

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Training course for Thailand

Transition from Impact Assessment to Strategic-Thinking SEA

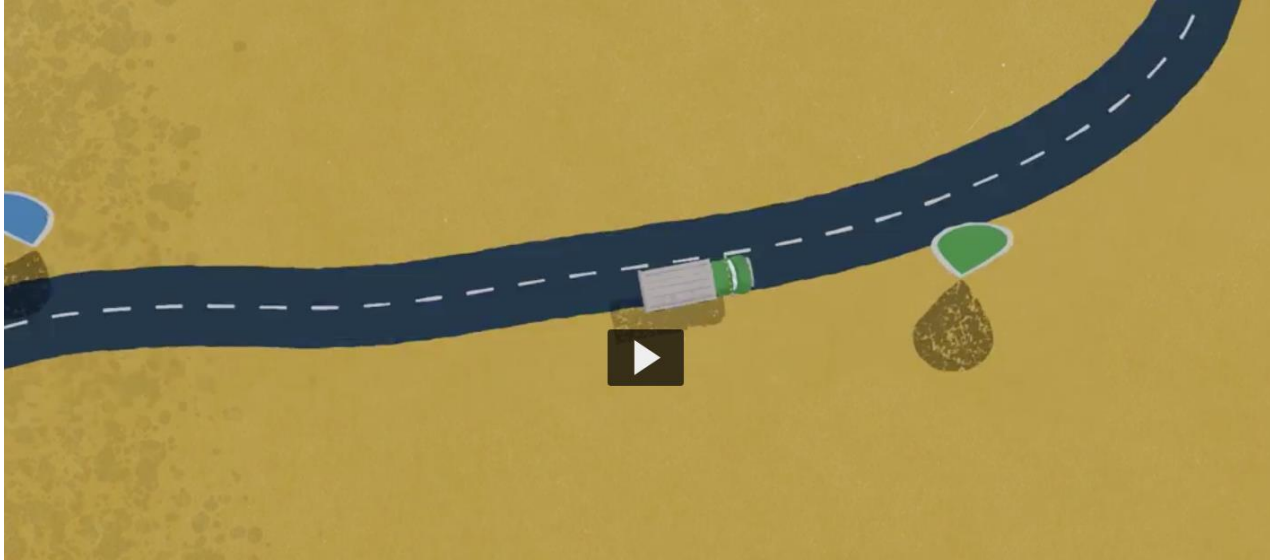
Maria Rosário Partidário

Professor

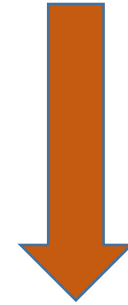
Universidade de Lisboa / Aalborg University

mariapartidario@tecnico.ulisboa.pt

Change of paradigm – transition from products to services/objectives



A highway that connects point A to point B

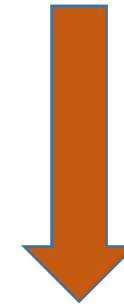


Transport / market strengthening

Change of paradigm – transition from products to services/objectives



School / social infrastructure



Education; capacity-
building;
Inclusion of vulnerable
groups

Change of paradigm – transition from products to services/objectives



Areas protected for its natural heritage value



Socio-ecological systems – community livelihoods, ecosystem services

From Impact assessment to strategic thinking in SEA

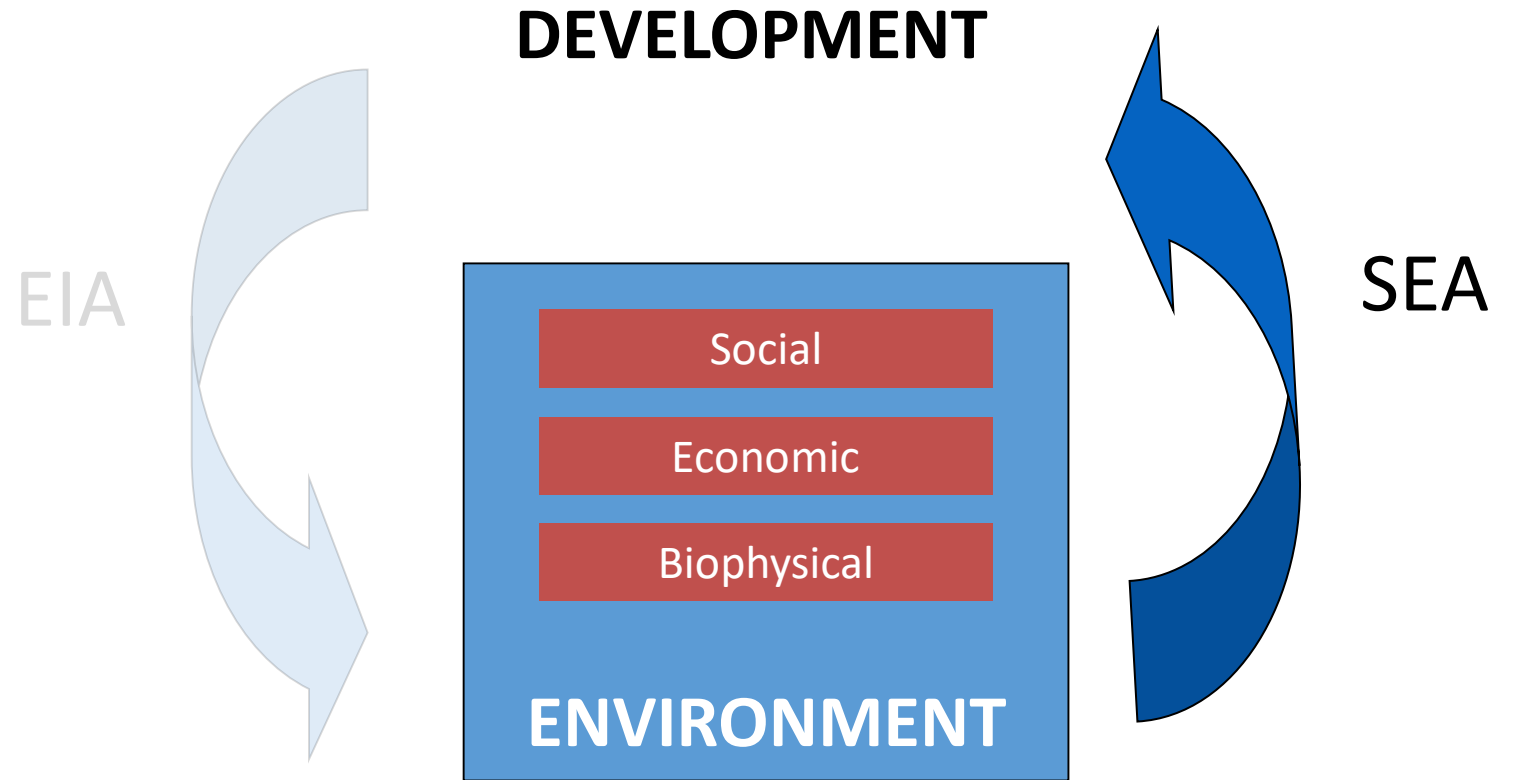
Philosophy

Impact Assessment	Strategic thinking
seeks assessment of effects/impacts of development proposal	seeks creating contexts for sustainable development
Uses controlling, negative, reactive attitude, looks into current values, backward looking	Uses positive, constructive, facilitator, proactive attitude, looks into what is desired, forward-looking

Philosophy



Facilitate sustainable development



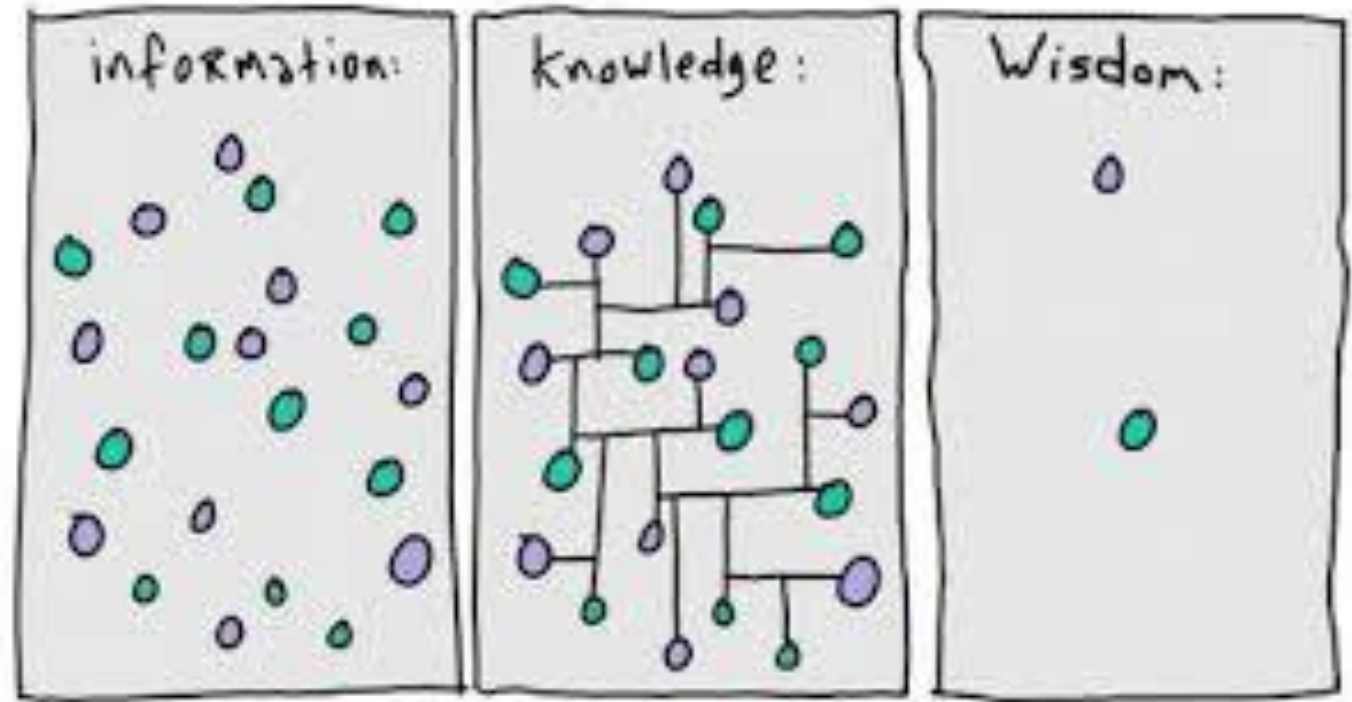
From Impact assessment to strategic thinking in SEA

Method

Impact Assessment	Strategic thinking
linear analysis based on Newtonian scientific principles (machine is the result of the work of its parts)	systems analysis based on interdisciplinary complexity science (adaptive systems)
to provide information, based on descriptive baseline (situational analysis)	to provide hints and directions to encourage change based on critical, non-descriptive, issues and trends

System thinking

Russel Ackhoff wisdom theory, 1989



"The whole is greater
than the sum of its parts"

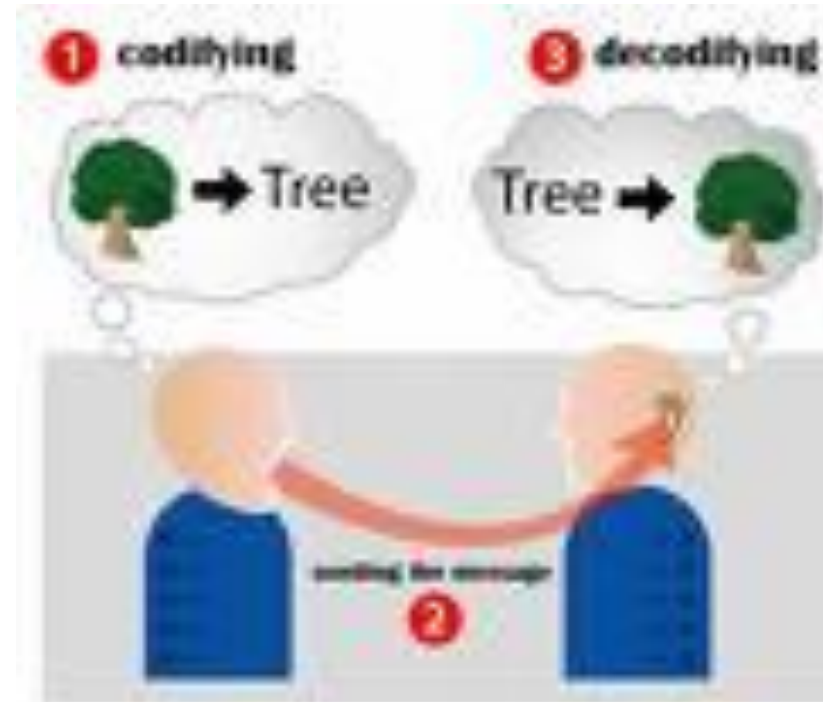
A system is not a sum of the behavior of its parts, it's the product of their interactions.

From Impact assessment to strategic thinking in SEA

Output

Impact Assessment	Strategic thinking
Reports, driven by need to provide information, based on demonstration, predictions, technical analysis	Learning processes, driven by the need to encourage change, based on dialogues, knowledge creation, mind shift

Learning processes



From Impact assessment to strategic thinking in SEA

Stages

Impact Assessment	Strategic thinking
Screening Scoping Baseline data Impact Assessment Mitigation Reporting Monitoring and Follow-up	Context and strategic focus Understand the PPP and its context Identify the problem Establish the assessment framework Pathways for sustainability Identify strategic options Assess risks and opportunities Establish follow-up guidelines and recommendations Continuous dialogues and follow-up Process links Stakeholders engagement Monitoring Post-evaluation

	Impact based practice	Strategic thinking
Departing point	Draft Proposal	Understand objectives of strategic intention
Objective	Reduce magnitude of impact	Help create development context for sustainability
How to start	Screening Scoping Baseline SD approach in silos	Understand context and get focused <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Intention strategic issues - Problem framework (fragilities and potentials, driving forces) - Governance framework - Strategic reference framework - Assessment framework: CDF, assessment criteria, indicators (SD integrated)
Assessment	Alternatives (??) Assessment Mitigation Monitoring programme	Trend analysis Options Assessment of risks and opportunities Recommendations Follow-up programme
Reporting	Scoping report Environmental report	Focus report Options assessment Full report

Essence of strategic-thinking SEA

Long-term objectives / vision

Highly focused

Addresses complexity

Combine strategic thinking and systems thinking

Act as facilitator

Enable learning

Use frameworks to address patterns and enable flexibility

Use SEA to simplify and structure thinking

Transition from traditional SEA to strategic thinking

1. Invest on a strong strategic focus
 - a. Understand what is strategically intended - the long-term objectives of the object of assessment
 - b. Understand the strategic challenges for decision-making – strategic issues (of the object of assessment)
 - c. Establish a problem framework – what are the key conflicts and potentials (for a sustainable development, integrating environmental, social and economic issues)
2. Establish the strategic focus – critical themes that will structure and guide the assessment (Critical Decision Factors)
3. Identify strategic options that enable reaching the objectives
4. Assess the opportunities and risks of strategic options, considering driving forces and trend analysis (structured around CDF)
5. Propose guidelines for follow-up (governance, management and monitoring) to address opportunities and risks

Transition from traditional SEA to strategic thinking

Define :

- SEA objectives
- Stakeholder analysis
- Policy analysis in terms of objectives and targets (use them as referential for assessment)
- Driving forces

Use terms correctly – establish a glossary in guidelines

Establish the **continuous phase of SEA**

1. Process links – explore the connection between SEA and the decision processes to find out what can be strategic moments to interact with decision-makers
2. Dialogues with stakeholders – define forms, moments and methods to communicate and enhance learning processes
3. Follow-up – identify monitoring and evaluation needs, institutional contexts and methods – set databases to provide continuously updated baselines and controlling/validation mechanisms

Motivation for strategic thinking SEA

What makes SEA complicated

- Being driven by the rational-technocratic linear thinking
- Fixed / rigid method with controlling features
- Standardization (as opposed to using a pattern)
- Incorrect use of concepts

How to simplify SEA

- Use positive, constructive, systems thinking
- Understand and follow flexible framework (adopt a pattern)
- Be driven by on-going activities that use simple methods

What makes SEA rich and outstanding

- Different knowledges, experiences and practices that can meet under common pattern