

## Consolidated checklist for the quality assurance, review, and performance evaluation of a comprehensive SEA

There are a number of SEA quality assurance, review, and evaluation checklists available on the internet. This *Consolidated Checklist* combines the following resources:

- EU SEA Directive-based environmental report quality review table; quoted in Fischer (2007).
- IAIA (2002)
- NEMA (2012)
- Report Review Sheet. In NEMA (2012)
- ODPM (2005).
- Therivel R. (2006).
- Therivel R. (2010).

The Consolidated Checklist provides a relatively complete and robust system to quality-assure, review, and evaluate a **comprehensive** SEA from start-to-end (i.e., from scoping process to development outcomes), focusing different sections of the consolidated checklist on:

- Scoping Process and TORs
- Draft SEA Report
- Internal/Administrative Review
- Detailed Content Review
- SEA Outcomes.

It goes without saying that quality assurance, review, and evaluation procedures **have to be modified for SEAs that are quick appraisals or semi-detailed.**

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### INTRODUCTION

**NOTE:** The checklist cannot be used in a “cookbook” fashion. Each SEA is unique; each SEA is tied to its TORs (including any limitations imposed on it by budget, available resources, data gaps, and context). The reviewer will NOT be able to answer all the listed questions in all cases; some questions may not be relevant to a specific SEA exercise. The “checklists” are meant to **guide reviewers** (and to guide those responsible for conducting SEAs and writing SEA reports)! The checklists are not a prescription, and they cannot replace (context-specific) good judgment!

The checklists comprise 11 sections that will provide reviewers and practitioners some insights into what to include in a comprehensive SEA and what to look for during review. Please always bear in mind the context specificity of the actual SEA exercise, the SEA’s tier (policy vs. program level), the SEA’s administrative level (national vs. local), and the SEA TORs (especially budget and allocated resources).

**Section 1** can be used to conduct quality assurance on a scoping report.

**Section 2**, “General Review,” mainly reviews the Report Presentation. NECS should complete this review before the report is sent to other stakeholders for review.

**Sections 3 to 8** cover a “Detailed Content Review,” which can be used by internal and external reviewers to systematically review these important SEA report chapters:

- Section 3: PPP description;
- Section 4: Policy and legal framework and links;
- Section 5: Description of the environmental baseline;

- Section 6: Determination of impact significance and evaluation of alternatives;
- Section 7: Mitigation and Environmental Management and Monitoring Plan (EMMP);
- Section 8: Consultation process.

**Sections 9 to 11** can be used to monitor and evaluate SEA outcomes:

- Section 9 reviews aspects of the decision-making process;
- Section 10 reviews the SEA process overall.
- Section 11 looks at certain aspects related to SEA performance.

The review of scoping, the review of the SEA report in general and in detail, and the review of the SEA outcomes will occur at different times in the PPP/SEA timeline. Table A10.1 summarizes the review system.

**Table A10.1: The review systems at a glance**

Type of Review	Topic/Review Section	Main (Responsible) Entity
<b>Review of SEA Scoping</b>	1. Scoping procedure	PPP proponent/SEA consultant/and competent authority
<b>Review of the SEA Report: General Review</b>	2. General Review of the SEA Report	Mainly competent authority
<b>Review of the SEA Report: Detailed Content Review</b>	3. PPP description 4. Policy and legal framework and links 5. Description of the environmental baseline 6. Determination of impact significance and evaluation of alternatives 7. Strategic Environmental and Social Management Plan (SESMP) 8. Consultation process	Reviews conducted by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead agencies;</li> <li>• Public review;</li> <li>• Independent Committees (Technical Advisory Committee, or Independent Expert Commission).</li> </ul> All review comments consolidated and considered by competent authority
<b>Review of Outcomes: SEA Implementation</b>	9. Decision making 10. IAIA SEA process review 11. SEA performance monitoring and evaluation	Competent authority

### PROPOSED REVIEW PROCEDURE

Within a given review exercise, each reviewer would be expected to summarize his/her review comments by topic/review section (and in the case of Lead Agencies, also by mandate, e.g., energy). Each entity could then summarize all the comments of its reviewers by topic. For instance, in the case where external reviewers are participating (e.g., during the technical review of the SEA document), each Lead Agency could summarize the comments of all of its reviewers by topic (e.g., Environmental Baseline).

The competent authority is the entity that would have to consolidate the review comments from all the entities involved in the review process for its deliberations and final decision and recommendations.

## SECTION 1: REVIEW OF SCOPING

**Was the methodology used to conduct scoping described? Was it adequate?** (i.e., did it lead to a correct identification of key issues, objectives, stakeholders, and alternatives?)

**Is there a clear description of the PPP and the PPP's objectives, the scope of the strategic action, and what the PPP can and cannot do?**

- Were the objectives of the PPP confirmed and clarified and are they in line with existing (environmental, social or other) objectives?
- Were the PPP objectives and targets reviewed against the national, regional, or local environmental and social action plan(s)?
- Were the links between the PPP and higher- and lower-tier strategic actions considered?

**Did the scoping process describe enough baseline to identify key problems? Did the scoping process identify key sustainability issues? Does the scoping report:**

- List the environmental, social, and sustainability issues considered in the assessment?
- Describe how key environmental, social, and sustainability issues were identified?
- Highlight what matters are more appropriately assessed at other levels or layers of decision-making?
- Provide information on existing environmental, social, and sustainability problems that are relevant to the PPP, including those relating to any areas of particular importance to sustainability?
- Outline the significant issues that need to be studied during the SEA?
- Provide valid reasons for eliminating some issues from further consideration (i.e., explain why certain issues were “scoped” out.).
- Regarding studies to be conducted during the SEA, are the baseline-data-collection requirements related to the SEA objectives?

**Did the scoping process identify adequate SEA objectives?**

- Does the scoping report provide information on relevant international and national environmental protection and social objectives?
- Were the international and national environmental protection, social, and sustainability issues adequately considered in selecting and developing the SEA objectives, indicators, and targets?
- Was the national policy and institutional framework adequately considered in selecting and developing SEA objectives, indicators, and targets (e.g., other development, sectoral, or poverty alleviation objectives)?
- Were the SEA objectives described and clearly defined, quantitatively where appropriate?
- Do the SEA objectives and indicators cover an appropriate range of environmental, social, and sustainability topics, including relevant objectives for the biological (e.g., biodiversity and ecosystems), physical (e.g., for soil, water, air, landscape, climate change), and socio-cultural and economic components (e.g., for health, equity, poverty, heritage, or economy)?
- Were adequate decision criteria identified for the assessment (e.g., the use of relevant standards)?
- Were the technical, procedural, and other difficulties discussed (e.g., technical deficiencies, data gaps, or lack of know-how)? Were the assumptions and uncertainties made explicit?

**Did the scoping process identify reasonable or adequate alternatives? Does the scoping report:**

- Consider and describe how reasonable alternatives were identified and selected for further assessment?
- Were the alternatives that were selected for further assessment appropriate to the scale (national vs. local) and level (policy, plan, or program) of decision-making?
- Do the alternatives deal with the key issues identified in the issue analysis?
- Do the alternatives include (among others) the “do nothing”/“do minimum”/“business as usual” alternative and the “most environmentally beneficial” alternative?

- Are the alternatives in the PPP proponent's remit (i.e., in terms of geographical scope, objectives, and legal competence)?
- Are the alternatives feasible (i.e., are the relevant resources and technology available)? Are the alternatives implementable?
- Are the alternatives relevant to the decision-making process (i.e., are the alternatives for "real," as opposed to made-up for the SEA exercise)?
- Were reasons given for eliminating some alternatives? (Also see 6b: *Evaluation of alternatives and selection of preferred alternative.*)

**Was the stakeholder consultation process conducted during scoping relevant and adequate?** (i.e., were key stakeholders identified? Was the stakeholder consultation process culturally appropriate?)

**Was a careful stakeholder analysis carried out to identify and characterize stakeholders?**

- Was the start of the PPP planning process announced, and were key stakeholders brought together to agree on the problem, objectives, and alternatives?
- Were appropriate consultation bodies (including NGOs) and relevant authorities (including environmental and health authorities) consulted in appropriate ways and at appropriate times on the content, scope, alternatives, SEA objectives, and level of information to include in the SEA report?
- Was an appropriate communication plan/stakeholder engagement plan developed for the full SEA?
- Did the scoping process identify adequate spatial and temporal boundaries for the SEA?

**Terms of References for the SEA study:**

- Do the SEA TORs focus on significant issues?
- Does the SEA work plan to implement the SEA study seem appropriate?
- Does the SEA budget to implement the SEA study seem appropriate?
- Is the budget sufficient to implement the work plan?
- Was a management team and an SEA coordinator appointed?
- Is the list of experts (with supporting accreditation) adequate to conduct the study?
- Are the methods of data analysis and sources of relevant information listed?

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## SECTION 2: GENERAL REVIEW OF THE SEA REPORT

*NOTE: The reviewer may need to interview some stakeholders.*

**Is the SEA report complete, acceptable, and adequate (as defined below)?**

- Does the SEA contain these chapters: non-technical summary, introduction, PPP description, environmental and social analysis (baseline description, evaluation of alternatives and risks, mitigation measures, consultation), recommendations, accompanying SESMP and appendices?
- Does the **non-technical summary** explain the overall approach to the SEA, the objectives of the strategic action, the objectives of the SEA, the main alternatives considered, the proposed mitigation and monitoring plan, and how the SEA changed the strategic action?
- Specifically, does the **non-technical summary** provide a statement summarizing:
- How were environmental/social/sustainability considerations (and their relationship with economic concerns and drivers) integrated into the PPP?
- How were the SEA report and the results of the consultations taken into account?
- The reasons for choosing the selected PPP over other reasonable alternatives?

**Is the SEA report:**

- Clear and concise in its layout and presentation? Does it use simple, clear language?
- Adequate in scope? (i.e., has it adopted a good time horizon? An adequate spatial scale)?
- Practical in focus? (i.e., does it focus on a limited number of key issues, targets, and indicators)?

- Presented as an integrated whole? (e.g., are the chapters harmonized)?
- Carried out in a professional manner? (i.e., does it provide an impartial/balanced analysis)?
- Presented in an open manner? (i.e., are the methods and data accessible? Are assumptions explicit?)

**Does the SEA report:**

- Define necessary technical terms? Does the report avoid technical jargon?
- Identify the decision-maker?
- Identify who carried out the SEA and their competences?
- Provide a declaration jointly signed by the SEA consultant and the PPP owner?
- Use maps, other illustrations, and summary tables where appropriate?
- Describe the methodology used in the SEA (i.e., methodology for scoping, impact identification, prediction, evaluation, comparison of alternatives, stakeholder identification, and analysis)?
- Were the methods used appropriate to the size and complexity of the assessment tasks?
- Were difficulties explained (e.g., technical deficiencies or lack of know-how; data uncertainties or data quality issues)?

**Was the draft PPP and draft SEA made available for public consultation and review by relevant authorities in a timely manner? Does the SEA report:**

- Explain who was consulted and what consultation methods were used?
- Provide proof that various stakeholders were consulted (e.g., signed statements and/or minutes) and summarize the comments received and how each comment was addressed?
- Focus on the big issues or relevant strategic issues?
- Discuss the scope of the SEA? (i.e., is the scoping report attached?)
- Comply with the policy, legal, and administrative framework for conducting an SEA (including being in compliance with existing procedural and substantive guidelines)?
- Comply with the TORs?
- Identify all sources of information, including expert judgment and matters of opinion?
- Provide adequate information (i.e., comprehensive, rigorous, understandable, and in compliance with the TORs) from the point of view of the PPP owner? What is missing?

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### SECTION 3: DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSAL (+ LINKS)

**Does the SEA report:**

- Clearly highlight the strategic action's purpose and objective(s)?
- If the SEA procedure was simultaneous with the PPP-making process, does the SEA describe how the SEA and the PPP-making processes were integrated:
  - **Simultaneous with integrated SEA process** (i.e., one team): Does the report describe what inputs and how the SEA inputs were integrated? Is this well documented?
  - **Simultaneous with parallel SEA process** (i.e., two teams): Does the SEA report describe what inputs/how/when the SEA inputs were integrated into the various decision-making windows/opportunities)?
- Identify the degree to which the PPP sets a framework for other projects/other activities (e.g., in terms of location, size, nature, and operating conditions, or resource allocation and future projects that will require EIAs)?
  - Explicitly highlight the links to project-level EIA (i.e., does it explain what type of projects requiring EIA will follow from implementing the PPP)?
- Clearly outline the expected content of the PPP, including the area covered and the implementation timeframe?
- Identify (and describe to the extent possible) PPP implementation activities that could influence:
  - Important ecosystem services/important ecosystem diversity;
  - Areas with legal and/or international status?

- Identify (and describe to the extent possible) PPP implementation activities that could influence:
    - Changes in land use or lead to the depletion of natural resources;
    - The production of raw materials, chemicals, and other hazardous products;
    - The generation of pollutants and wastes?
  - Identify (and describe to the extent possible) PPP implementation activities that could lead to these **direct drivers of change** (also see Section 'Baseline'):
    - Land conversion;
    - Fragmentation (and isolation of important habitats);
    - Extraction and use of natural resources;
    - Wastes (all types);
    - Disturbance of ecosystem composition, structure, or key processes;
    - Introduction of alien species;
    - Restoration;
    - Population changes;
    - Conversion or diversification of economy or land use;
    - Enhanced transport, services, or access;
    - Marginalization and exclusion?
  - Identify (and describe to the extent possible) PPP implementation activities that could lead to **indirect drivers of change**:
    - Societal changes (demographic, economic, socio-political, scientific, or changes in social values) (e.g., a new technology could result in more intensive use of a resource in the future)?
  - Are the **assumptions about what the strategic action will 'look' like** when implemented clearly stated or, if implicit, do they make sense? (This query is repeated in Section 6)
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## SECTION 4: POLICY AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PPPS

### **Does the SEA report:**

- Clearly explain the PPP's links to other related PPPs, including links between the strategic action and related higher- and lower-tier strategic actions?

### **Consistency and compatibility analyses:**

- Does the SEA identify and describe any conflicts that exist between the SEA objectives (e.g., an internal consistency analysis on the SEA objectives)?
  - Does the SEA identify and describe any conflicts that exist between the PPP's objectives (i.e., internal consistency analysis of the PPP objectives)?
  - Does the SEA identify and describe any conflicts that exist between the SEA objectives and the PPP's objectives (compatibility analysis)?
  - Does the SEA identify and describe any conflicts that exist between the PPP's objectives and the objectives of other PPPs (compatibility analysis)?
  - Where the proposed PPP, other strategic actions, or other objectives are in conflict, does the report clearly document the reasons for the conflict, and does it make recommendations on how to reconcile the PPP [or how to reconcile the other PPP(s)] to promote sustainability?
    - Where identified conflicts are not reconcilable, does the SEA explicitly state which PPP, action, or objective will dominate?
  - Does the report succinctly summarize all of the above, highlighting the most relevant to the PPP (relevant in terms of important problems and/or tier of assessment)?
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## SECTION 5: ENVIRONMENTAL BASELINE DESCRIPTION

**Bearing in mind the likely PPP activities (identified in Section 3), does the SEA report:**

- Describe the relevant aspects of the current biological, physical, social-cultural, and socioeconomic environment, as per TOR requirements?
- Provide a “trend” analysis of relevant, important aspects (i.e., does it describe or predict the future environment **without** the PPP)?
- Describe **in detail** the environmental and social characteristics of the area likely to be significantly affected, including areas beyond the physical boundary of the PPP that are likely to be affected?
- **Specifically**, does the SEA provide sufficient information/baseline information on the likely significant effects of the different options on (where relevant):
  - **Biological component:**
    - Biodiversity and ecosystem services
    - Protected areas
  - **Physical component:**
    - Soil
    - Water
    - Air
    - Climate and climate change
    - Landscape
  - **Social-cultural and socioeconomic component:**
    - Population
    - Human health
    - Cultural heritage, including architecture and archaeology
    - Material assets
    - Resource use (e.g., water, land use)
    - Economy

**And the (important/relevant) interrelationship between the above biological, physical, and social-cultural and socioeconomic components?**

- Does the baseline data cover more than just an inventory of species? Was there a focus on important ecological systems, their services, their resilience and vulnerability, and the significance of the ecological services for human wellbeing?

**Does the report:**

- Explain data sources, data gaps, and assumptions, where relevant?
- Describe the tools and methods used to complete the baseline description?

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## SECTION 6: DETERMINATION OF IMPACT SIGNIFICANCE & EVALUATION OF ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

### 6.1 Impact identification, prediction, and evaluation

- Are **assumptions about what the strategic action will “look” like** when implemented clearly stated or, if implicit, do they make sense? (Same query seen in Section 3)
- Are **assumptions about the likely impacts** of the strategic action’s implementation clearly stated, or if implicit, do they make sense?
- Is the area and time over which the predictions are made appropriate?
- Is an effort made to prioritize those effects that most affect sustainability?
- Is the level of detail of the predictions appropriate (is it proportional to the level of detail of the strategic action and the baseline data, and is it “fit for purpose”? (Are the predictions overly detailed or insufficiently detailed?))
- Is the level of uncertainty regarding the predictions documented?

- For each alternative or option, are the likely significant impacts on the environment identified, described, predicted, and evaluated?
- For **each alternative**, does the SEA:
  - Identify both positive and negative effects?
  - Identify the probability, duration (short-, medium-, or long-term, permanent or temporary), frequency, and reversibility of the effects?
  - Identify the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of population affected)?
  - Identify the secondary, cumulative, and synergistic effects?
  - Identify the transboundary effects?
  - Identify risks to human health and to the environment (e.g., due to the risk of accidents)?
  - Are the impacts on different groups of people identified and evaluated (e.g., on those stakeholders already negatively affected by environmental impacts and risks)?
- Has impact evaluation been carried out against a clearly stated and reasonable basis? e.g., evaluated against the current situation, future situation, environmental standards, SEA objectives, or environmental limits?
- In evaluating “significance,” is the “importance” of environmental components considered using various ways of viewing importance, e.g.:
  - **Institutional recognition** (i.e., the attribute is acknowledged in the policy and legal framework or has relevant accepted standards, regulations, and thresholds);
  - **Public recognition** (i.e., the public recognizes the feature as important);
  - **Technical recognition** (i.e., the feature is recognized as important based on scientific or technical knowledge)?
- Were the tools and methods used to identify and evaluate impacts adequate?

### 6.2 Evaluation of alternatives/options and recommendations on the preferred alternative/option

- Was each alternative/option evaluated against the SEA objectives or relevant baseline?
- Were the environmental, social, and sustainability effects (both adverse and beneficial) of each alternative/option compared to the other alternatives/options?
- Were the residual impacts (impacts remaining after mitigation) of each alternative/option evaluated and compared?

### 6.3 Does the SEA report:

- Outline how the alternatives were assessed and the reasons for selecting the preferred alternative(s)?
  - Did the assessment and the procedure for comparison use credible tools/methodology?
  - Did the evaluation/comparison of alternatives involve appropriate stakeholders?
- Are credible reasons given for eliminating certain alternatives?
- Are “trade-offs” explained and justified?
- If “trade-offs” are necessary:
  - Are irreversible impacts avoided?
  - Are impacts that would exceed environmental thresholds or limits avoided?
  - Are sensitive areas avoided?
  - Are areas that have already been cumulatively affected avoided?
  - Is greater weight given to longer-term impacts?

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## SECTION 7: MITIGATION AND STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL MANAGEMENT PLAN (SESMP)

### 7.1 Mitigation: Does the SEA report:

- Document that the mitigation hierarchy of first avoidance, then mitigation, and then compensation was followed?

- Identify measures to avoid, reduce, repair, or compensate for any significant adverse effects of implementing the PPP?
- Mainly, propose mitigation measures that are within the PPP proponent's remit or control?
- Identify measures that are likely to be effective (i.e., measures that will manage a good share of the impacts caused by the strategic action)?
- Clearly commit to measures to avoid, reduce, repair, or compensate for any significant adverse effects of implementing the PPP (e.g., is there a budget and an organizational framework for implementing impact mitigation and monitoring)?
- Identify and commit to measures to enhance the positive effects of implementing the PPP?
- Where relevant, identify mitigation measures that need to be taken into account in follow-on project consents (e.g., does it identify subsequent EIAs? or the need to conduct specific types of assessments, e.g., poverty impact assessment or gender impact assessment)?

### 7.2 SESMP: Does the SESMP:

- Summarize the impacts related to the PPP?
- Describe the mitigation measures envisaged to prevent, reduce, or compensate for any significant adverse effects on the environment or social conditions related to the PPP (including the need for subsequent EIAs or the need for specific designs, equipment, or operating procedures)?
- Summarize the enhancement measures related to the PPP?
- Describe the SESMP implementation framework:
  - Explain how existing monitoring arrangements may be used, and where appropriate?
  - Propose monitoring measures that are clear and practicable?
  - Provide clearly defined indicators based on the baseline information and on the objectives of the PPP and the SEA?
  - Describe the measures envisaged to monitor the significant environmental and social effects of the PPP implementation?
  - Describe how monitoring will identify and manage unforeseen adverse effects in a timely manner, e.g., in the case where SEA predictions prove to be inaccurate?
  - Provide thresholds that signal the need for corrective actions?
  - Propose adequate action in response to significant adverse effects?
  - Ensure that the collected monitoring data addresses deficiencies in the SEA's baseline information?
  - Describe the institutional arrangements (responsibilities for mitigation and monitoring, and any coordination arrangements)?
  - Describe the implementation schedule (e.g., methods, sampling locations, detection limits, timing, frequency of measurements, and duration of mitigation measures)?
  - Describe reporting procedures?
  - Provide cost estimates (initial investment and recurring expenses)?
  - Provide for institutional strengthening and capacity building requirements (equipment requirements and training requirements)?
- Describe how stakeholders provided input to the mitigation and monitoring plan?
- Describe the role of the various stakeholders (including the public) during the SESMP implementation?
- Define outcome indicators?
- Provide an evaluation plan (with an adequate budget and clear responsibilities)?

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## SECTION 8: CONSULTATION PROCESS (DURING SCOPING, THE SEA STUDY, THE SEA REVIEW, AND DURING IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING)

**Was there effective cooperation between the SEA team and the PPP proponent?** If not, how could this be improved in the future? (May require interviews.).

**Was SEA consultation an integral part of the PPP-making process** (in the case of a simultaneous [parallel or integrated] SEA model)?

**Was an SEA consultation integrated into the SEA design and implementation** (e.g., were stakeholders consulted on the SEA TORs, the baseline, the evaluation of alternatives, the identification of mitigation and monitoring measures, and the SEA review)? (Relevant to the “separate” and the “simultaneous” SEA models.)

**Overall, was the consultation process adequate and effective?** How could it be improved in the future?

**Was there broad participation in the SEA?** That is:

- Were relevant professional, technical, social, and NGOs groups represented?
- Did the decision-makers participate (to ensure adoption and endorsement)?
- Were the communication methods effective, i.e., tailor-made to the needs of the different audiences?
- Did the SEA process promote collective learning and feedback? Did the SEA process support the development of local assessment capacity?

**Does the SEA report:**

- Describe **how/when** the relevant stakeholders were **identified** and how their interests were **analyzed** (i.e., during scoping, SEA preparation, and SEA review)?
- Describe **how/when** the relevant authorities (including environment and health authorities), lead agencies, and the public were **consulted** (i.e., during scoping, SEA preparation, and SEA review)?
- Specifically, describe **how/when** the **draft PPP** and the **draft SEA report** were made **available** to relevant authorities, lead agencies, and the public, and **how/when** they were allowed to **express their opinions** on the documents?
- Was an appropriate range of stakeholders consulted (i.e., was the stakeholder analysis sufficient)?
- Were these stakeholders consulted in ways and at times that gave them an early and effective opportunity with appropriate timeframes to express their opinion on the draft PPP and draft SEA report:
  - **Lead agencies and other authorities?**
  - **Environmental and health authorities?**
  - **Expert committee** (TAC, SERC, or IEC)?
  - The **public** (or more likely, the designated public representatives likely to be affected by, or having an interest in the PPP)?
  - Was there an effort to **involve vulnerable stakeholders** (e.g., very poor) in the consultation? If so, was it successful? How could this be improved in the future?

**Does the SEA report:**

- Summarize and address all stakeholder views?
  - Highlight how the consultation results were considered in decision-making?
  - Provide adequate documented evidence of the consultation events?
  - Outline a grievance mechanism if stakeholders feel that their opinions have not been sufficiently addressed?
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## OUTCOME REVIEW

### SECTION 9: DECISION-MAKING

*NOTE: Some of these questions may require interviews.*

**Was the SEA conducted as an integral part of the decision-making process?** (i.e., in the case of a simultaneous SEA model [integrated or parallel], were SEA inputs considered during decision windows? In the case of a separate or a reactive (ex-post) SEA, were SEA inputs considered when approving, revising, or amending the strategic action)?

**Does the Final SEA Report explain how the SEA findings and stakeholder inputs were considered during decision-making?**

**Was the Final SEA Report and the opinions of those consulted taken into account in finalizing and adopting the PPP?**

**What was the influence of the SEA on the PPP process?**

- Was the SEA proactive? i.e., did the SEA provide assessment results early enough to influence decision-making?
- Did the SEA provide useful information for those responsible for developing the PPP?
- Did the SEA identify the issues most important to **sustainable outcomes**, rather than dealing with all environmental and socioeconomic issues?
- Did the SEA address questions and concerns not initially included in the PPP? What was appreciated most? What proved irrelevant?
- Could the SEA findings be effectively conveyed to the decision-makers?
- Were decision-makers willing to consider the SEA inputs and willing to integrate the findings into decision-making?
- Did the SEA actually make the PPP more environmentally sound?
- Did the PPP process make sufficient reference to the findings of the SEA?

**Did the SEA build capacity and improve accountability and transparency?**

- Did SEA empower weak and vulnerable stakeholders?
- Did the SEA help build capacity by training decision-makers on implementation?
- Did the SEA build capacity to collect data and provide documentation?
- Did the SEA enhance the transparency of the decision-making processes and accountability of decision-makers on the environmental implications of the PPP?
- Did decision-makers justify/correct their decisions based on the SEA findings and SEA monitoring?
- Did the SEA exercise lead to a better understanding of the potential of this approach? Did the SEA exercise encourage subsequent SEA applications (did the SEA results identify other PPPs requiring SEA? Was the SEA process fruitful and/or a positive experience, making the participants more willing to participate in the next SEA)?

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### SECTION 10: IAIA SEA PROCESS REVIEW

*NOTE: Some of these questions may require interviews.*

**Was the SEA integrated?**

- Did it ensure an environmental assessment/sustainability appraisal of all the PPP's strategic decisions?
- Did it address the interrelationships of biophysical, social, and economic aspects?
- Was it tiered to policies in relevant sectors and transboundary regions and, where appropriate, to project EIA and decision-making?

**Sustainability-led?**

- Did it facilitate identification of more sustainable development options and alternatives?

**Focused?**

- Did it provide sufficient, reliable, usable information for planning and decision making?
- Did it concentrate on key issues of sustainable development?
- Was it customized to the characteristics of the decision-making process?
- Was it cost- and time-effective?

**Accountable?**

- Was it the responsibility of the strategic decision's lead agencies?
- Was it carried out with professionalism, rigor, fairness, impartiality, and balance?
- Was it subject to independent checks and verification?
- Did it document and justify how sustainability issues were considered in decision making?

**Participatory?**

- Did it inform and involve interested and affected public and government bodies throughout the decision-making process?
- Did it explicitly address stakeholders' inputs and concerns in the report and in decision-making?
- Did it provide clear, easy-to-understand, necessary information?
- Did it ensure sufficient access to all relevant information?

**Iterative?**

- Did it make available the assessment results early enough to influence the decision-making process and inspire future planning?
- Did it provide sufficient information on a strategic decision's actual implementation impacts to judge whether the decision should be amended?

**Overall comments on the SEA process:**

- What is/what was the view of key stakeholders (particularly the more vulnerable) and those responsible for developing the PPP on the SEA procedure and results?
- How could it be improved in the future?
- What were the most significant constraints to achieving an effective SEA?
- What were the most significant positive factors ensuring the success of the SEA?
- Did the SEA address equity, social acceptability, and incorporate the precautionary principle?

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**SECTION 11: SEA PERFORMANCE REVIEW: IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING, AND EVALUATION**

***Did the SEA predict future outcomes correctly?***

- Were the assumptions made during the SEA for modelling impacts and/or institutional and governance requirements, correct?
- Were there any PPP-related unforeseen impacts? Explain.

***What was the influence on the implementation process?***

- Did the SEA improve the strategic action (i.e., did the SEA result in relevant amendments or modifications to the PPP? Did it identify more sustainable alternatives?)
- Did the SEA lead to more effective implementation? (e.g., did it inform subsequent lower-tier decision-making? Did it improve monitoring and follow-up?)
- Did the SEA succeed in actually changing the PPP implementation or budget plans, or other subsequent measures, making the PPP more environmentally sound?
- Did the PPP implement measures that better reflect the goals of sustainable development?

- Were the options implemented in a more environmentally sound manner?
- Did the recommendations of the SEA lead to:
  - Institutional development (e.g., an advisory group on environment or better inter-sectoral coordination)?
  - Subsequent EIA requirements?
  - Improved governance (e.g., empowerment of vulnerable stakeholders)?
  - More sustainable implementation/more sustainable resource use by the PPP?
- Did the different stakeholders implement their relevant SEA recommendations?
- How do the stakeholders view the SEA process and its outcomes now?

***What was the influence on direct and indirect goals of sustainable development?***

- Are there any indications that the SEA contributed to:
  - Achieving SDGs and/or other goals of relevance in the particular case?
  - Environmental protection and sustainability?
  - Improving conditions of environment and natural resources in the relevant area?
  - Enhancing transparency, accountability, and good governance?
  - Improvements to future PPP making? (e.g., were key environmental issues identified? Were lessons learned? (Do planners have a better understanding of sustainability issues?))
- Did the sustainable development benefits of the SEA outweigh the costs of conducting the SEA?