

EFFECTIVENESS IN ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT -some international perspectives-

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What is 'Effectiveness'

Effectiveness

- Influences on decision-making - “litmus test of EIA effectiveness” (Sadler 1996)
- Effectiveness is defined as — “something that works as intended and meets the purpose for which it was designed” (Sadler, 1996)
- Fischer, 2007
 - EA provides decision makers with better information
 - EA enables attitudes and perceptions to change through participation and involvement
 - EA changes established routines.
- Substantive and Procedural

Do we mean what we say?

- Effectiveness vs. success
- Effectiveness vs. impact
- Effectiveness vs. efficiency
- Effectiveness vs. quality
- Effectiveness review vs. EA follow-up

History

History

- **How much difference is EA making?** Ideally, with reference to EA's ultimate aim of 'restoring and maintaining environmental quality'. [NEPA]
- Traditional views
- Diversity of ideas
- Importance of context

Approaches

'Effectiveness' of ...

SYSTEM

PROCEDURE

ELEMENT

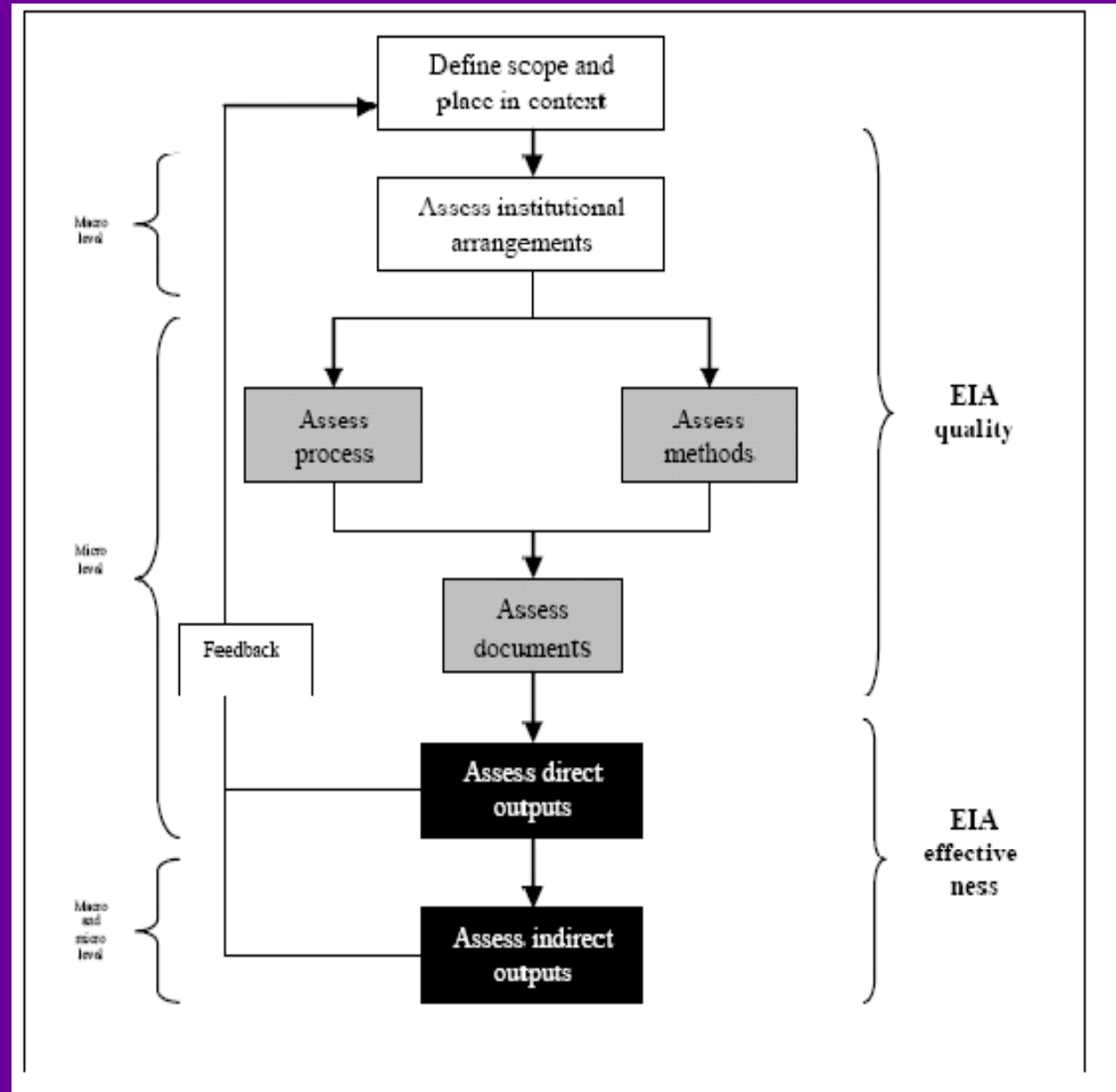
OUTPUT

Frameworks

- Scales and dimensions
- Inputs and Outputs
- Context

- Criteria
 - Direct
 - Indirect

Ideal EIA quality/ effectiveness analysis (Lawrence 1997)



EIA

Elements for EIA effectiveness

EIA is effective when it:

- includes proper methods for assessing impacts;
- includes the formulation of alternative plans, selection of a proposed plan, and mitigation of adverse impacts;
- includes the placement of appropriate weight on environmental impacts relative to economic and technical factors; is fair and provides opportunities for public participation before a decision is made;
- is central and contributes to decision-making; is applied flexibly to the various stages of the EIA process; and
- takes into account environmental and socio-economic factors.

Influence of EIA reports on decisions (Wood, 2003)

- Seven countries
- Regulatory provisions
- Actions of decision-makers

- Influence = moderate rather than substantial

Evaluation of Directive 85/337/EEC and Associated Amendments (2008)

- France, Germany, Netherlands, Poland, Spain and the UK
- Skills and Training
- Environmental Effectiveness of the EIA Regime – barriers:
 - Competence
 - Capacity
 - ‘Gold-plating’
 - Double assessment
 - Smaller projects

Cont'd

Recommendations

- Examine Use of More Formal Timetables
- Raise Project Size Thresholds
- Introduce Simplified Procedures for Smaller Projects
- Expand and Improve Training for EIA with Increased Quality Control
- Review the Scope to Reduce the Risk of Delay from Overlaps and Double Assessment
- Improve Screening of Projects to Identify the Need for EIA

SEA

Elements for SEA effectiveness

- SEA should be integrated and sustainability-led – support a pro-active planning process driven by clear goals and objectives; SEA should also consider economic and social aspects;
- SEA should be effective in ensuring environmental aspects are given due consideration in [existing] PPP making;
- SEA should be accountable and carried out with professionalism - document and justify how environmental and sustainability objectives are considered in a transparent and simple manner; quality control of great importance;
- SEA should be stakeholder-driven - explicitly address the public's inputs and concerns, ensure access to relevant information of the PPP-making process;
- SEA should provide sufficient, reliable and usable information in a cost and time efficient manner;
- SEA should be iterative and part of an ongoing decision cycle - inspire future planning, applied in a tiered manner;
- SEA should be flexible and adaptive to the PPP process.

Influence of SEA on land use planning decision-making (Jones et al, 2005)

Criterion question: Do SEAs have any discernible influence on the contents of land use plans or the treatment of environmental issues during decision making?		
Jurisdiction	Criterion met?	Comment
Canada	No	Little evidence that SEA has discernible influence on the contents of reports or treatment of environmental issues during decision making. Some indications that early integration of SEA with plan development yields best results
Denmark	Yes	SEAs have discernible influence on plan preparation and decision making
Germany	Yes	Post-SEA Directive practice is expected to achieve, at least, standard of pre-Directive practice
Hong Kong	Yes	SEAs have often had significant influence on planning decisions, development of strategies and policies
Hungary	?	Not yet possible to judge outcome. SEA might facilitate more systematic incorporation of various stakeholder concerns into land use planning
Ireland	?	Very few formal SEAs undertaken to date, and little evidence of influence on decision making
The Netherlands	?	Will become clear only after years of implementation although pilot studies show positive results
New Zealand	Partially	Difficult to discern extent of influence given wide number of parties and other factors involved in decision making process
Portugal	?	No system yet in place
South Africa	?	Preliminary research suggests that influence of SEA on decision making varies considerably
Sweden	?	Influence of previous SEA system uncertain. Environmental benefits probably greater for DDPs than MCPs. New legislation requires description of modifications to plan to reflect SEA findings
United Kingdom	Partially	Too early to evaluate. Environmental sustainability appraisal (EA/SA) led to minor modifications to some land use plans
United States	Partially	NEPA primarily procedural. Federal agencies may approve plans despite their resulting in significant environmental impacts
World Bank	No	Has happened in the past but not routinely. Influence on decision making at core of present and future efforts to make SEA more effective

Source: Jones et al, 2005

Future

Report card on success of EIA and SEA as policy instruments (Sadler 2004)

Aspect Evaluated	Score / rating	
	EIA	SEA
Test 1: Wide adoption and use	B+	C
Test 2: Record of process innovation or improvement	B	B
Test 3: Inclusion of new areas and aspects	A-	B-
Test 4: Added value to decision making and condition setting	C+	C-
Test 5: Effective means of achieving environmental protection	C-	C-?
<p>Evaluation scale</p> <p>A = The feature is represented fully and completely</p> <p>B = The feature is represented well but there are minor qualifications</p> <p>C = The feature is represented but there are a number of reservations</p> <p>D = The feature is not represented well</p> <p>E = The feature is represented only minimally or incipiently</p>		

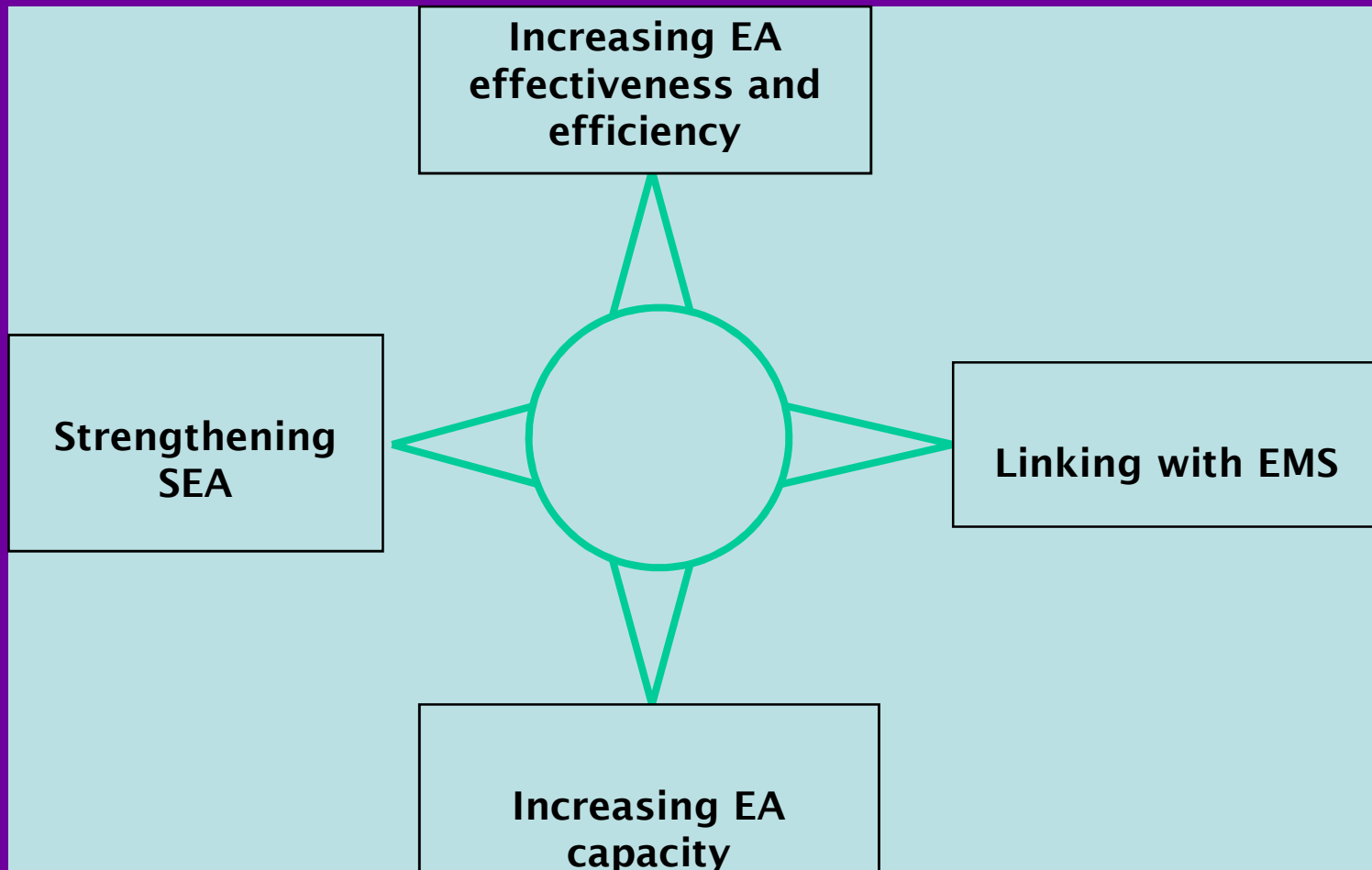
Indirect effects of EA

- environmental learning amongst communities and other stakeholders;
- greater environmental awareness amongst decision makers;
- influencing changes in institutional environmental values, rules and priorities;
- identifying and highlighting gaps in policy and legislation; and
- source of information generation and sharing.

How to support effective EA

- Usual suspects
 - improved legal provisions;
 - more detailed guidance;
 - in depth training and expanded capacity building.

Diffusing and strengthening EA processes



New approaches to EA and decision making

- Assessment for environmentally sustainable development
- No net environmental deterioration in assessment decisions
- Precautionary principle in assessment decisions
- **SHOULD EA HAVE A PURPOSE?**

Caldwell (1989)

- ... for EIA to be effective it needs to be understood as a value driven concept which also relies on a structured legal, procedural and methodological framework.

“EIA will be most effective where environmental values:

(1) are implicit and consensual in the national culture and

(2) are explicit in public law and policy”