



This project is funded by the European Union



A checklist for the review of strategic environmental studies - tables

For the purpose of clarity and ease of following an environmental study, this checklist is divided into specific sections dedicated to the most important segments of an SEA study. The importance of each section is explained under each heading, followed by a set of questions to which qualitative answers are to be provided after the study had been read. Possible answers are:

Not applicable: This answer is appropriate in cases where questions are specific to one type of development or technology, which is not the topic of the SEA study being evaluated. These questions carry no weight in evaluating the overall quality of the study.

Fully meets best practices: This answer indicates that the information that would answer the relevant question is well elaborated, based on appropriate data and other information, and thus can serve as a basis for making development decisions. Such data and information need to be up-to-date, comprehensive, and relevant for the topic of discussion; with official sources properly quoted and all cited background studies available for review.

Partially meets best practices: This answer indicates that there is not enough information or analysis provided in the SEA study to fully answer a particular question; the study does not consider all important data or up-to-date information, so before any development decision can be made, additional information or evaluations should be included.

Does not meet best practices: This answer indicates a significant deviation from the purpose of an SEA study, raising serious concerns about the quality of a decision that can be made based on the information presented in the study. It implies that these aspects of a study need to be reevaluated or improved with more data before a development decision should be made.

Description of the policy, plan, or programme

Question	Score	Notes
<p>Are the purpose, overall aim, and expected outcomes of the proposed policy, plan or programme described?</p>		
<p>Are the links of the proposed policy, plan or programme with other policies, plans, or programmes described?</p>		
<p>Does the SEA study describe the overall approach to the assessment, including procedural steps and integration in the planning process?</p>		
<p>Are the key environmental and/or sustainable development issues and their main questions to be addressed by the SEA study clearly identified and supported by references to relevant objectives in related official documents?</p>		

Question	Score	Notes
<p>Are the key environmental impacts identified, taking into account the views of key stakeholders, for the SEA study to focus on?</p>		
<p>In case some environmental issues are eliminated (i.e. scoped-out) from the SEA study focus, are the reasons for elimination given and explained?</p>		
<p>Is the territorial scope of SEA study (i.e. area to be likely affected by the policy, plan or programme) identified and shown on a map?</p>		
<p>Are the potential transboundary impacts of the proposed policy, plan or programme identified?</p>		

Consideration of alternatives

Question	Score	Notes
<p>Are all alternatives suggested by the policy, plan, or programme described in detail, with their respective environmental effects?</p>		
<p>Is the process for the policy, plan, or programme development described, including elaboration of the reasons the proposed alternative was chosen?</p>		
<p>Are the considered alternatives and their environmental effects compared to the 'no action' situation and to the proposed policy, plan or programme?</p>		
<p>In case that the SEA recommends a new alternative course of action, is a clear explanation given of the reasons for eliminating the originally proposed alternative(s)?</p>		

Description of the environment likely to be affected by the policy, plan or programme

Question	Score	Notes
Is the existing state of the environment described?		
Is up-to-date reliable scientific data used for the baseline analysis in the SEA study, and are references provided?		
Are missing data or potential uncertainties clearly acknowledged?		
Are the past and current trends for the key environmental issues analyzed, including factors influencing those trends?		

Question	Score	Notes
<p>Is the future evolution of the key environmental issues without the implementation of the policy, plan or programme estimated and described?</p>		
<p>Does the baseline analysis in the SEA study include the entire potentially affected area, as established during the SEA scoping phase? Even when this area it is wider than administrative and/or physical boundaries, such as national borders, of the policy, plan or programme?</p>		

Description of the likely significant effects of the policy, plan or programme

Question	Score	Notes
Are likely conflicts and/or synergies between environmental objectives in other strategies, if any, for the key sustainable development issues elaborated in the SEA study and objectives of the policy, plan or programme identified and described?		
Are the full range of impacts likely to be caused by the implementation of the policy, plan or programme to all key environmental issues evaluated?		
Are all types of impacts considered, i.e.: direct and any indirect, secondary, short, medium and long-term, permanent and temporary, positive and negative, and cumulative?		
Are likely transboundary impacts analyzed?		

Question	Score	Notes
<p>Are the impacts characterized (e.g. their nature, significance, probability, scope and extent, frequency and duration, and reversibility), with sources of quality standards, rationale, assumptions and value judgments for such characterization clearly described?</p>		
<p>Are impacts quantified, where possible, and clearly supported by evidence such as references to any research, discussions, or consultations held?</p>		
<p>Is the evaluation of impacts substantiated by calculations, examples, and references, with sources of quality standards, rationale, assumptions and value judgments for the evaluation clearly described?</p>		

Question	Score	Notes
<p>Are the impacts on any of the key environmental issues excluded from the evaluation, and are reasons for such exclusion clearly elaborated?</p>		
<p>Are any components of the policy, plan, or programme excluded from evaluation, and are reasons for such exclusion clearly elaborated?</p>		
<p>Are the methods, approaches, techniques, and tools used to evaluate the impacts clearly described?</p>		

Question	Score	Notes
<p>Are potential uncertainties in the impacts' evaluation described, including what is their expected effect on objective decision-making?</p>		
<p>If any assumptions are used in evaluating impacts, are they clearly justified (e.g. examples of impacts from similar activities in other areas / countries, and references to literature)?</p>		
<p>Are the conclusions and recommendations given by the SEA study unbiased, clear and explicitly describe: (i) what is recommended, (ii) why it is recommended, (iii) what actions are needed, and (iv) who should perform them?</p>		

Description of mitigation measures and monitoring

Question	Score	Notes
Are measures to prevent, reduce, and/or offset any significant adverse effects suggested by the SEA study for all main impacts clearly defined?		
Are the impacts that cannot be mitigated identified?		
Are mitigation measures clearly linked to impacts identified, including transboundary ones (i.e. is it clear which impacts will be mitigated by a given measure)?		
Is the responsibility for the implementation of mitigation measures clearly assigned?		

Question	Score	Notes
Is a monitoring plan elaborated in the SEA study?		
Are the indicators for monitoring clearly defined based on the baseline information, the objective, and likely impacts identified by the SEA study?		
Where monitoring may reveal significant adverse effects, does the SEA study clearly define commitments for actions to be made in response to these adverse effects?		

Question	Score	Notes
<p>Is a plan outlined for how affected stakeholders will be informed of these adverse effects?</p>		
<p>Does the suggested monitoring scheme include monitoring of likely transboundary impacts?</p>		
<p>If so, is it clear how the likely affected foreign country will be informed about monitoring results and participate in actions in response to any adverse effects?</p>		

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