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Practical aspects of SEA implementation

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What makes good SEA?

Main goal: Integration of relevant environmental aspects in the plan or programme

- What is needed to achieve this goal?
 - Reliable SEA report with the likely effects analyzed and mitigation measures proposed
 - Proper participatory process
 - Integration of SEA inputs in the plan or programme already during SEA
 - Adjustments of the plan or programme after it is (almost) finalized may be difficult or impossible
 - Therefore, SEA needs to seek for ‘windows of opportunity’ to influence planning

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Windows of opportunity

- To provide SEA inputs when it can be integrated in the plan/programme
- Requires
 - Sounds analysis of the planning process at the beginning of SEA and planning SEA workplan accordingly (however considering the formal stages in SEA procedure)
 - Coordination and communication between SEA team and planning authority/planning team
 - SEA makes suggestions to be considered by the planning team (usually iterative process)
 - Adjustments of the plan/programme may require informal approval by management of the planning authority
 - Flexibility in SEA as the planning process is often non-linear

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Windows of opportunity

Good understanding to context and content of Policy/Planning document

- Key questions:
 - What is proposed?
 - What will be different compared to the existing business-as-usual scenario?
 - What baseline aspects will be analyzed (including environmental aspects)?
 - Has the implementation of the previous plan(s) been evaluated?
 - What are the main objectives and priorities?
 - How the plan is going to be implemented?

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Who can carry out SEA?

The SEA report has to be prepared natural persons or groups of persons who, cumulatively, meet the following criteria:

- a) higher studies in environmental sciences, climate sciences, natural sciences, engineering, urbanism and land planning, law, economics and/or other related fields and qualification studies in the field of environmental assessment;
- b) 3 years of professional experience, academic research and consultancy, with practical knowledge and experience in carrying out environmental assessment;
- c) lack of criminal record for false declarations.

In practice, external experts/consultants contracted by the planning authority

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Main tasks of SEA experts

- Preparation of relevant documents including all necessary analyses
- Coordination of stakeholder participation in the SEA process, including consideration of comments and suggestions received as part of the scoping and/or SEA reports
- Communication and coordination with the planning team to achieve proper integration of SEA proposals and recommendations into the plan/programme
- Liaise and coordinate with the Environment Agency and other relevant authorities

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Composition of SEA team

- The requirements for experts in the SEA team should reflect the environmental aspects addressed in the SEA (in principle, the conclusions of scoping)
- Team leader/coordinator
- Coordinator of stakeholder consultations
- Experts on specific environmental issues
- Health expert
- Expert on social issues
- Planning expert (to properly understand the planning)

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Costs of SEA

- Costs largely depend on
 - How detailed the policy or planning document is and number of its alternatives
 - Data availability
 - Length of the planning process
- **Most SEAs require 70-80 person days** to complete (UK study)
- Czech survey: about 50% of SEAs required about 2 – 10 person days time allocation from the planning authority side (in addition to costs needed for contracting SEA consultants)

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Costs of SEA

- Main costs usually associated with initial applications of SEA when
 - appropriate approaches & tools have to be tested & developed
 - basic data sets need to be compiled
- Subsequent SEAs are less costly
 - build on previous experience
 - may require only standard analytical work & process management
- **Costs for SEA are marginal compared with costs of policy or planning document implementation!!!**

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Case example: SEA for the Czech Transport Sector Strategy to 2050

- SEA conducted in Nov 2011 – July 2013
- Team leader, team coordinator, nature and biodiversity, public health, air, transport planning,
- Over 250 mandays
- Very demanding for coordination and communication with all partners – Ministry of Transport, Ministry of Environment (3 Depts.), the strategy planning team, ex-ante team, NGO coalition following the entire process,
- Involved evaluation of several drafts of the Strategy

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Case example: SEA for spatial plan of Krasna Hora

- SEA was carried out in July and August 2007
- Approx. 25 mandays
- SEA team – 3 experts (waste, biodiversity, public health)
- Involved field survey on all 11 proposed localities
- One public hearing (obligatory)

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SEA in transboundary context

- SEA and decision-making procedures open to the public and authorities in neighboring potentially affected countries, taking their comments into account.
- There is no requirement that the preferences of the Potentially Affected Country dictate the final decision of the Country of Origin, but “due account” must be taken of the consultations between the parties and public participation undertaken under the Convention
- Bilateral consultation early on in the process recommended to agree on specific practical details (e.g. costs of translation, deadlines for response) and communication channels

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Transboundary consultations

- May require additional time and resources, which needs to be well considered in the planning of SEA
 - Additional costs: additional data and analyses, translation/interpreting, organizing consultations, travel costs
- For plan/programme with potential transboundary impacts it can be recommend to keep workplan and budget for SEA as well as **for the planning process** flexible until it is clear the transboundary consultations will be required
- It is important – besides formal communication – also keep informal communication between relevant governmental bodies

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Thank you for your attention!

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