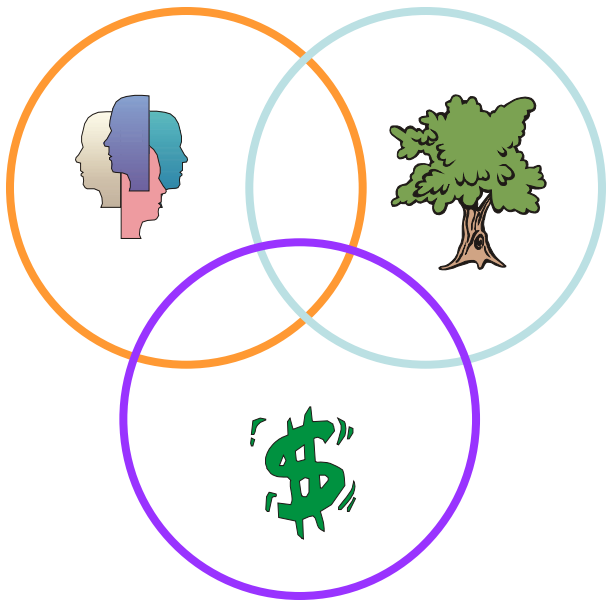


An Introduction to Strategic Environmental Assessment

Alex Weaver

Purpose and Intent of SEA

The purpose of SEA is to integrate environmental considerations (social, economic, biophysical) into strategic decision-making, to facilitate the move towards sustainability.



WHY IS SEA NEEDED?

- Environmental implications above project level
- Informs planners, decision makers and affected public on sustainability of strategic decisions
- Facilitates search for best alternative
- Overcome constraints of EIA (aids cost-effective EIA)
- Enhances credibility of decisions
- Right information at right time (early warning)
- Legislative requirements

Some Definitions

Policies, Plans and Programs

(Sadler and Verheem, 1996)

- **Policy:** a general course of action or proposed overall direction that a government is or will be pursuing and that guides ongoing decision-making.
- **Plan:** a purposeful, forward-looking strategy or design, often with co-ordinated priorities, options and measures that elaborate and implement the policy.
- **Programme:** a coherent organised agenda or schedule of commitments, proposals, instruments and/or activities that elaborates and implements the policy.

DEFINITIONS OF SEA

<i>Source</i>	<i>Definition or interpretation</i>
Thérivel <i>et al.</i> (1992:19)	Evaluating the environmental impacts of PPPs and their alternatives.
Sadler and Verheem (1996:27)	SEA is a systematic process for evaluating the environmental consequences of a proposed policy, plan or programme
Brown and Thérivel (2000:185)	SEA is a process directed at providing a holistic understanding of the environment and social implications of the policy proposal. The intention of SEA is moving PPP towards sustainable outcomes.
Partidário (2000:657)	SEA is to be conceptualised as a framework, which address environmental quality and environmental consequences.
DEAT (2000)	SEA is defined as a process of integrating the concept of sustainability into strategic decision-making

DEFINITIONS:

COMMON ELEMENTS

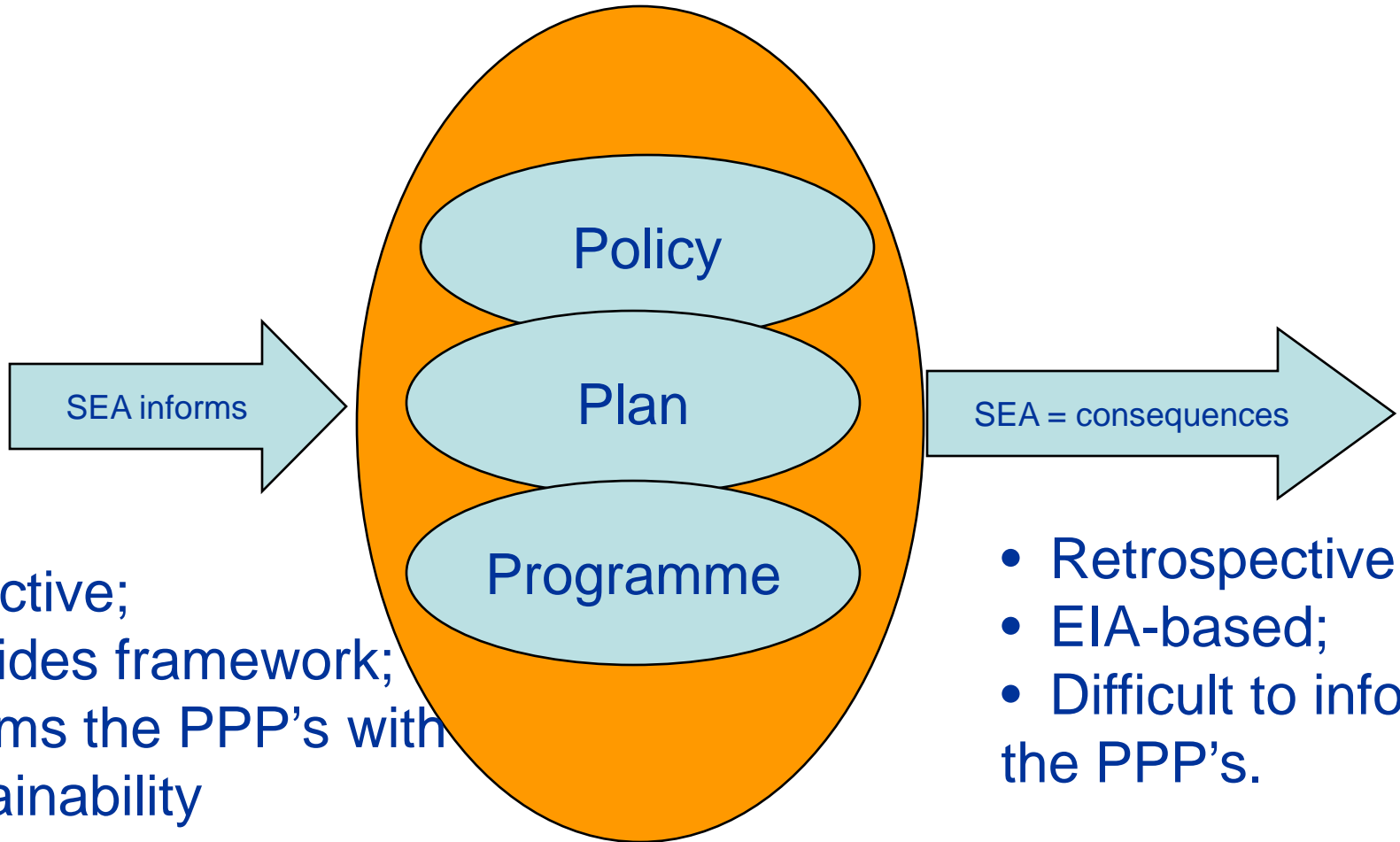
- SEA should be applied at the policy, plan and programme level
- SEA should provide information before strategic decisions are made; and
- SEA provides the opportunity to include environmental issues into strategic decision-making

DEFINITIONS:

DIVERGENCE

- SEA evaluates the environmental consequences of PPP; or
- SEA extends environmental assessment into the decision-making of PPPs; or that
- SEA should be integrated into existing PPP processes

SEA is integrated into existing PPP processes or evaluates PPP



- Proactive;
- Provides framework;
- Informs the PPP's with sustainability principles.

- Retrospective;
- EIA-based;
- Difficult to inform the PPP's.

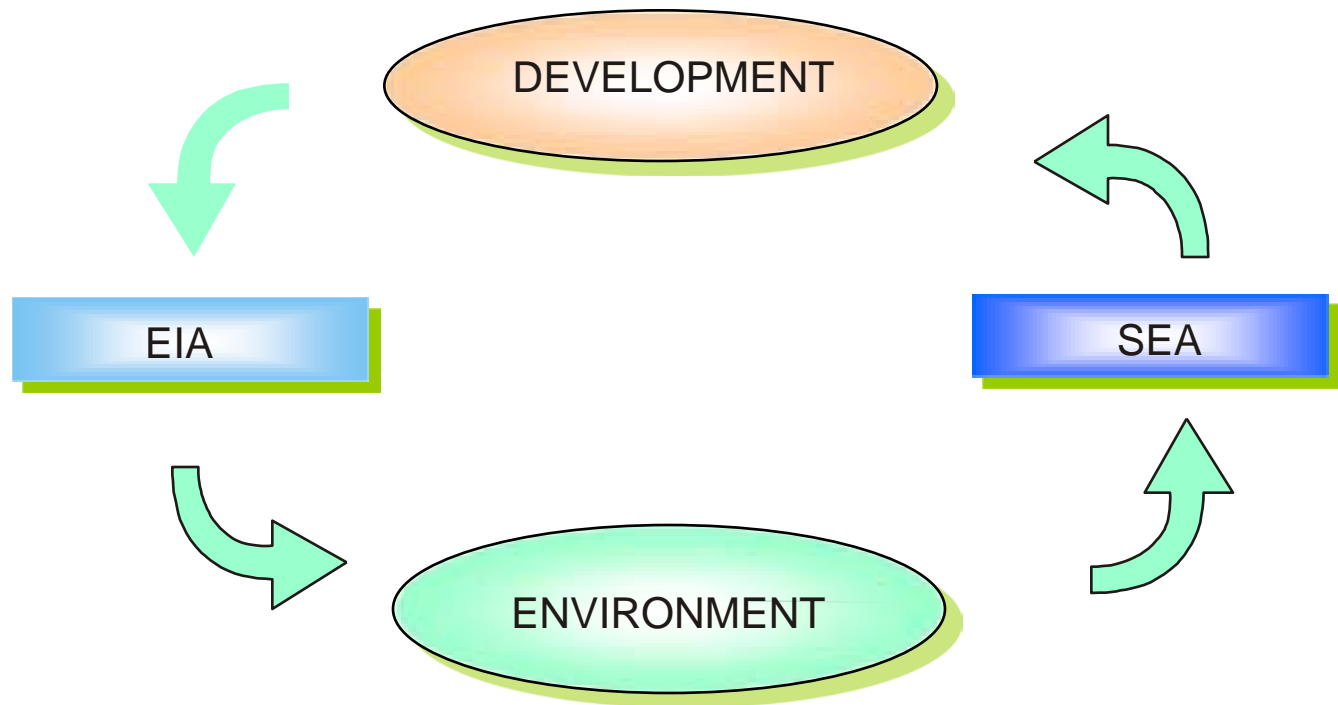
Is SEA EIA “dressed up”?

Comparison between the application of EIA and SEA in South Africa

<i>EIA</i>	<i>SEA</i>
Is reactive to a development proposal	Is proactive and informs development proposals
Assess the effect of a proposed development on the environment	Assesses the effect of the environment on development needs and opportunities
Address a specific project	Addresses areas, regions or sectors of development
Has a well defined beginning and end	Is a continuing process aimed at providing information at the right time
Assesses direct impacts and benefits	Assesses cumulative impacts and identifies implications and issues for sustainable development
Focuses on the mitigation of impacts	Focuses on maintaining a chosen level of environmental quality
Narrow perspective and a high level of detail	Wide perspective and a low level of detail to provide a vision and overall framework
Focuses on project -specific impacts	Creates a framework against which impacts and benefits can be measured.

The difference in focus between EIA and SEA

(Source: adapted from Strategic Environmental Assessment: A Primer, CSIR, 1996:8)



The tiered approach to SEA and EIA

(DEAT and CSIR, 2000)

STAGES IN THE
DEVELOPMENT
CYCLE

Plans and
programmes

Projects

Implementation
& monitoring

COMPONENTS OF IEM



Core Principles of SEA

Performance criteria for SEA

(International Association for Impact Assessment, 2002)



■ Integrated	■ Accountable
■ Sustainability-led	■ Participative
■ Focused	■ Iterative

Principles for SEA in South - Africa

Content

- Sustainability
- Opportunities and constraints
- Levels of environmental quality

Process

- Flexible
- Strategic
- Tiered
- Participative
- Alternative scenarios
- Precaution and continuous improvement

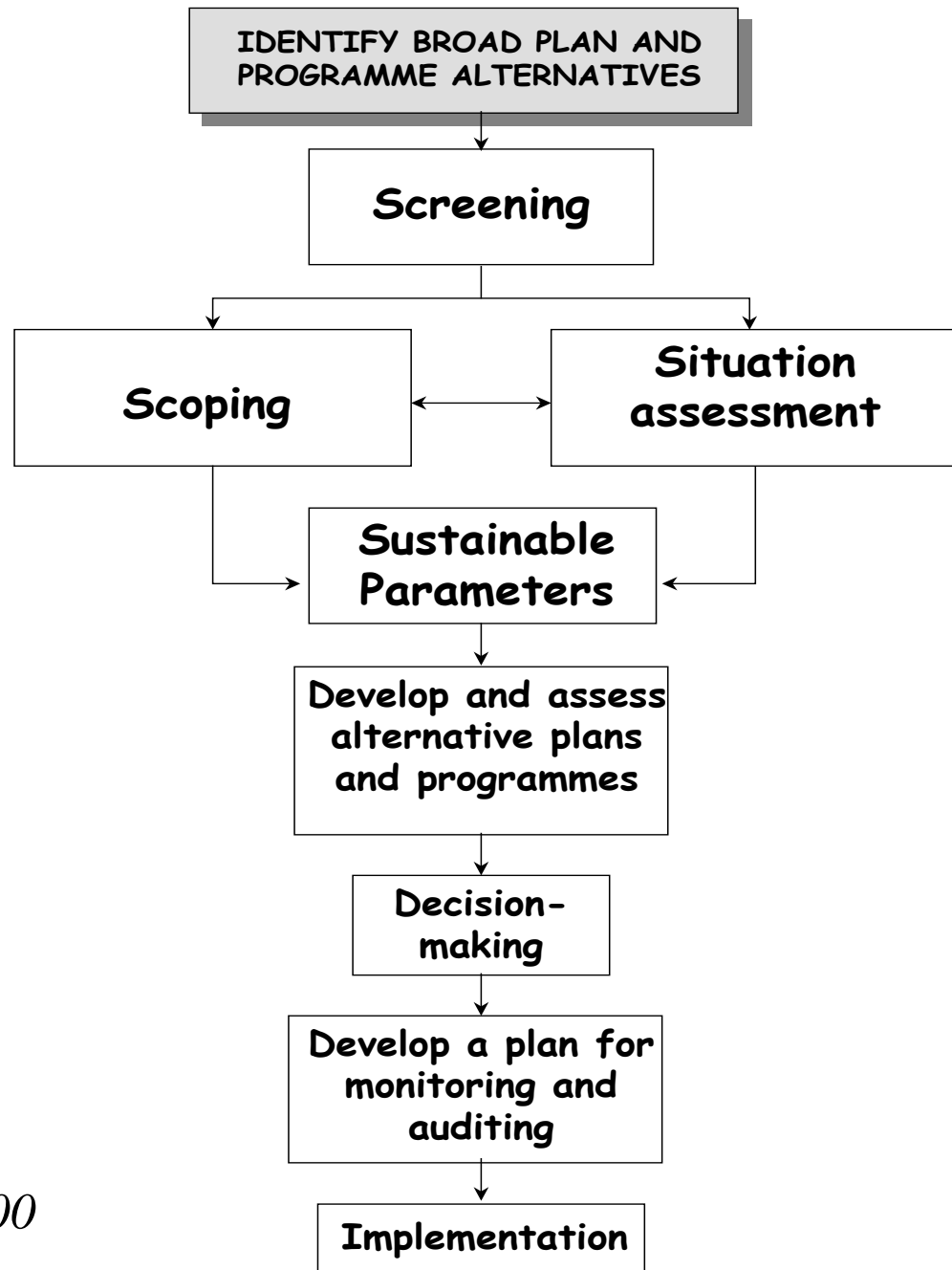
SEA in Canada: The 1999 Cabinet Directive on the Environmental Assessment of policy, plan and program proposals

- Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency: Guidelines for Implementing the Cabinet Directive (2000)

Principles

- Early integration
- Examine alternatives
- Flexibility
- Self-assessment
- Appropriate level of analysis
- Accountability
- Use of existing mechanisms

SEA Process and Examples



DEAT and CSIR, 2000

Examples from SA

- More than any other developing country (>50)
- Biodiversity Conservation (e.g. CAPE)
- Water Management (e.g. forestry permits)
- Industrial (e.g. Coega)
- Transport (e.g. Wild Coast, Maputo Corridor)
- Port Planning (e.g. Cape Town, Richards Bay)
- Mining (EMPRs for artisanal mining)
- Energy (e.g. Offshore Gas)
- Olympic Bid