

Policy Dialogue workshop on Mainstreaming SEA in Thailand
Bangkok, 21st June 2019

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) International state of the art

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What is Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)?

International systems on SEA



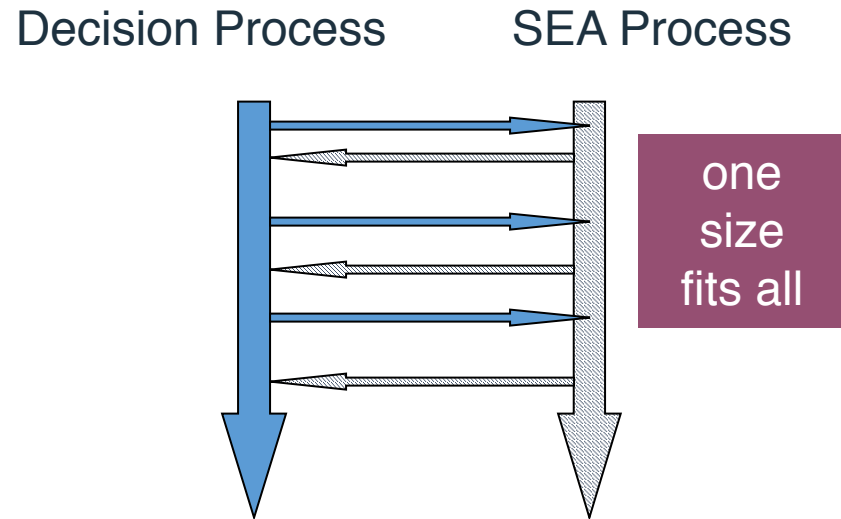
SEA - From "big EIA" to strategic thinking

What works better depends on purpose and context

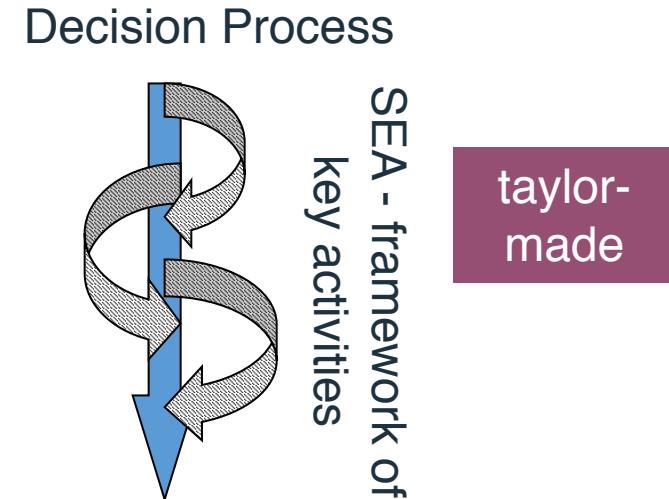


Models of SEA

Parallel model



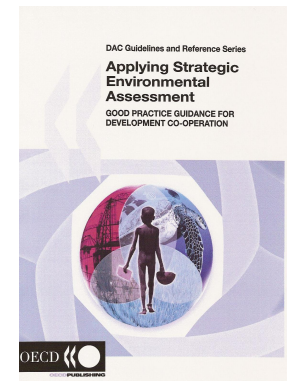
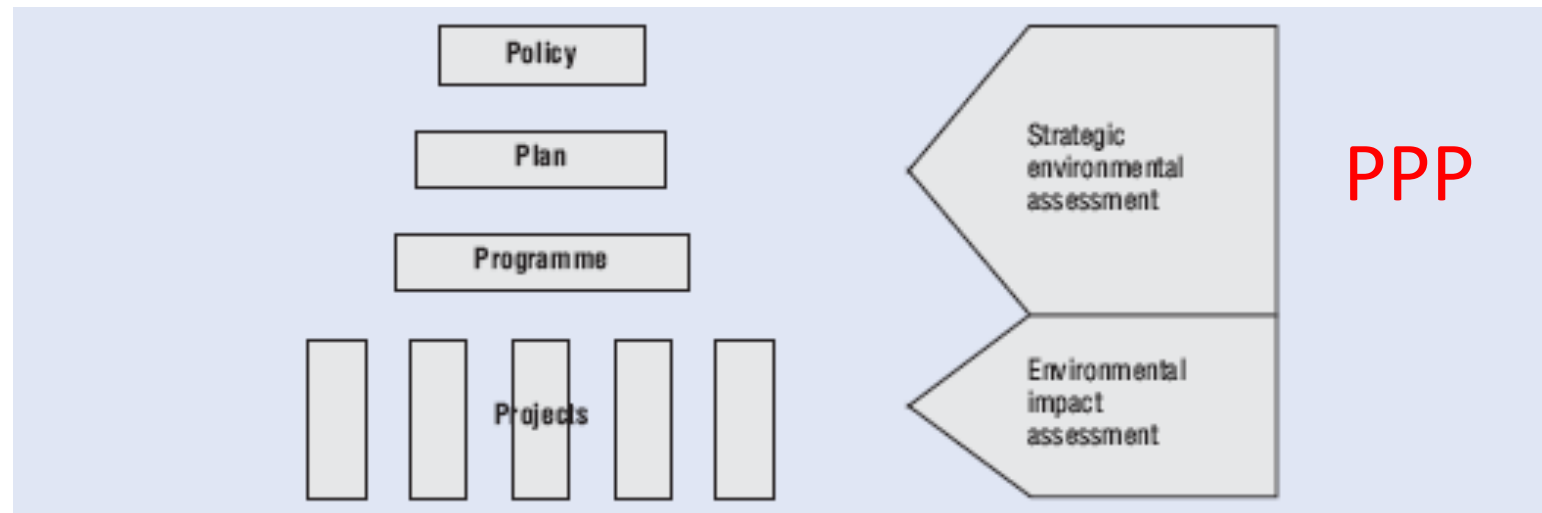
Decision-centred model



(Partidário, 2007)

Traditional SEA

Roots on Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)



OECD-DAC, 2006

SEA steps

Screening



Scoping



Considering alternatives and assessing effects



Environmental reporting, providing information and consultation



Decision-making



Monitoring and evaluation

Standard process for impact based SEA

European Commission

European Commission, 2013

(Beacon Manual, 2005)

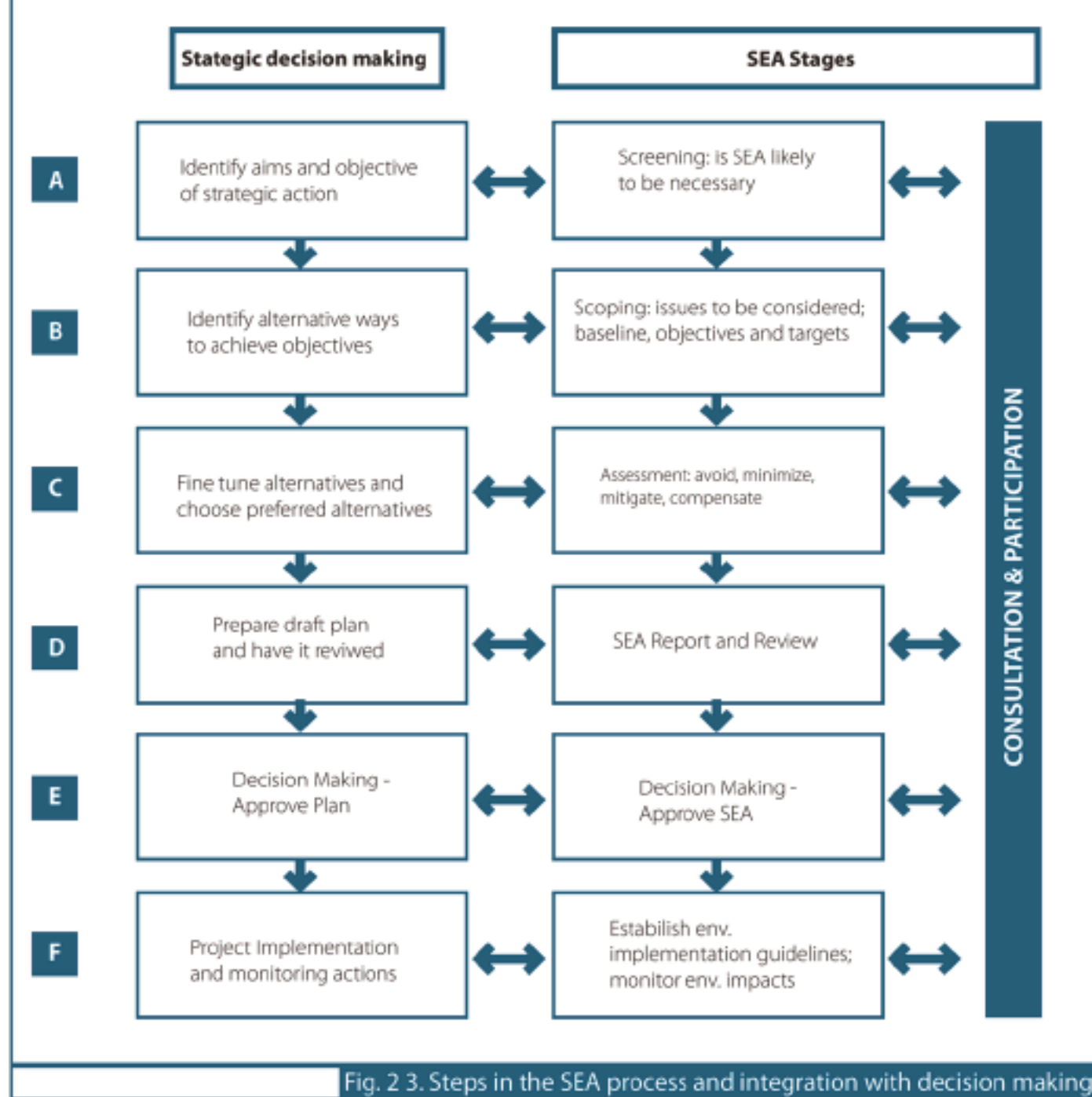
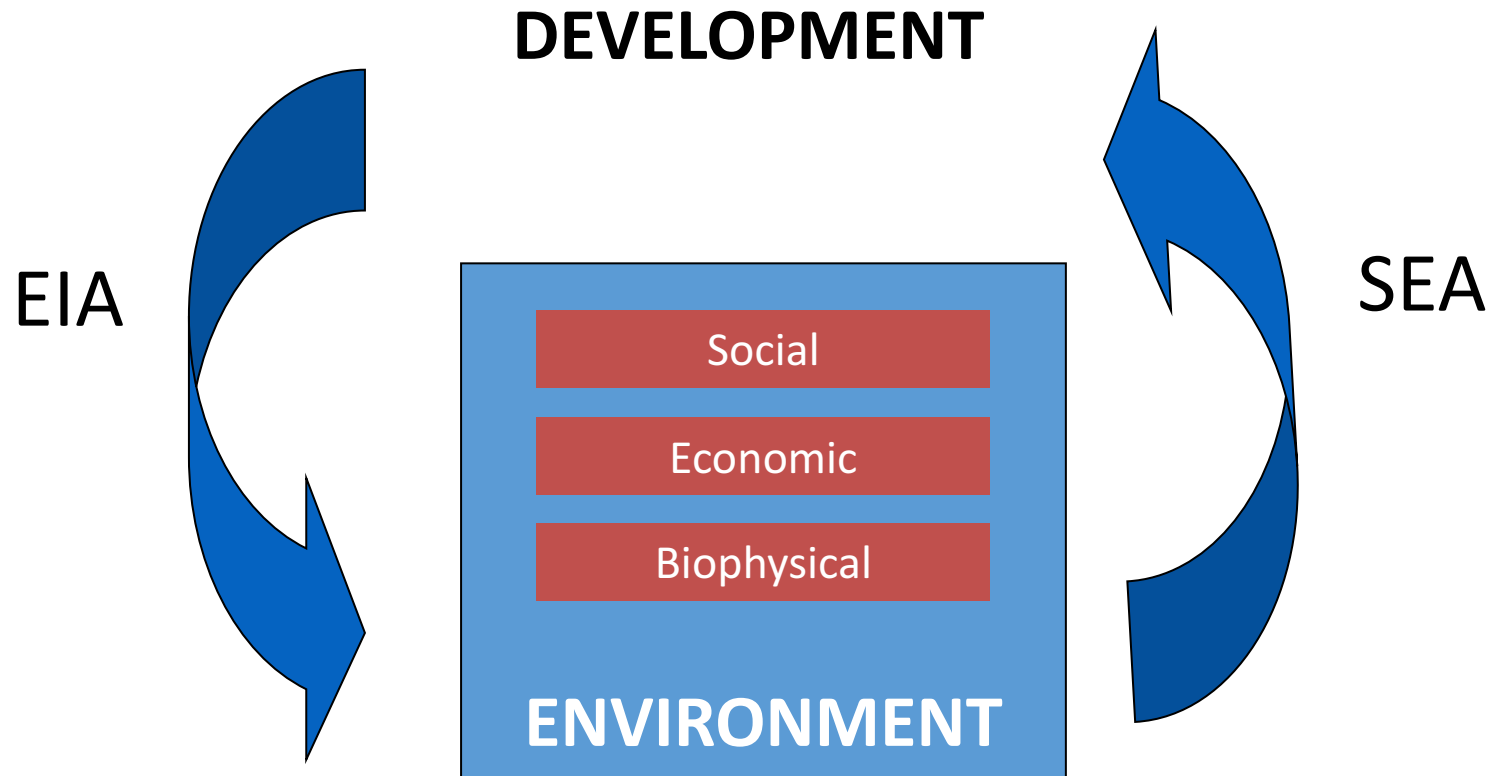


Fig. 2 3. Steps in the SEA process and integration with decision making

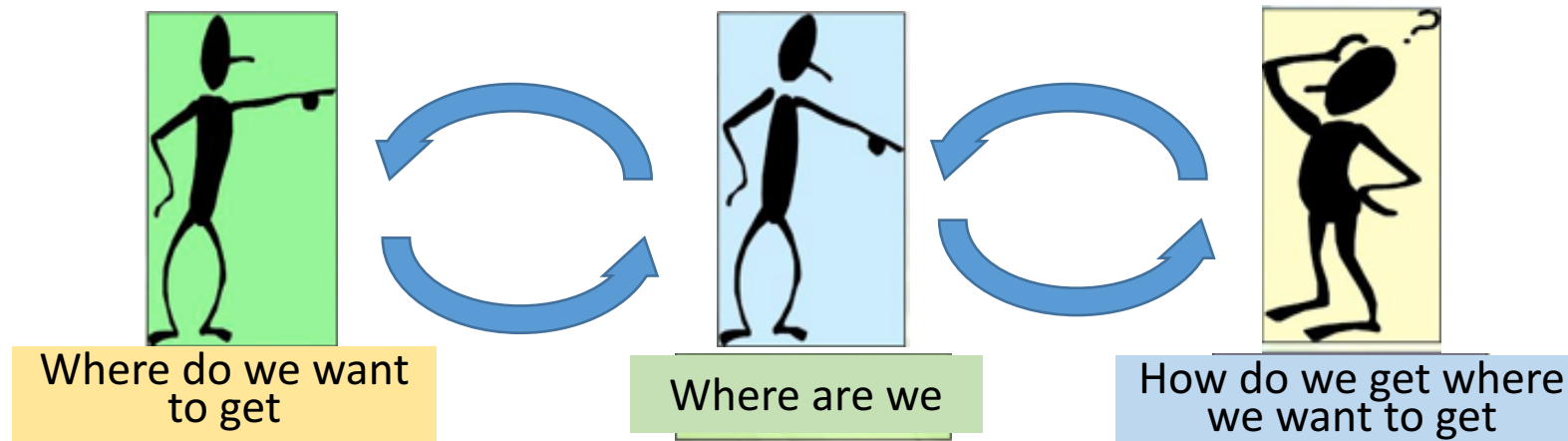
SEA can help to create contexts for future development (Partidário, 2007, 2012)



Source: CSIR, 1996, 2007

Thinking strategically SEA is

A strategic decision support instrument about how to get where we want to get with the best results for the environment and for sustainability



Why is SEA important?

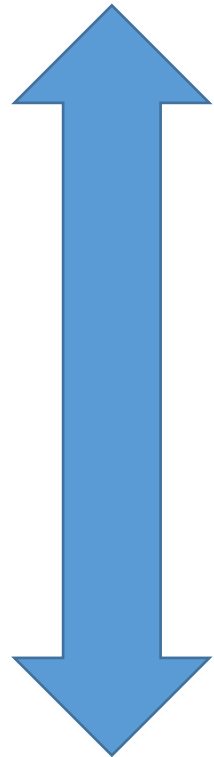
- Offers a cross-cutting perspective
- Promotes a strategic and integrated approach
- Discusses alternatives while options are still open
- Supports strategic decision-making
- Incorporates environmental issues and principles of sustainability in policy-making and planning processes.

Where are we with SEA?



A question of perspective

International experience with SEA



✓ success as a legal procedure

✗ frustration as a decision support instrument

Review of international experience with SEA



- ✓ Success as a procedure – in general there is compliance with legal requirements
- ❖ Limited capacity as a decision support instrument :
 - Performs as a non strategic tool
 - Lacks ownership by decision-makers
 - Weak integration in decision processes
 - Unknown environmental and social benefits

Milieu (Law and Policy consulting) 2016 Study concerning the preparation of the report on the application and effectiveness of the SEA Directive (Directive 2001/42/EC)
Review of effectiveness in Scotland, Ireland, several authors

Ireland

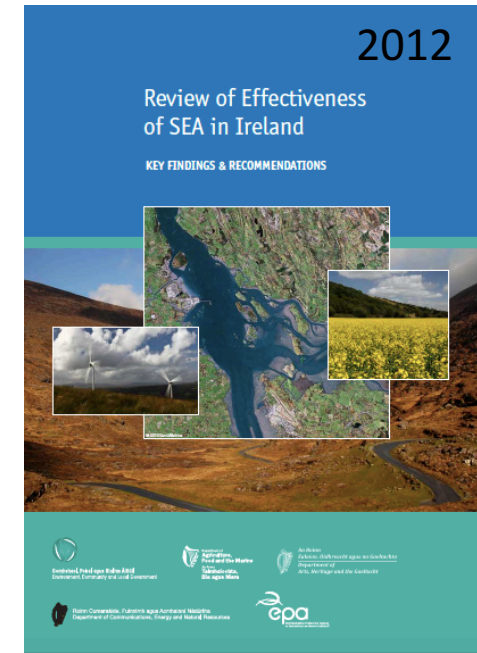
SEA transposed into Irish law in 2004

Irish SEA Review 2012

All procedural steps are successful (screening, scoping, baselines, environmental reports, mitigation, etc.)

Critical: poor integration between SEA and plan-making, alternatives, understanding by senior decision-makers, reporting, monitoring, **poor buy-in to the SEA process from senior managers and decision-makers.**

Not clear if SEA generates environmental, social and economic benefits or the reduction of adverse effects



Scotland

Enhancement of positive environmental impacts in SEA reports since the 2005 SEA Act in Scotland

Sample 15 reports 2006 - 2009	Four point scale Thorough, Fair, Minimal and Absent	Results 60% (9 in 15) ‘Minimal’ or ‘Absent’.
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1. SEA focus mainly on mitigation, frequently ignore opportunity offered by enhancement
2. Little detail on relevance of strategic action to environmental enhancement
3. Ineffective reasonable alternatives to the strategic actions

Vietnam

SEA introduced in 2005 Environmental Protection Law

Lack of SEA knowledge and experience at ministerial level, lack of a systematic coordinated inter-agency planning (Victor and Agamuthu 2014)

Institutional constraints challenge the effective use of SEA: inadequate training, technical guidelines, baseline data and financial resources. Limited use of stakeholder and public participation

Incentives to not share information between ministries and severe restrictions on access to information and public participation.

Large gap between how the SEA system is supposed to work, as stipulated in SEA legislation and guidelines, and actual practice.

Canada

SEA under the Cabinet directive is approached largely as an impact assessment tool ... entrenched in project-based assessment principles

Noble et al, 2019

Effectiveness of strategic environmental assessment in Canada under directive-based and informal practice

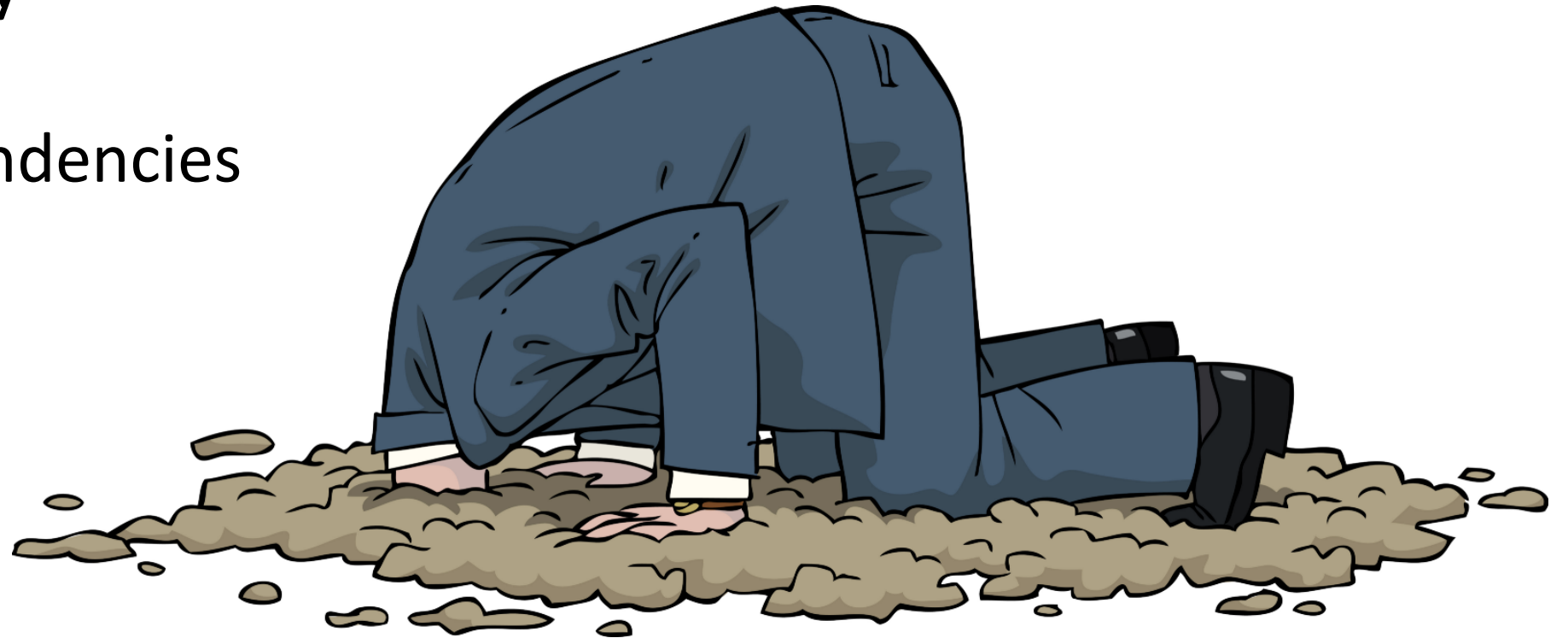
IAPA Special issue on Effectiveness of SEA



SEA locked-in by

IA myths of
rationalistic
philosophy

Uncertainties
Complexity
Systemic
Interdependencies



Grid25 Implementation Programme 2011-2016 SEA



Purpose of SEA: **likely environmental consequences** of decisions arising from the Grid25 IP
Due to the **very high-level and strategic nature of this SEA** most of the recommendations have been **about how to change decision-making processes within the IP itself.**

Baseline Environment

Biodiversity and Flora and Fauna
Landscape
Cultural Heritage
Climatic Factors
Population and Human Health
Water
Material Assets
Soil

Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs)

Ensure compliance (Habitats Directive,
Avoid significant impacts on habitats..landscape..archaeology...
Prevent effects on water surface...underground pollution
Help achieve energy targets
Minimize proximity to human settlements...sustainable use of land, soil and minerals

Scenario 1: Business as Usual

Scenario 2: Grid 25 (continuation of existing planning and economic development policy)

Scenario 3: Grid 25 (alteration of existing planning and economic policy)

Significant effects from overhead and underground power lines, and substations

Loss of biodiversity
Effects on landscape
Effects on entries of records of monuments...
Effects on human health
Effects on water bodies...
Etc.

All in relation of meeting or not overarching Government target to meet 40% of electricity consumption from renewable energy and expanding transmission network or not (existing policy) – **scenario 2 was favoured!**

SEA of the Electricity Transport Network Development and Investment Plan (PDIRT) 2009 – 2014, Portugal



Critical Factors for Decision-making (CFD)

1. Fauna
2. Land-Use Planning
3. Energy

Influence in decision-making

Identify barriers to transmission lines network, enhance renewable sources

Discuss strategic options

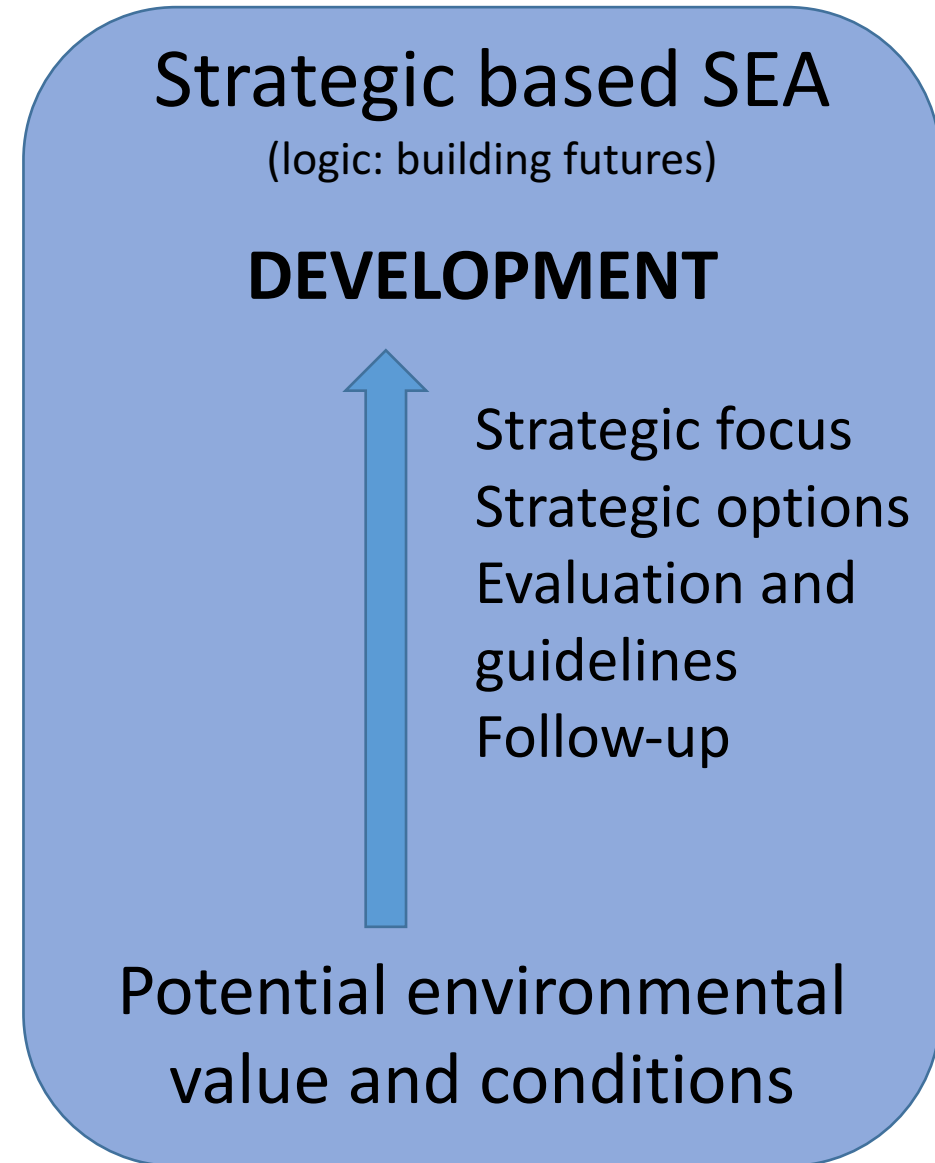
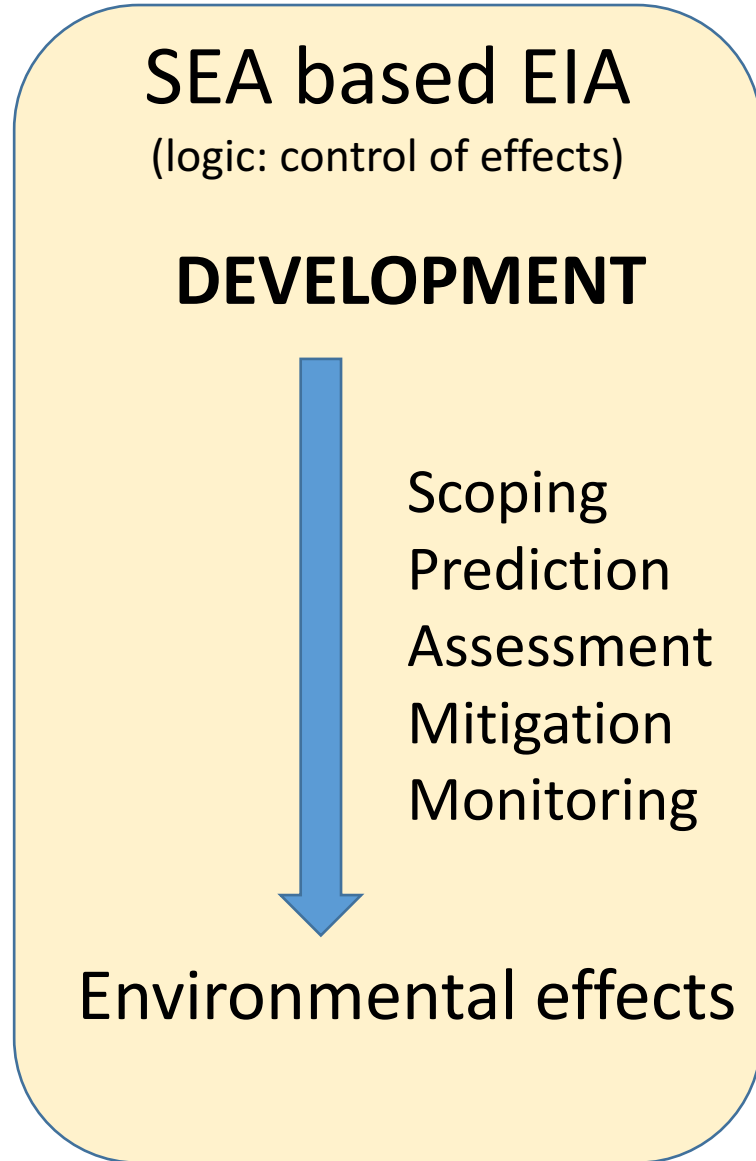
Help design and choice an additional option that conciliates all CFD

Where is the debate?

Increasingly, SEA is promoted as an instrument to also shape the formulation and implementation of PPPs, to provide for a better understanding of the complex institutional arenas that influence decision processes, to ensure actions that lead to informed development choices, and to facilitate transitions toward sustainable outcomes (Jilberto 2011; Partidário 2015).”

Bram Noble, Robert Gibson, Lisa White, Jill Blakley, Peter Croal, Kelechi Nwanekezie & Meinhard Doelle (2019): Effectiveness of strategic environmental assessment in Canada under directive-based and informal practice, *Impact Assessment and Project Appraisal*, DOI: 10.1080/14615517.2019.1565708

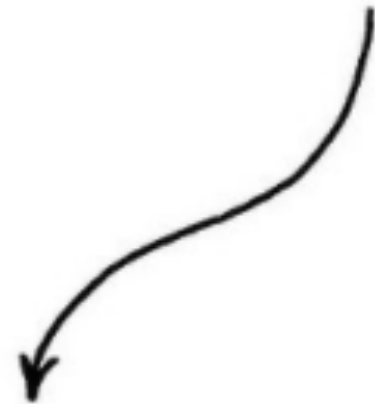
Proposal for SEA using Strategic Thinking



Impact based practice vs strategic thinking

- Impact based – seek impact assessment – backwards looking (assesses effects on existing values, corrects situations)
- Strategic thinking – seek creating contexts for sustainability – forward looking (opens opportunities, explores new values)

REACTIVE



CREATIVE

Source: ten meters of thinking
<http://www.tenmetersofthinking.com/>