

FAST FACTS



Environmental Assessment of Economic Corridors and Sectors

Background

Strategic Environment Assessments (SEA) is a strategic planning support tool that is promoted under the Core Environment Program. The tool aims to incorporate sustainability issues in strategic planning work through identifying environmental impacts of policies, plans and programs and factoring in these in the design of sector policies.

The Core Environment Program promotes and supports the use of state-of-the-art planning tools to ensure that economic development is in balance with eco- and social systems that sustain it. SEA processes assist governments in taking into account possible environmental impact of a plan, policy or program and presents options to avoid adverse effects.

Objectives

The goal of SEA activities is to ensure that development strategies for the GMS economic corridors and sectors are environmentally sound, economically efficient and socially equitable.

This goal will be accomplished by:

- Raising awareness among sector decision makers;
- Supporting the use of state-of-the-art planning tools;
- Building capacity among relevant public agencies in the GMS for the use of SEA as a decision support tool in their development planning;
- Involving a broader process of policy analysis including setting objectives, generating alternatives and scenarios, assessing impacts and weighting of different alternatives based on multiple development objectives;
- Testing SEA technical guidance to obtain feedback for further improvement, and developing sector specific SEA technical guidance.

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Results

- The SEA of Viet Nam's Power Development Plan VI (PDP VI) has assessed a full range of potential risks associated with hydropower for communities and the environment, identified more effective mitigation and compensation actions, and provided a series of policy recommendations to the Ministry of Industry and Trade (MoIT) and other relevant agencies in Viet Nam. Request from Viet Nam for follow-up assistance to an ex-ante SEA of PDP VII and from Lao PDR for assessing impacts of proposed hydropower dams along mainstream Mekong River are indicators of effective delivery, uptake and ownership.
- The SEA of tourism sector planning in Cambodia has examined official laws, policies, plans and programs for tourism in Cambodia, described baseline environmental conditions and assessed the environmental consequences of the tourism development. Based on these consequences, specific mitigation measures were proposed to various national and provincial agencies. The effective implementation of this SEA has contributed to Cambodia's new national tourism law.
- The SEA of the North-South Economic Corridor (NSEC) applied integrated spatial planning and multi-criteria analysis to identify suitable development trajectories, zoning and mitigation measures within the GMS Strategy and Action Plan (SAP) for the NSEC.
- Capacity building workshops have been carried out at each stage of the SEA processes in addition to "on-the-job" training. Capacities have been strengthened within energy, tourism, environmental, planning, land-use and other line ministries across the GMS.
- Engagement with the GMS Working Group on Tourism, Energy Sector Strategy group and GMS Economic Corridor Forum has raised awareness of environment in other sector investment strategies.



Basic Stages in SEA

1. Establishing the context for the SEA

- Screening
- Setting objectives
- Identifying stakeholders



2. Implementing the SEA

- Scoping (in dialogue with stakeholders)
- Collecting baseline data
- Identifying alternatives
- Identifying how to enhance opportunities and mitigate impacts
- Quality assurance
- Reporting



3. Informing and influencing decision-making

- Making recommendations (in dialogue with stakeholders)



4. Monitoring and evaluating

- Monitoring decision taken on the Policy, Plan and Programme
- Monitoring implementation of the PPP
- Evaluation of both SEA and PPP