

Impact Assessment in transition - keeping accountable in collaborative learning processes

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Questions

What are current trends in the fields of EIA and SEA?

To what extent MIA proposal fits the current debate?



Questions

What are current trends in the fields of EIA and SEA?

Dominant Trends

Constructivism

Knowledge, Learning, Uncertainty,
Collaborative approaches

Multiple kinds of knowledge
World making rather than world mirroring
Creating more than finding
Focus on processes more than on substances



Dominant Trends

Sustainability

Integration, Transversality, Justice,
Governance, Mind thinking

New practices rather than new metrics
Transdisciplinary as opposed to piecemeal
Societal values and perceptions
New attitudes, mind processes



Direction from scholars

Weaver, A. Pope, J. Morrison-Saunders, A. and Lochner, P. 2008
Contributing to sustainability as an environmental impact
assessment practitioner, *IAPA*, 26(2): 91–98

“we urge practitioners to raise the bar on
day-to-day EIA activities that will push the
vectors of sustainability”



Direction from scholars

Innes and Booher, 2004. *Reframing Public Participation: Strategies for the 21st Century*. Institute of Urban and Regional Development
University of California at Berkeley

“emerging set of practices of collaborative public engagement from around the world to demonstrate how alternative methods can better meet public participation goals

Research shows that collaborative participation can solve complex, contentious problems such as budget decision making and create an improved climate for future action when bitter disputes divide a community. Authentic dialogue, networks and institutional capacity are the key elements”



Direction from scholars

Patsey Healey, Collaborative Planning

Mat Cashmore, Effectiveness in IA

Tim Richardson, Governance, policy and urban planning

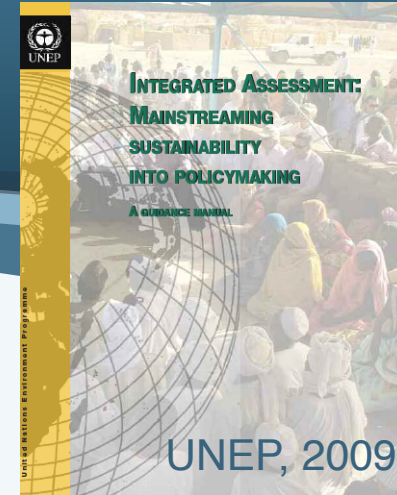
Tuija Hilding-Rydevik, importance of context

Lone Kornov and Wil Thissen, 2000, IA and decision-making

.....



Continuum in SEA



Priority policy areas

Climate Change

Energy crisis

Food security

Health

Poverty

Consumption behaviour

Biodiversity

Valuation of ecosystem services

Green economy

New challenges
and agendas in
EIA and SEA



Priority process in EIA and SEA

Stakeholder engagement
in collaborative processes

Sharp focus in scoping

Cumulative assessment

Monitoring

Learning for sustainability

New challenges
and agendas in
EIA and SEA



Trends - problems



- Old rules for new challenges
- By-the-law approach
- Limited focus and scope
- Heavily dependent on data, on technical-rationality
- Perception of EIA/SEA as a barrier, often as useless and inoperative
- SEA is replacing EIA - performing as EIA was originally conceived

EIA/SEA -role in decision-making

Civil Society

Proponents

**Sector competent
authorities**

EIA/SEA authorities



What does EIA/SEA
mean to them?

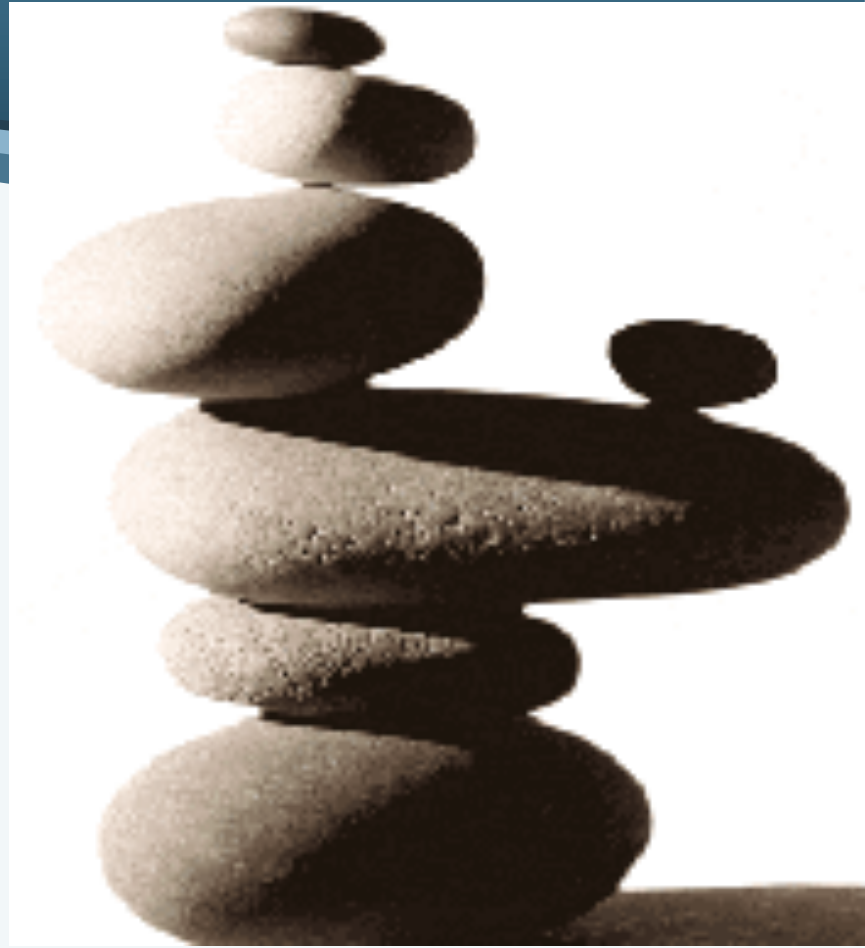
Is EIA/SEA helping
in positioning the
environment as one
of the decision-
factors?

Can SEA change outcomes? (Partidário, 2009)

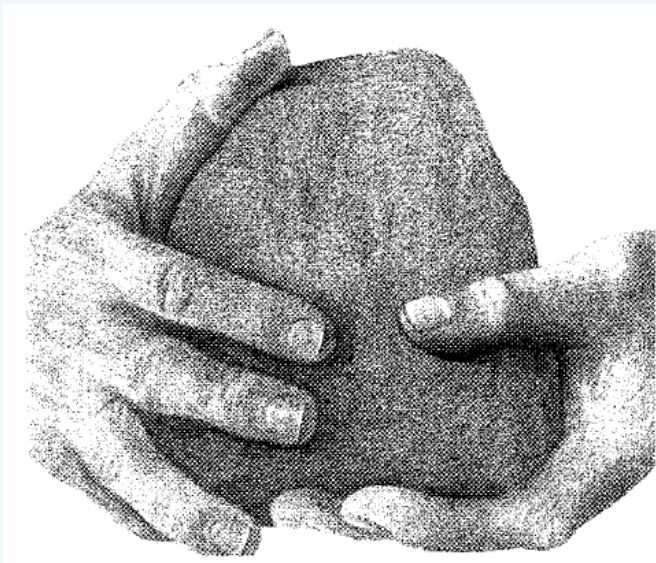
Yes it can if....

We provide to decision-makers what they need:

1. Solutions to problems
2. Responses to questions
3. Reliable outcomes
4. Short and clear narratives
5. Spend the least (time & money)
6. Improve their image



SEA advocacy role for better environmental and sustainable decision-making (Partidário, 2009)



Moulding
process

(Crafting strategies,
Mintzberg, 1988)

Capacity of SEA to influence decisional contexts and the formulation of strategic options that meet strategic objectives

SEA can not be limited to a technical assessment, even less with a narrow environmental scope



Questions

To what extent MIA proposal fits the current debate?

MIA

Transition between EIA and SEA – eg
detailed plans, major projects

Benefit from policy setting in SEA

Set referential for assessment
in EIA - targets, metrics, thresholds

Life cycle perspective, cross-sectoral

Medium to short term



MIA

Complex approach

- Simplify, without being simplistic

Place specific

New model always - neighbourhood
metabolic model may be erroneous

6 stages – but stage 1 and 2 metabolic
issues will change

Materials (building - food?)



MIA

Put people at the centre, not modelling

Earlier engagement, collaborative approaches

Improve the policy links – widen the scope

Link to context (geographical, sectoral)



Concluding

MIA is important to set thresholds, mix of knowledges (IA, thresholds analysis, LSA)

Underlines the importance of looking at a wider picture proactively (transport + energy systems)

Mind thinking - broaden environmental understanding - push the vectors of sustainability

Allow learning processes together with technical assessment

Make it simple to be useful

