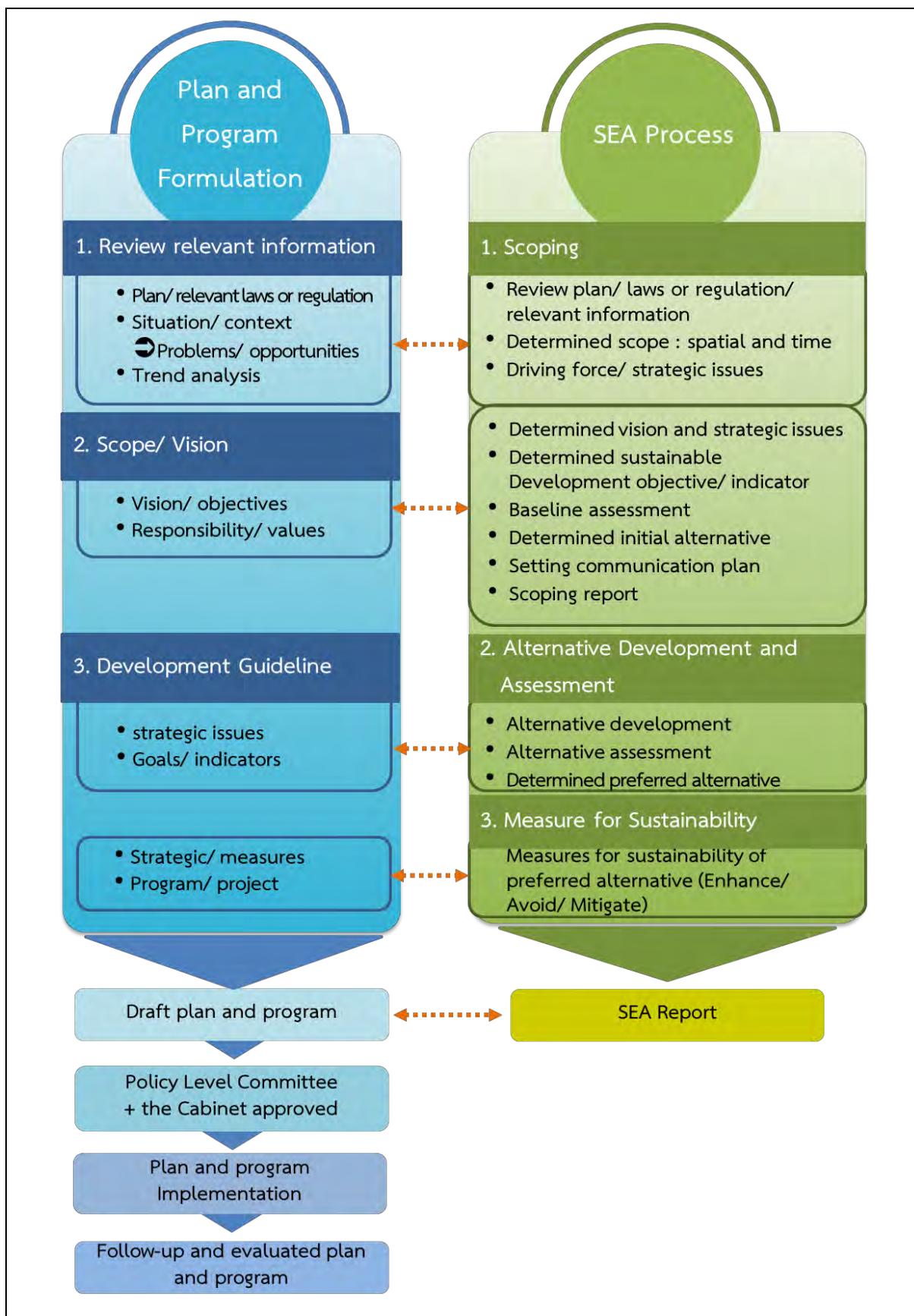


Figure 1.2-2 Integration of SEA with plan and program formulation

### 1.3 Enhancement of the knowledge and understanding of SEA to relevant organizations

#### 1) The policy dialogue on mainstreaming strategic environmental assessment for sustainable development plan and program

The project invited the qualified and experienced expert in strategic environmental assessment, Professor Maria Rosario Partidario, from University of Lisbon, internationally qualified person and expert in strategic environmental assessment who has over 20 years of experience to expand SEA knowledge and mainstream SEA towards sustainable development plan and program.

The participants gained understanding of SEA and exchanged the knowledge in order to integrate SEA for the conducting, developing and improving plan and program sustainably.

##### **Remark on the outcomes of the policy dialogue**

The policy dialogue on the mainstreaming on strategic environmental assessment towards the sustainable development plan and program enhanced SEA knowledge to relevant agencies leading to acceptance amongst all relevant stakeholders. The participants of the event recommended that legal mechanisms should be clear in terms of the sector requiring SEA, together, with appropriate timeframe.

#### 2) Two seminars for enhancement and brainstorming on SEA knowledge

The seminars aimed to enhance the knowledge on SEA and SEA's benefits to public and relevant organizations, along with brainstorming ideas and suggestions from relevant organization and SEA's trainee. There was a total of 444 participants for the two seminars as shown in **Table 1.3-1**.

**Table 1.3-1 Summary of dissemination and brainstorming workshops**

Number	Activity	Date month year	Target groups	Number of Participants
1	1 <sup>st</sup> seminar for enhancement and brainstorming on SEA knowledge SEA to relevant stakeholders	Monday 27 May 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Government agencies/ state enterprises including central and regional government agencies whose roles and responsibilities are on policy, plan and program formulation</li> <li>● Agencies whose mandate are direct responsibilities on SEA</li> <li>● Private firms with large development projects</li> <li>● Private organizations on environmental protection, non- governmental organization, academic, institutions and consultants</li> <li>● Consultants who has obtained the license to study and report preparation on environmental measures</li> <li>● Media</li> <li>● Interested people</li> </ul>	218
2	2 <sup>nd</sup> seminar for enhancement and brainstorming on SEA knowledge SEA to relevant stakeholders	Thursday 7 November 2019		226
<b>Total numbers of participants</b>				<b>444</b>

The recommendations obtained from two seminars were integrated into the revision of the draft SEA Implementation Proposal and the SEA National Guideline. Additionally, the key messages were also applied into SEA handbook for public communication.

#### **Remark on the outcomes of the seminars**

Major recommendations from the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> seminars were; further enhancement SEA knowledge with relevant organization were required, especially NESDC as main expert. In addition, to support SEA implementation, a clear and understandable SEA guideline, measures and references which can be applied to plans and programs should be developed. Moreover, there should open opportunity for academics and professors in order to analyst and develop SEA tool, and revising the recommendations and suggestions on development plan and program from all relevant organizations resulting on mutual benefit on all sectors, in economic, social and environmental aspects.

### 3) Study Visit in Australia

The study visit in Australia was conducted between 29<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> October, 2019 with 5 attendees consisting of representatives of NESDC, Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning, and experts on SEA. The study visit aimed to gain knowledge, perspectives and experience from successful case studies on SEA implementation in order to be applied to the Thai policy and strategic development in economic social and environmental aspects. The key messages obtained from study visit were presented as following detail:

- **Department of Foreign Affairs Office, Collins Street, Melbourne**

The attendees learned about Metropolitan planning strategies of Melbourne. The key remarks for the success were the identification of clear vision of the city, the agreements between state level and national level framework, together with clear SEA processes such as baseline assessment, timeframe determination, and compensation procedures. These were the key factors on the acceptance of the locals resulting in outstanding SEA implementation in Melbourne Metropolitan Plan.

- **Western Treatment Plant, Melbourne Water, Werribee District, Victoria, Melbourne**

The attendees visited and learned about Western Treatment Plant of Victoria, Melbourne. The key factors, in order to support the further increase of the population, long-term wastewater management strategic were adopted. Not only, the wastewater was recycled effectively, but also the water-pond became an important wetland RAMSAR site.

- **Melbourne Water Office, 990 La Trobe Street, Docklands, Melbourne**

The attendees learned about Strategic Water Resource Planning of Melbourne. The remarks were that the plan was categorized into long-term (50 years) middle-term (10 years) and short-term annual plan. The integrated water management in Melbourne were not enforced by legislation on the SEA integration but planning process included main procedural steps: alternative development and assessment, public participation and integration of economic, social and environmental aspects.

### **Remarks on the study visit in Australia**

With regards to the study visit in Australia, the success to mainstream SEA in Thailand was enforcement by the law to proponent. Furthermore, proponents should consider integrating the procedural steps and principles of SEA into planning process directly, following the example of the water management of Victoria, Melbourne.

In this regard, Thailand's context was different in various aspects, particularly, Thailand is developing country with several development plans and low awareness in environment aspect. Therefore, the mainstreaming SEA in Thailand required the enhancement of SEA knowledge and, understanding as well as, raising awareness on the important of environment and SEA systematically. Also, all supporting factors in SEA mainstreaming should efficiently be prepared for sustainable development.

#### **4) SEA handbook for public communication**

Ten thousand copies of SEA handbook have been prepared for public communication. The objective was to enhance SEA knowledge by focusing on SEA's benefits, participation in SEA procedural step and the importance of SEA public wellbeing (**Figure 1.3-1**). The major topics in SEA handbook include what is SEA?, principles and benefits of SEA, SEA process, participation and communications plan, plan and program requiring SEA and SEA overseeing agency.



Figure 1.3-1 SEA handbook for public communication

## 5) SEA outreach

One hundred copies of A3 posters (Figure 1.3-2) have been prepared which aimed to enhance knowledge and understanding on SEA to relevant organization and public. The main topics in SEA poster consisted of what is SEA?, plan and program requiring SEA, benefits of SEA and SEA process.



Figure 1.3-2 SEA outreach

## 6) Frequently Asked Questions: FAQs

The project collected Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) obtained from trainees, stakeholders and agencies in regard to SEA. Then, FAQs are replied with correct, practical and up-to-date information and based on lessons learnt from the project. FAQs and their replies are grouped for the following topics,

- An understanding on SEA:
  - What is SEA?
  - Why we should conduct the SEA?
- SEA procedural steps:
  - Are SEA procedural steps well defined, clear, correct and reliable?
  - Are there any constraints in SEA study?
  - Which type of plan and program that shall conduct SEA?
- What mechanisms for mainstreaming SEA:
  - Are there any laws or regulations for SEA enforcement?
  - How to raise SEA acceptance by the public?
  - How SEA can be applied and contributed to Thailand Sustainable Development Goals?

## 2 Lessons learnt form the project

To apply SEA for the sustainable development of Thailand in past decade still faced numerous challenges namely, 1) Lack of correct and common knowledge and understanding; 2) Insufficient resources, personnel and tools to support and apply SEA; 3) Limited responsiveness of relevant governmental agencies whose work are related to development and; 4) Insufficient knowledge and management mechanism. In order to overcome such challenges, the Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council had put strong efforts to mainstream SEA application apparently during 2018-2019. **Evidently, lessons learnt are to build right knowledge and understanding on SEA; to review and improve SEA Guideline, and provision of opportunity for all stakeholders to express their views**

**on SEA.** As a result, those SEA challenges are progressively overcome. SEA is on board to be an important practical tool which visioning for sustainable development.

The project achieved its pre-determined objectives; in particular, for building right knowledge and understanding of SEA to all relevant stakeholders. It provided a number of technical training events extensively throughout the country. The outcome is greater than pre-determined number of trainees, and rising an amount of 900 trainees. The five-day intensive and participative training courses delivered the right knowledge and understanding of different agencies; central and regional line agencies, private entities, and also individuals, academic, independent organizations. Evidently, the scores of trainee self-assessment comparing between before and after were arose doubly. The training courses were gradually appreciated by trainees who expressed their emotion and expectation at the end of each day assessment. In consequence, the number of trainees had risen in following training events by trainees of former training via Word-of-Mouth appreciation.

The Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council achieves in building a recognition of SEA; especially for line agencies whose being responsible for plan and program formulation and implementation so as to integrate SEA with their development plan and program. The project brings about clear knowledge and application of SEA, then replies line agencies for doubtful pending issues of how-to SEA referred since the 10<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> National Economic and Social Development Plan. **The project opens a platform of opportunity for stakeholders; either of government, private sector and interested individuals, to dialogue, and exchange diverse views on SEA.** As a result, SEA is on spotlight and gained interests throughout the period of the project in 2019. Taking into account of the Project activities, government line agencies, whose being responsible for plan and program formulation and implementation, had deliberated to understand and scrutinize on SEA correctly, and then wider recognition of SEA importance is noted. SEA capacity building and support mechanism for organizations is crucially aware and needed so as to achieve their mandate for sustainable development. In other words, SEA should **be practically adopted as a support tool in formulation of plan and program.** The project also helps decrease a misunderstanding on SEA in a satisfactory manner.

The project positively affects to bring relevant academics' and experts' comments into action **to review and brainstorm what and how to improve SEA Guideline for Thailand.**

Accordingly, SEA guideline is revised as key outcome of the project. It will be used and referred as standardized SEA database tool countrywide for sustainable development. The revised SEA guideline recommends detailed SEA process and procedural steps suitable for Thailand. It will help mainstreaming SEA in Thailand progressively, and overcoming constraints in SEA implementation and application by line agencies and the public. The SEA Guideline is revised by trial lessons learnt obtained while delivering SEA training and past experiences, problems and constraints of SEA studies in Thailand and elsewhere. It is to ensure that SEA Guideline's content is correct and suitable for Thailand's context and is in accordance with the international practice. The SEA guideline is recommended to be **referred as the SEA National Guideline for relevant agencies and should be tested and be trial-and-error use at later stage.**

The SEA training curriculum and process which was developed under the project is the **State-of-the-Art of SEA intensive training** which has not ever established before in Thailand. The concept and process of the training course are based on principles of system thinking, design thinking and participatory training. The trainees participated in SEA stepwise process via a case study for learning-by-doing and thinking. As a result, this training course **can be replicated** and adapted for similar training by different agencies and institutes to ensure a continuity of knowledge and understanding of SEA in Thailand. In addition, the training outcome is to provide a platform of opportunity **for all stakeholders to exchange how to study** SEA in Thailand and to **share common understanding and study direction of SEA**. Further, it opens a unique opportunity for researchers and experts on SEA in the country to exchange techniques, and steps in training course curriculum and correct knowledge on SEA. The surplus of the training is also to **build a network of SEA trainers and experts who could replicate SEA training for the country.**

Another successful product of the project is to disseminate and publish SEA outreach for public communication with right, accessible and ease information to support an understanding of public participation and benefits on SEA. The product is “SEA Booklet for Citizens” which helps SEA recognition at individual level.

**In effect, revision of the SEA National guideline influences on what and how to improve SEA mainstreaming and to promulgate Draft Regulation of the Official Prime Minister on Strategic Environmental Assessment B.E. .... .** In consideration of lessons learnt

and outcomes obtained from SEA training curriculum and dialogue workshop, **SEA mainstreaming and management mechanism** for Thailand has been improved, leading to the roadmap and scope of SEA implementation should be started. However, project's outcomes crucially contribute to a better improvement of SEA mainstreaming and mechanism under a consideration of Sub-committee on SEA and the Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council. It is likely to get an approval by the Council of Ministers. It is evident that the project outcomes demonstrate that SEA mainstreaming is possible and practical to overcome key problems and constraints. Even though revised SEA guideline is yet required for trial application by line agencies later on. Hence, rationale, principle, content and mechanism for SEA management is suitable for a consideration of and likely get approval by Committee on Sustainable Development, Sub-committee on SEA and the Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council soon. Still, in recognition of SEA challenges. But, key constraints are mostly resolved and currently responded. Key success of the project is as follows:

- right knowledge and understanding on SEA via participatory learning and training,
- awareness on the importance of SEA,
- SEA Guideline which is appropriate, clear, and practical reference,
- increase of human resources and experts who are competent on SEA, and
- emphasis on shared common goal for mainstreaming sustainable development by state agencies.

### 3 Conclusion

#### 3.1 Policy Brief on SEA Mainstreaming

With an aim to buy in and mainstream SEA as a support tool for policy, plan and program formulation of the country to achieve sustainable development in accordance with the National Strategic Plan, Country Reform Plan and the National Economic and Social Development Plan, the Prime Minister did substantially order the Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council to take leading role on mainstreaming SEA for development plan. Continuing SEA mainstreaming after the project should be based on the success and outcomes gained during 2018-2019 activities by upscaling and piloting SEA in greater extent for sustainable development. The core of SEA success for SEA mainstreaming

next to the Project is “*SEA shall be applied correctly and be integrated with development plan and program formulation by relevant agencies; which are well prepared with support mechanisms and linked accordingly*”.

**Mainstreaming SEA is joint responsibility of relevant governmental agencies.**

Providing that SEA is not applied as tool and process for in development plan and program formulation, Thailand might miss the opportunistic choice to achieve sustainable development goal. SEA mainstreaming helps sharing our long-term vision and desirable future to poise the economic, social and environmental dimension. The desirable future of Thailand should be “Security, Prosperity and Sustainability” and guided by Royal Philosophy of “Sufficiency Economy”. **Thus, relevant state agencies shall oblige to mainstream SEA as key support tool to help achieve their mandate for sustainable development.** In other words, the relevant state agencies shall deliberately and continuously integrate the SEA tool while formulating development plan and program by taking stock of lessons learnt, success including obstacles and challenges of the Project.

The policy brief on SEA mainstreaming alines and the National Reform Plan on SEA system which aiming for: 1) to ensure that the national, sectoral and spatial development strategies are to better support for sustainable development and; 2) to use SEA system tool to increase capacity and integration of all relevant sectors to determine shared development strategy. SEA mainstreaming is necessary to support for sustainable development goal and it has been continuously contented in the national plan including the 10<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> National Economic and Social Development Plan and Environmental Management Plan. This is to highlight the importance of SEA use for Thailand as a policy tool to support sustainable development.

As a result, policy brief in SEA mainstreaming recommends the four following actions by a collaboration and joint mission of all relevant state agencies:

- 1) **preparedness of SEA application:** State agencies; that are responsible in a formulation of plan and program required for SEA, should deliberately prepare their readiness to perform SEA. Necessary support including personnel, knowledge and budget capacity shall be included in the agency strategic plan. In addition, institutions including educational and research institute should take part in seeking for knowledge

on SEA. In this regard, the Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council will help coordinate such supports; namely SEA knowledge, central database, working mechanism and joint mandate, in accordance with the national policy on sustainable development.

**2) key mechanisms supporting SEA**

consist of:

**(1) enforcement SEA by laws and regulations:** To oblige relevant state agencies to buy in SEA should be initiated by law enforcement. In particular, The Prime Minister's Directive on SEA is initially drafted and subject to Cabinet's approval for an enforcement of relevant state agencies soon.

**(2) establishment of mechanisms for SEA implementation and monitoring:** The relevant agencies should establish or mandate on SEA implementation and monitoring at their organization level so as to align and coordinate with those at national level. the Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council, Committee on Sustainable Development and Subcommittee on SEA (current) or Committee on Development of SEA (future) will jointly support, supervise and monitor other relevant agencies to establish coordinated mechanisms under the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> National Economic and Social Development Plan.

**3) coordination on SEA implementation among relevant agencies:** Applying common SEA Guideline and its indicators will effectively coordinate SEA implementation and outcomes of all relevant agencies. Such agencies' coordination promotes to share SEA-related data, information, knowledge and human resources. In effect, it helps standardize SEA performance and quality assurance, and also monitoring and evaluation of development plan and program of relevant agencies whether to achieve sustainable development via alike indicators and criteria. Eventually, SEA performance improvement among relevant agencies could be linked among relevant agencies along with the 20-year National Strategic Plan.

4) **continuous development of SEA knowledge:** The Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council might regularly review SEA Guideline at least once for each period of National Economic and Society Development Plan. Hence, responsible agencies should apply the SEA knowledge oneself to build their staff capacity and training provision. In consequence, an increase of agencies' capacity on SEA leads to the right direction of SEA performance, recognition and participation of SEA. In other words, it is to continuously build an understanding of SEA amongst all levels of public and individuals through lessons learnt from SEA performance by agencies.

### 3.2 Recommendation

Even though the project achieves its objectives and outcomes expected by the Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council, it is a merely initial successful step towards a vision for sustainable development. The project outcomes had made a progress indicating that **SEA mainstreaming in Thailand needs to upscale and make continuous efforts** by all relevant agencies and stakeholders. It is recommended that SEA knowledge, lessons and tools which are the outputs of the project, should be brought into and applied in SEA performance. Then, it should be monitored and evaluated whether it should be improved. Due to SEA requirement of resources, personnel and budget, its mainstreaming should be in such a way that relevant agencies **could integrate SEA process with a formulation process for development plan and program**. SEA process should support and promote responsible agencies to achieve their key current roles and responsibilities under relevant laws or regulations.

In support of the Policy Brief for SEA mainstreaming (topic 7.2), it is recommended what will be next for SEA implementation phases as following:

#### **Phase I: Present (current year 2563 B.E)**

Target: to support government agencies to comply with Draft Regulation of the Official Prime Minister on Strategic Environmental Assessment B.E. .... and to correctly use SEA Guideline to perform the study, then to evaluate at what degree its outcomes succeed. Also, lessons learnt on the SEA National Guideline for next phase mainstreaming.

- 1) **to promulgate Draft Regulation of the Official Prime Minister on Strategic Environmental Assessment B.E. ....** as soon as possible: In effect, the Directive will establish Committee on Development of Strategic Environmental Assessment and will hence build mechanisms in developing the SEA system and monitor SEA performance by relevant agencies.
- 2) **to promote a use of the SEA National Guideline** (improved version 2020): In new SEA study or a formulation of current/ past development plan and program. Its use will be reported to the Committee on Development of SEA. Also, it might be inputted whether to develop specific sectoral and spatial SEA guideline, if necessary.
- 3) **to monitor and evaluate outcomes of past SEA implementation** by summarizing, problem analysis, constraints including success. The results of monitoring and evaluation will help improve plan and program formulation for specific sector/areas or specific the SEA National Guideline.

#### **Phase II: Intermediate period (2564-2565 B.E.)**

Target: evaluate SEA use by relevant state agencies which have an obligation to comply with Prime Minister Office's Directive on SEA via pilot studies. Also, to continue building capacity and to establish SEA national database for next period of SEA mainstreaming.

- 4) **to support SEA pilot studies which are integrated with sectoral or spatial plan and program formulation:** SEA pilot studies might be performed either of national, regional and provincial level with an aim to improve plan and program formulation for sustainable development. During initial period, a focus of SEA pilot should be performed by relevant state agencies which are obliged to comply with Draft Regulation of the Official Prime Minister on Strategic Environmental Assessment B.E. ....
- 5) **to support capacity building for SEA performance:** for all stakeholders and public to participate in SEA process. Capacity building includes support activities for strengthening personnel, knowledge and tools. Priority support given to those

involved at policy and decision-making level and those in educational and public communication. (by upscaling SEA training course, the Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council, 2019).

- 6) **to establish SEA national database:** This is to avail and access to SEA national database which could share common and right knowledge and understanding to all relevant stakeholders. Also, it could build a network of SEA academics and experts (the Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council will begin in 2020).

### **Phase III: Long-term period (2566-2570 B.E.)**

Target: incorporate SEA tool into 13<sup>th</sup> National Economic and Social Development Plan and plan and program at all levels, if suitable and meeting need. Attempt to link SEA with all levels of plan and program to sustainable development goals.

- 7) **associating SEA with SDGs:** To associate SEA Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is long-term target by linking SEA indicators with SDGs indicators. The use of SEA is to buy SEA in platform of opportunity and public interest together with SDGs.
- 8) **SEA as a suitable and opportunistic choice tool for plan and program formulation at all levels:** SEA shall be used for development plan and program formulation at all levels as far as possible. It should be in consideration of those plan and program at provincial cluster, provincial and local administrative level.
- 9) **to build collaborative mechanisms among agencies/ institutions:** Such collaborative mechanisms could help an integration of SEA implementation between agencies/ institutions so as to improve SEA transparency and integrity including knowledge sharing, benefits and risk of SEA.

The project implementation (2019) brings about a conclusion with successful outcomes and achieving objectives and goals. It provides lessons, products and outcomes; which can be useful for the next SEA mainstreaming phrase. The next one could be based on SEA right knowledge, and mechanisms and SEA guideline developed by the Project. SEA process and tool will be further incorporated and used for the 12<sup>th</sup>

and 13<sup>th</sup> National Economic and Social Development Plan. SEA mainstreaming policy consists of 3 phases; current, intermediate and long-term period. It will emphasize on preparedness of relevant agencies, promulgation of laws and regulation, and support mechanisms for implementation, etc.