

## The role of a Strategic Environmental and Social Management Plan (SESMP)

A SESMP should be an integral part of a PPP and act as an **overarching framework** and roadmap for addressing the cumulative impacts of projects, development initiatives, and activities planned to be implemented under the PPP (see Box A15.1). To fulfill this role, the SESMP should set limits of environmental and social quality (i.e., performance targets) that need to be achieved as a whole (by the concerted, collaborative oversight of relevant authorities) and, at a lower level, by the proponents of individual projects.

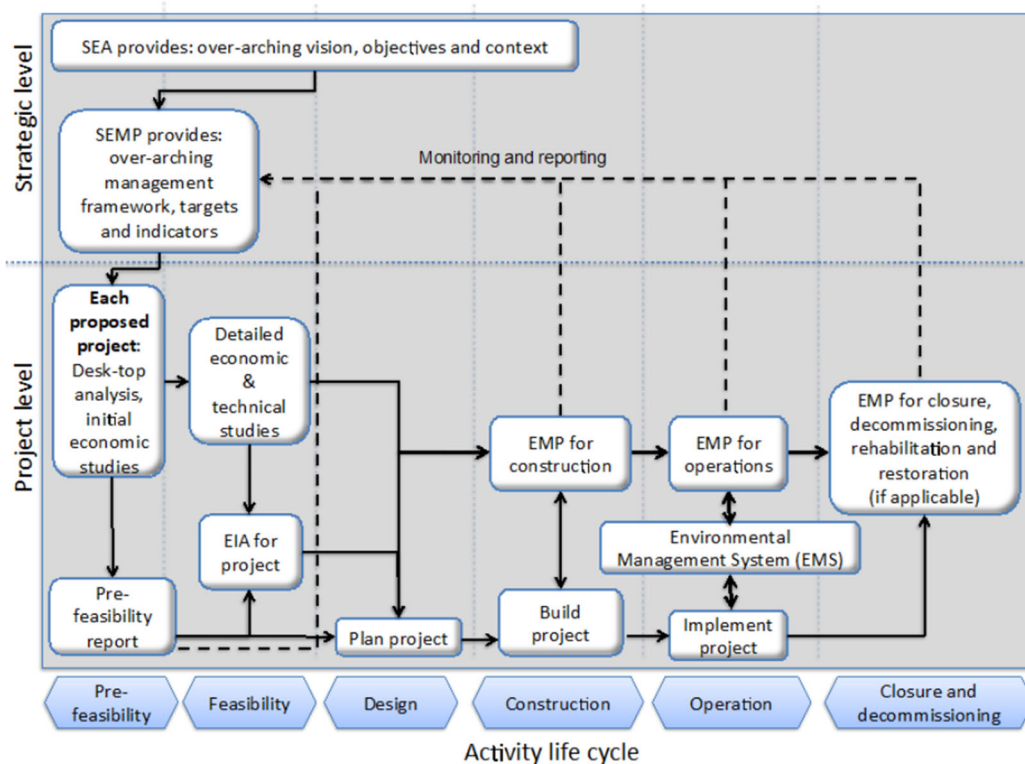
Guided by the overall SESMP, individual Environmental Management Plans (EMPs) prepared for each individual project will need to incorporate all relevant environmental and social management specifications. Thus, the SESMP does not remove the obligation to a developer for conducting a project-specific EIA and EMP where required by national legislation or regulations or the need to secure required permits for development activities/projects.

### Box A15.1: Relations between SEA, SESMP, ESMP AND EMS

The undertaking of the SEA will not rule out the need for subsequent project-level EIAs. Even though the SEA might set development parameters (e.g., good practice for particular development activities), individual projects with the potential to cause significant environmental and social impacts will still require an EIA to address site-specific concerns and circumstances. This tiered approach means that the major, consolidated, and integrated efforts made to conduct the SEA will result in the subsequent EIAs (which could be many in number) needing relatively less effort, cost, and time (Figure A15.1).

**Figure A15.1: The continuum between SEA, SESMP, EMP and EMS**

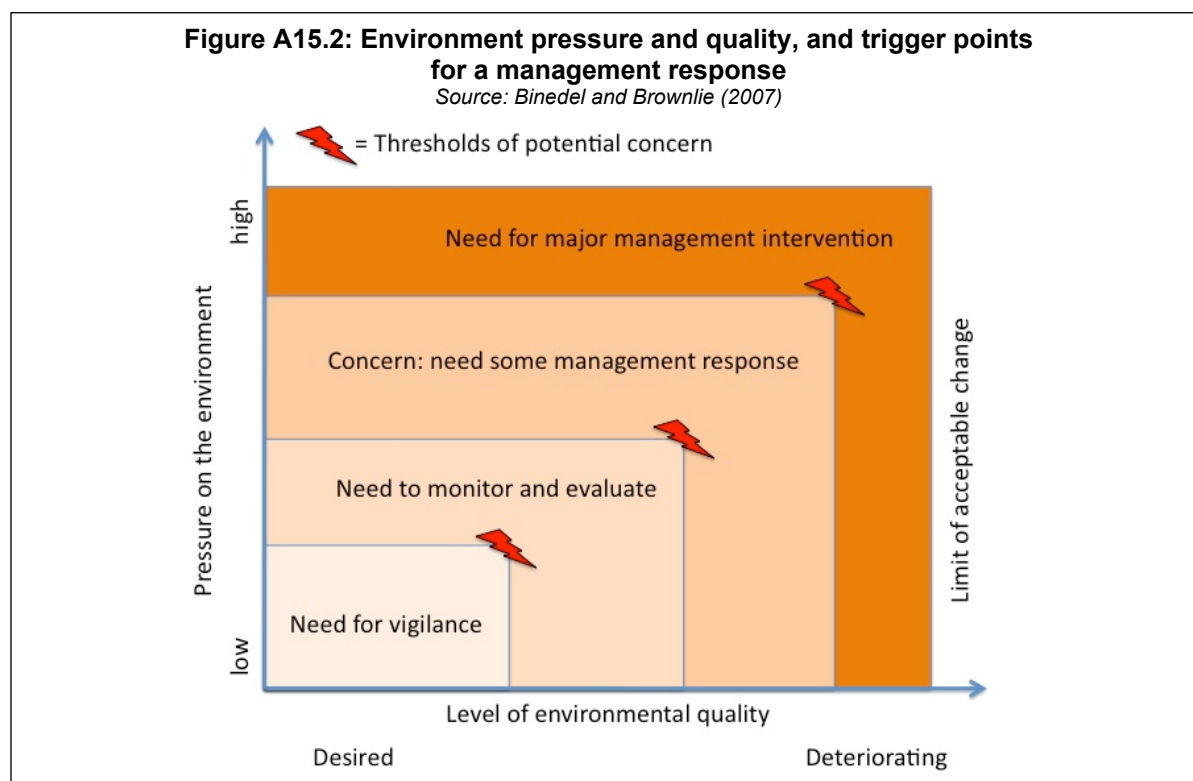
Source: Unpublished training materials developed by the Southern Africa Institute for Environmental Assessment, 2012



Developing environmental and social quality objectives (ESQOs) (see Section 3.3.4 of these guidelines) will require a combination of public and expert opinion, scientific research, and an examination of policy, ethical, and legal requirements. These informants constitute the “**input**” into the objectives. The objectives must each articulate a specific goal, provide a context, set standards, and elaborate on a small number of key indicators that need to be monitored. These will collectively make up the SESMP, which is the framework within which individual projects need to be planned and implemented and within which a number of institutions need to undertake certain actions.

The objectives must specify targets that are outcomes-based, practical, achievable, measurable, and enforceable. Wherever possible, they should be acceptable to all key stakeholders.

Implicit within all environmental and social quality objectives is a minimum management objective that any changes to the environment or social conditions must be within acceptable limits (following the precautionary principle) and that pro-active intervention will be triggered by the responsible party to avoid unwanted changes that breach a specified threshold (Figure A15.2).



Through the SESMP, the information obtained during monitoring will enable the PPP proponent to prepare an annual SESMP report for the PPP.

Institutional and procedural arrangements will need to be established for the above purposes (through discussion and consensus amongst key authorities and actors) and maintained to ensure that the monitoring system runs effectively and that data from year to year are replicable, comparable, and auditable.

The SESMP should also indicate any capacity-building required to ensure that the SESMP can be effectively implemented, including any institutional adjustments or procedures, recruitments or new assignments, and training for national and local officials and civil society organizations.

It will be necessary to ensure that proposed implementation measures are workable. In this regard, the SEA team should review the implementation of previous SESMPs.