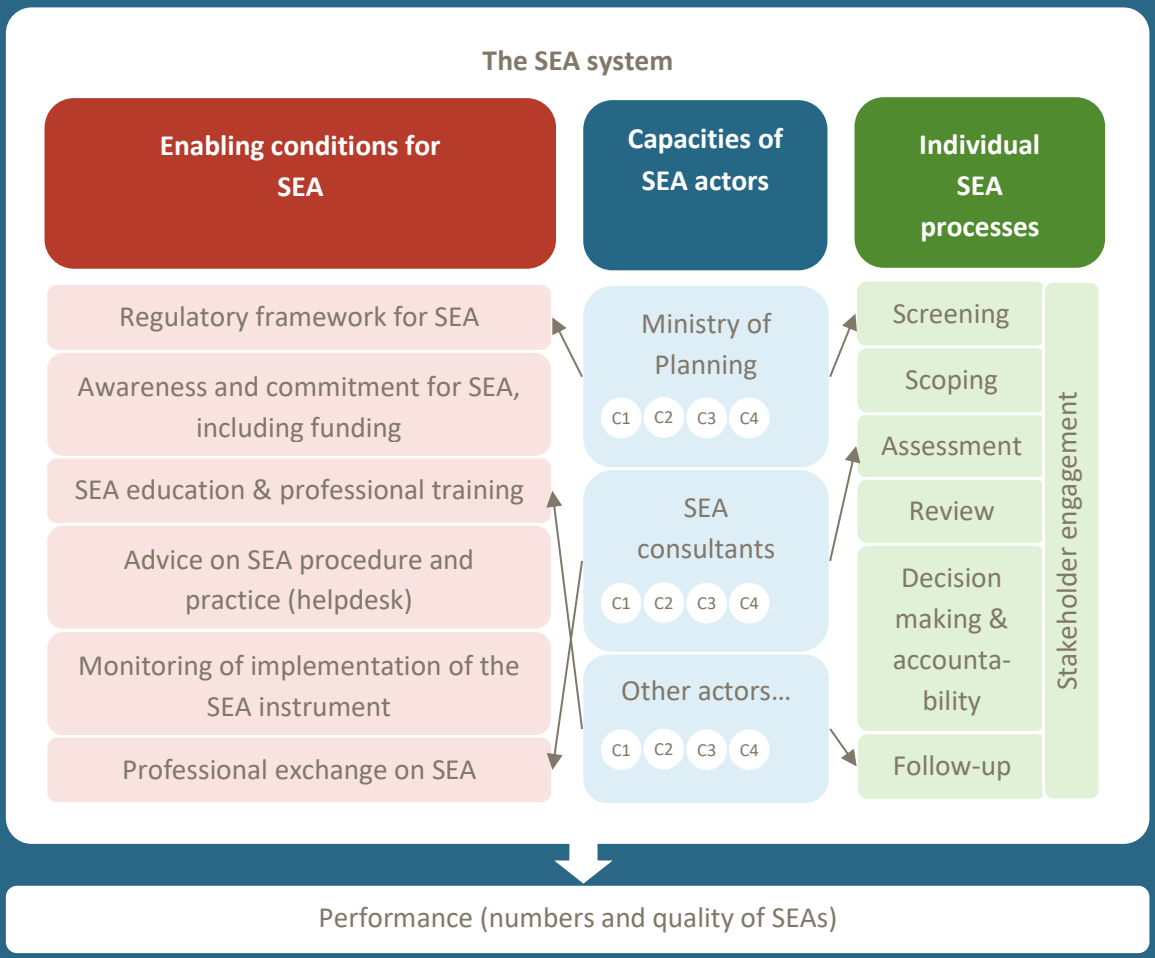
Netherlands Commission for
Environmental Assessment

A Systems Approach to SEA Effectiveness

NCEA/ISBN 978-90-421-9454-0



Updated version, September 2022

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1. Introduction

The Netherlands Commission for Environmental Assessment (NCEA) has been involved in Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) practice in the Netherlands for over 30 years, and in international cooperation for 20 years. Within the Netherlands, the NCEA provides independent quality assurance and operates as an ESIA/SEA knowledge centre. Outside the Netherlands, the NCEA supports ESIA/SEA capacity development, in addition to advice on quality assurance and knowledge sharing.

The NCEA makes its knowledge, experience and lessons learned available to its direct partners, and to a wider audience of ESIA/SEA practitioners, scientists and the general public, through a variety of channels: the NCEA website, newsletters, the NCEA-Views & Experiences series, (joint) publications and key sheets.

This updated publication introduces the reader to an ambitious endeavour the NCEA has embarked on in 2012: the translation of its practice experience into a so-called *systems approach*. This approach is intended to be used both for analysing existing ESIA and SEA systems in the countries with whom the NCEA cooperates, as well as for measuring the results of the contribution that the NCEA makes to improving these systems.

The system approach has been developed for both ESIA and SEA. This publication, however, concentrates solely on SEA, in a separate publication the systems approach is detailed for ESIA[1].

Below, in chapter 2, the systems approach is further explained. In chapter 3 we set out how we apply this approach in practice. The last chapter contains a series of tables with a detailed overview of the SEA system results, and the indicators and means of verification we have defined for the systems approach.

It is important to emphasise that this systems approach to ESIA and SEA is a work in progress. We expect to adapt the approach as we gain practical experience with this way of working, and in response to feedback we receive from the partners we work with. In line with this, this current publication is an update of the original 2014 and 2018 versions. A new edition of this publication will be prepared when our understanding of the systems approach has evolved further.

[1] See: NCEA, 2022, A Systems Approach to ESIA Effectiveness

2. Characterising the systems approach to SEA effectiveness

In its international work, the NCEA strives to contribute to 'better enabling conditions for SEA, more SEA capacity and better SEA processes' in the countries with which it cooperates. In 2012, we were challenged by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which subsidizes the majority of our international programmes, to make these objectives more tangible and measurable. In response, the international section of the NCEA made an effort to translate the lessons learned from practice into the 'SEA systems approach' presented here.

Starting point for this approach is the idea that if we want to understand SEA effectiveness, we need to take into view the whole SEA system, rather than looking solely at different components such as SEA regulation. We distinguish three levels in our systems approach: the enabling conditions level (see par. 2.1), the actor level (2.2) and the process level (2.3). At the enabling conditions level we look at key functions that should be fulfilled within a system to enable good practice SEA. The actor level is about the capacities of actors that have a role in the SEA system. At the process level, we look at how individual SEA processes are undertaken.

In keeping with the overall NCEA objective to contribute to 'better enabling conditions for SEA, more SEA capacity and better SEA processes', we have identified key results that should be achieved at each level. Each result is subsequently translated into a set of indicators, including the means of verification that allow assessment of the progress on that result. More detail is provided in chapter 4. In most cases, the assessment is qualitative, although some indicators are assessed quantitatively. Note that, in some instances, the means of verification refer to separate methods that the NCEA has developed, or which are currently under development. These methods are not elaborated in great detail in this publication, but more information is available elsewhere (see www.eia.nl).

2.1 Better enabling conditions for SEA: How to track improvement?

The NCEA considers an SEA system as having a number of 'enabling conditions' that are necessary for effective SEA practice. The system can be considered to be improved, when one or more of these enabling conditions have been strengthened. An SEA system is generally bounded by country borders, but in a country where SEA is decentralised, the system could also be specific to a region, province or district. Similarly, where countries have co-ordinated their SEA approaches, a supra-national SEA system could be considered. At the enabling conditions level, we have identified six key conditions (see figure 1 below).

In the view of the NCEA, these six enabling conditions need to be fulfilled for an SEA system to be effective. For each of the six enabling conditions we have formulated the results that we would hope to see as we work with partners to ensure that each of the conditions is operational within their SEA system. For each result we have defined a set of indicators to measure progress on these results, as well as means of verification.

For example:[2]

- ⇨ **Condition:** Raise awareness, commitment and funding for SEA.
  - ⇨ **Result**: SEA is on political agenda and high level decision-makers are involved in SEA practice
    - ⇨ **Indicator**: Government has explicit policy on development of SEA instrument (yes/no)
    - ⇨ **Indicator**: Nr. of times SEA appears on relevant agenda for Cabinet meetings, or other relevant agendas
    - ⇨ **Indicator**: Nr. of intervention moments by decision-makers in individual SEA processes
      - ⇨ **Means of verification:** Reporting by partner organisation

Figure 1

2.2 More SEA capacity: How to determine when it is sufficient?

Capacity development at actor level

It is essential for the effectiveness of an SEA system that the actors that have a responsibility in this system have the capacity to perform their role. This applies both to governmental actors with formal roles in the system, and to non-government actors that have more informal roles, such as NGOs and Universities. In the NCEA systems approach, the roles of actors are related to enabling conditions for the SEA system. See figure 2 on the next page. Note that we use the term actor loosely. For example, a network of actors such as that of consultants that undertake SEAs is included here as an actor that contributes to enabling conditions for SEA.

[2] See chapter 4 for all six enabling conditions and all corresponding results and indicators.

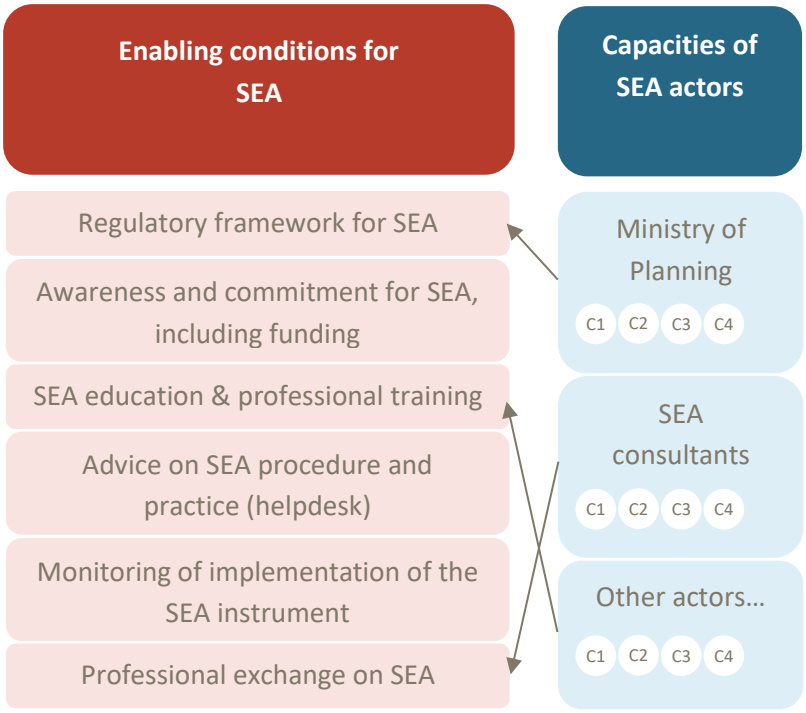

Figure 2
NB: The illustrated relations and actors in this figure are an example, the nature of the actors and their contribution to enabling conditions will vary depending on the context of a country.

But what does 'capacity' mean in this context? And when can it be concluded that an actor has sufficient capacity? In the past decade, the NCEA made use of the 5C capacity model[3], in which organisations need to have five distinct capacities, together making up the overall capacity of an organisation or network of actors. After over ten years of using this model, we concluded that in practice, a regrouping and rephrasing of capacities would better fit the NCEAs actual operations as well as the partners' realities. The newly (2022) adopted set of NCEA indicators for actor's capacity are the following:

- ***Mandate, structure, and resources***: for example, does the organisation have a clear mandate for what it tries to do? Is structural financing secured to execute this mandate? Etc.
- ***Management:*** does the organisation have a clear vision of where to go to? Does it anticipate new developments? Does it have effective procedures instructing staff what should be done under which circumstances? Etc.
- ***Knowledge and skills***: is sufficient expertise available to execute SEA related tasks? Are financing and mechanisms in place to access external expertise if needed? Etc.
- ***Maintaining strategic relations***: does the organisation have access to an effective network? Does it effectively manage its relations? Does it justify its decisions? Etc.

To strengthen the capacity of the actors that have a role in the SEA system, the NCEA needs to consider these four capacities. For each we have formulated SEA specific indicators and means of verification. For example[4]:

⇨ **Capacity**: Mandate, structure and resources
⇨ **Indicator**: Mandates clearly defined in legal texts (yes/no)

[3] IOB evaluation No. 335: Facilitating resourcefulness. Evaluation of Dutch support to capacity development (2011).
[4] See for all four capacities and all corresponding results and indicators chapter 4.

⇨ **Means of verification**: Analysis of legal texts.

Another adjustment that we have made in this 2022 version of the Systems Approach for SEA, is that the indicators have been specified for different sets of actors: Environment Agencies, Environmental and social assessment professionals (ESAPs), NGOs, CSOs and civil society, "Other government agencies" with a specific role in SEA, and "Other actors" if relevant (see Chapter 4).

Capacity development of persons

Traditionally, some of the activities of the NCEA are targeted towards individuals, oftentimes a small selection of individuals from different organisations. These activities are geared towards supporting individual professional development to enable SEA professionals to perform their specific tasks within the organisation or network that they operate. This usually involves training and/or coaching, often (preferably!) as components of actor capacity development interventions. For this reason, the NCEA has also identified a set of indicators that can track progress in capacity development at the level of an individual person. These are also further described in chapter 4.

In its work the NCEA aims to help actors across the four capacities, as well as strengthening capacity of individuals within organisations. The capacity of an actor is considered to have improved, if an actor within the SEA system scores better on the indicators for one or more of the four capacities and/or the indicators for individual capacity.

2.3 Better SEA processes: When has an SEA improved?

Together the SEA organisations identified have the capacity both to run an effective SEA system, and to deliver effective SEA processes. See figure 3 below.

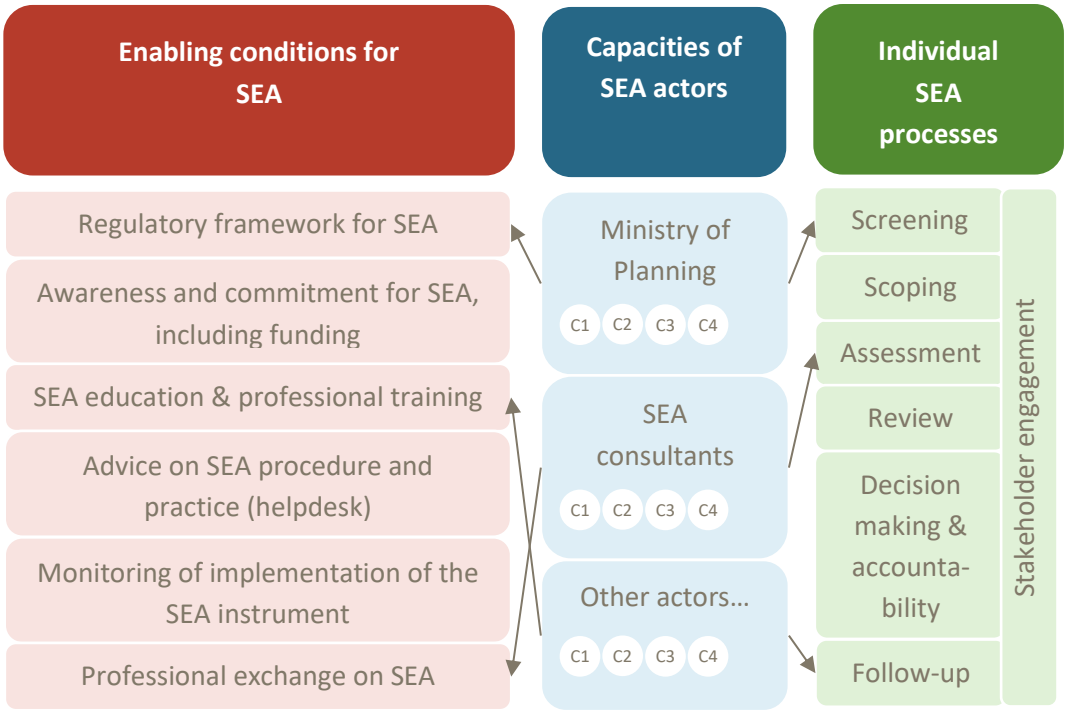

Figure 3. NB: The illustrated relations in this figure are an example, the nature of the actors and their contribution to enabling conditions and to the SEA process will vary depending on the country.

For the process level the NCEA formulated the following seven results that identify an effective SEA process:

- **Good quality** of the SEA report and process
- **Improved quality of the decision making** process
- Improved sustainability of the adopted **policy, plan or programme**
- Improved **quality of decision making at other levels**, e.g. on ESIAs or within other sectors
- **Improved capacity of actors** (learning through training on the job)
- **Rate of satisfaction** with the NCEA advice
- **Improved governance**, e.g. SEA led to stronger collaboration between government agencies.

In the same way as for the enabling conditions and actor levels, we have formulated indicators and means of verification for each result. For example:

⇨ **Result**: Good quality of SEA report and process
⇨ **Indicator**: Assessment complete and of appropriate scope (yes/partially/no)
⇨ **Means of verification**: NCEA review of SEA report

To assess the results of its efforts at the level of an SEA process the NCEA looks at both the 'product' (SEA report) and the 'process' (SEA process, including follow-up). Within the means of verification we make use of monitoring forms that NCEA has developed earlier as part of its internal monitoring system.

2.4 Better system performance: When has SEA practice improved?

The six enabling conditions, actor capacities, and individual processes, all contribute to the overall SEA system performance in terms of the number and quality of SEAs that are produced. To track this performance, we have also defined specific system results that the NCEA wants to contribute to, as well as indicators and means of verification for these.

For example:

⇨ **Result**: Improvement in SEAs quality (yes/no)
⇨ **Indicator**: Proportion of SEAs considered of sufficient quality
⇨ **Indicator**: Proportion of SEAs considered influential (on decision-making and implementation)
⇨ **Means of verification** (for both indicators): Analysis of SEA sample and/or interviews (for example, with those responsible for SEA review)

3. Application of the SEA systems approach in practice

3.1 Links between enabling conditions, capacities and SEA processes

Different organisations or networks of actors contribute to different enabling conditions within the SEA system. Sometimes, one specific organisation has a dominant role in one condition, such as a Ministry of Spatial Planning might have in providing a regulatory framework for SEA. In other cases, more actors contribute to an enabling condition. For example for the condition *Raise awareness and commitment for SEA,* the same Ministry will be relevant, but a body like a Council for Sustainable Development can also play a role. The capacities of an actor determine how well the actor is able to contribute to an enabling condition. Ultimately, this will lead to better application of the instrument SEA (coverage) and better quality SEA processes.

Figure 4. illustrates the relationship between enabling conditions and actors. It depicts a possible outcome of an analysis of a given enabling condition for the SEA system and actor capacity The coloured circles with a "c", stand for the capacities singled out for strengthening in a possible cooperation programme with the NCEA, see also 3.2.

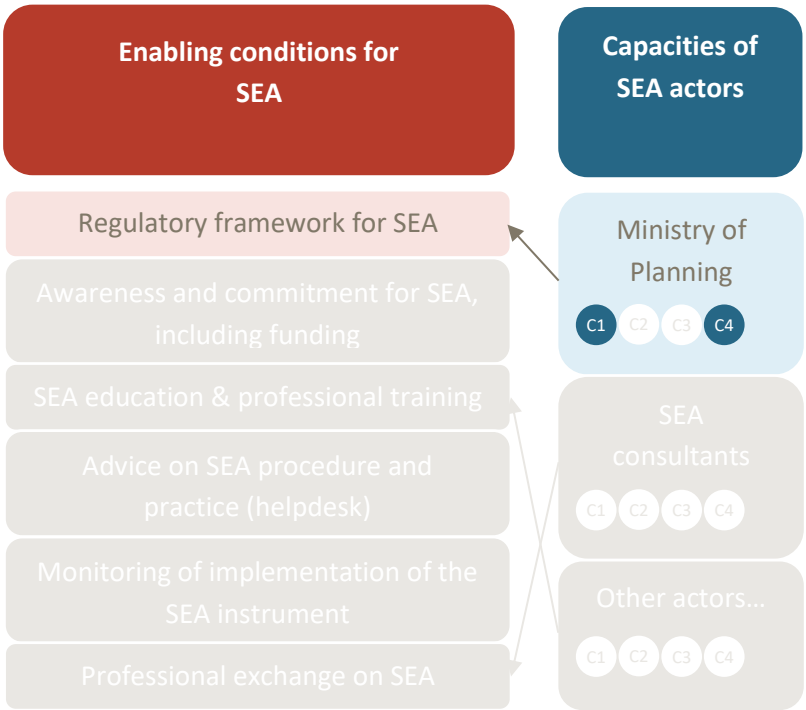

Figure 4

3.2 How does NCEA apply the systems approach in practice?

The SEA system approach can provide a useful framework to analyse a countries SEA system and identify those elements that need strengthening. When a multi-annual cooperation programme is being formulated, the NCEA usually starts with such a system-wide assessment. Together with our partners, we discuss the different enabling conditions that should be contained within an SEA system. Jointly it is then decided which enabling conditions need to be

established or strengthened. In the next step, the actors are identified that play a role in these enabling conditions. Depending on where possibilities for cooperation emerge, the NCEA starts working on the conditions that have priority with the interested actors.

When the NCEA starts a cooperation process with an actor, this actor is subsequently analysed according to the four capacities (see 2.2). Together with the actor, an action plan or programme is then developed to strengthen that particular actor. The cooperation programme addresses one or more of the actor's capacities (see for example the coloured circles within the Ministry of Planning box in figure 4 above).

Of course, it is rarely possible to take on all the capacity needs within a given SEA system simultaneously. Choices have to be made depending on the scale of the cooperation and who the willing partners for cooperation are. Cooperation always starts with a request by the potential partner. Often the NCEA will work specifically with the actors and capacities that are more directly related to SEA. In most cases, the activities supported by the NCEA concentrate on one or two levels of the SEA system, but can lead to results at other levels. For instance, NCEA advice on a specific SEA case may lead to changes in working procedures within an organisation or may lead to improvement in political commitment to SEA. Similarly, as the NCEA partners strengthen their own capacities, the enabling conditions to which the partners contribute should also improve.

In box 1 below, we illustrate how the SEA system approach influenced the design of a two year cooperation project in Macedonia[5].

Box 1. SEA systems approach in Macedonia

In 2010 a government-to-government cooperation started between the Macedonian Ministry for Environment and Physical Planning and the NCEA. In the early stages of the project, the Macedonian and Dutch counterparts jointly analysed the SEA system. They identified the various enabling conditions that need to be fulfilled within the Macedonian SEA system. Then they looked at the key actors within this system, and how they contributed to different enabling conditions.

For example, all SEA systems require a steady influx of young SEA professionals. There need to be training opportunities for people who are interested in this field (enabling conditon "SEA education and professional training"). The question was, who should be offering such training, and how to ensure that it is structurally available? The ministry counterparts decided that in Macedonia it should be the universities and the training institute for government staff. For the enabling condition "Awareness and commitment", a high-level champion of SEA within the administrative or political system is needed. Here, the SEA staff of the ministry thought that the Council for Sustainable Development could contribute to this condition. For the enabling condition "Advise on SEA procedure and practice", the ministry staff concluded that they themselves should be primarily responsible and that the Ministry should house a helpdesk function. Certified SEA consultants could advise in specific cases.
This way the system analysis helped to determine which enabling conditions required attention, and how the ministry should organize itself to effectively contribute to these conditions.

[5] See: NCEA, 2012, Success Factors for SEA Capacity Development: the Macedonia Case, In: Views and Experiences 2012, Netherlands Commission for Environmental Assessment, Utrecht, the Netherlands.

3.3 Opportunities and threats: Cooperation activities in their context

The NCEA's systems approach can help to identify opportunities for SEA strengthening, to decide, jointly with the partner, on ambitions for change, and to define the results that partners want to achieve with the NCEA's support. Conversely, the systems view might also highlight impossibilities. For example, if the systems analysis shows specific enabling conditions or actor capacities to be a clear bottleneck for performance of the system, and there is little scope to change those, then the NCEA may opt to postpone cooperation activities until a more opportune time.

In addition, jointly with our cooperation partners, we will try to assess the context of an SEA system to figure out if the cooperation activities are suitably timed. What is the political agenda? What is the administrative culture? Who has the power? The answers to these kinds of questions help to determine whether the proposed activities are likely to be successful in the given context. If important contextual factors are likely to be restrictive, the cooperation activities may need to be reconsidered.

3.4 Using the indicators to measure the NCEA's performance

As stated before, the original incentive to formulate the SEA system approach was a request by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs to render the results of the NCEA's work more tangible and measurable. We have experimented with the systems approach in the NCEA working programme for 2013, and ever since. The intended results of planned activities were formulated along the lines of the criteria and indicators in the systems approach. The approach proved suitable for this use. The NCEA team is positive that the approach will also serve as a valid framework for measuring results during and at the end of a cooperation project. However more practical experience is needed to support this expectation.

Clearly, we will carefully need to focus our use of the performance indicators for each application. After all, in our country programmes we seldom work with all institutions relevant for the SEA system, or each of the six functions of the system. So each time the NCEA will be following a limited set of results that relate to the activities that are relevant within a specific cooperation project or programme.

4. The performance indicators

In the tables on the next pages, the performance indicators are elaborated, for each of the levels (enabling conditions, actor (and individual), and process).

Note that the means of verifications are lined up with the indicator for which they are intended. If not, then the means of verification can be used for more than one of the indicators listed under that result.

If there is a reference to “partners” under means of verification, we are referring to our country partners in our cooperation activities, such as a Ministry for Spatial Planning.

4.1 SEA performance indicators – Enabling conditions level

Condition: Provide regulatory framework for SEA		
Results	**Indicators**	**Means of verification**
SEA regulation is in place	SEA regulation established (yes/no)	▪ Document analysis (sources: govt reporting) interviews
SEA regulation is of sufficient quality	Quality assessment against good practice benchmark: ▪ Scope of application consistent with ambition and capacity ▪ Sufficient scope of assessment (including strategic alternatives) ▪ Participation included ▪ SEA quality control included ▪ Transparency and access to information sufficiently addressed ▪ Accountability sufficiently addressed ▪ Clear roles, mandates & co-ordination arrangements ▪ Sufficient arrangements for compliance and enforcement	Assessment of regulation (of regulation changes) against benchmark (checklist approach – (yes/no) on each aspect supported by qualitative statement)
SEA guidance exists, is widely accessible, and of sufficient quality	▪ Guidance exists (yes/no) ▪ Estimation of % practitioners that have access to guidance ▪ Combined result of assessment quality against good practice benchmark: o Guidance developed in iterative and consultative process o Guidance appropriate for level and nature of practice o Guidance is practical, includes case illustrations o Guidance makes use of existing (international) resources	▪ Document analysis (sources: govt reporting) ▪ Interview with (panel of) practitioners ▪ Quality assessment of guidance

Condition: Raise awareness and commitment for SEA, including funding		
Results	**Indicators**	**Means of verification**
Sufficient budget is allocated to undertake SEA related tasks at relevant organisations, such as Ministry for Environment (differentiate between donor and country budget)	▪ Earmarked SEA budget in governmental budgets exist (yes/no), rough estimate budgets & trends, budget considered sufficient? ▪ Budget available for individual SEA cases: (yes/no), rough estimate budgets & trends, budget considered sufficient?	▪ Interviews and (if available) analysis of govt budget ▪ Interviews with panel of SEA consultants
SEA is given attention in the public domain	Level of media coverage on SEA	Media analysis, or more anecdotal (partners collect "cuttings")
SEA is on political agenda and high-level decision-makers are involved in SEA practice	▪ Government has explicit policy on development SEA instrument (yes/no). ▪ Other agencies have explicit policy (yes/no – and nr. of policies). ▪ Nr. of times SEA appears on relevant agenda for Cabinet meetings, or other relevant agendas, etc. (per year). ▪ Nr. of intervention moments by decision-makers in individual SEA processes. ▪ Nr. of times decision-makers are physically present at SEA related events.	Reporting by partner
Sufficient level of interest and participation in SEA related events (seminars, etc)	▪ Turn-out: Nr. of participants, and ratio target audience versus who attended ▪ Appreciation for event ▪ Level of questions and discussion (basic/advanced)	▪ Reporting on events ▪ Feedback participants (forms etc) ▪ Analysis/interview organizers
Recognizable, accepted, and effective leadership on SEA	SEA practitioners can identify SEA leaders pushing/motivating better practice when asked (yes/no)	Interviews with panel of SEA practitioners
Condition: Provide SEA education and professional training (NB: education = tertiary level ESIA teaching at academic institutions, training = professional development)		

Results	Indicators	Means of verification
SEA education is available	▪ Curricula established at teaching institutions (yes/no) ▪ Nr. of degree programmes where SEA is taught	Internet search (+interviews if needed)
SEA education is of sufficient quality	▪ Nr. of institutes where SEA is taught with good reputation (academic ranking). ▪ SEA teaching is co-ordinated or under quality control (unified curriculum etc) (yes/no). ▪ Participants/students are able to contribute to good practice (yes/no). ▪ High scores on education participants evaluations.	▪ Internet search ▪ Interviews ▪ Interviews with panel of SEA practitioners ▪ Analysis existing evaluations ▪ Interviews with ex students
Professional training is available (i.e. indicator is not about one-off training but about regularly organized workshops etc for SEA professionals to further develop their skills & knowledge)	▪ Training available (yes/no) ▪ Nr. of SEA training opportunities on annual basis (workshops etc. available)	▪ Internet search ▪ Interviews with panel of SEA practitioners if needed
Condition: Provide advice on SEA procedure and practice (SEA helpdesk)		
Results	**Indicators**	**Means of verification**
Helpdesk for SEA established, accessible and used	▪ Helpdesk established (yes/no) ▪ Nr. of queries received	▪ Partner reporting (tracking system helpdesk and/or interview with helpdesk experts)
Helpdesk facilitates access to data and information relevant for SEA	▪ Helpdesk identifies relevant (external) data bases and sources of information and brings client in contact with owner/manager (yes/no) ▪ Information management system exists giving access to (external) data bases and sources of information (yes/no) ▪ Nr. of queries received	▪ Partner reporting (tracking system helpdesk and/or interview with helpdesk experts) ▪
Helpdesk effective in influencing practice	Level of effectiveness (%) allocated by practitioners	Interviews with (panel of) SEA practitioners
Condition: Monitor implementation of SEA instrument		

Results	Indicators	Means of verification
Adequate monitoring of SEA implementation takes place	▪ Monitoring activities are undertaken (yes/no) ▪ Budget is available for monitoring (yes/no) ▪ (Public) reporting on progress takes place (yes/no)	▪ Document analysis ▪ Interviews
Monitoring leads to SEA improvement efforts	Nr. of actions undertaken on monitoring conclusions (feedback and follow-up)	▪ Document analysis ▪ Interviews
Condition: Enable professional exchange on SEA		
Results	**Indicators**	**Means of verification**
Professional exchange platform is established and operational	▪ Platform exists (yes/no) ▪ Average turn-out for activities (nr. or high/medium/low) ▪ Level of activity (nr. of events or high/medium/low) ▪ % effective in influencing practice ▪ Network recognizes and promotes good practice (yes/no)	▪ Partner reporting ▪ Interviews with (panel of) SEA practitioners
SEA professionals identify and share data and information relevant for SEA	▪ Existence of (external) data bases and sources of information actively shared (yes/no) ▪ Access to (external) data bases and sources of information facilitated among SEA professionals (yes/no)	▪ Partner (professional SEA association) reporting ▪ Interview with (panel of) practitioners

4.2 SEA performance indicators – Actor level

Capacity of the Environment agency (i.e. administrative agency for SEA)		
Result	**Indicators**	**Means of verification**
Mandate, structure and resources	▪ Mandate clearly defined in legal texts ▪ Structural financing secured to execute mandate ▪ Actor has committed and stable leadership ▪ Actor has clear and functional organisational structure ▪ Offices established, facilities and equipment needed available ▪ Number of staff available sufficient to perform tasks ▪ Information management system exists giving access to information required to perform tasks ▪ Tools/guidance available to support tasks (working procedures, checklists, etc)	▪ Analysis of legal texts ▪ State budget/ organisation's budget ▪ Human resources policy ▪ Workload assessment ▪ Document analysis (including guidance documents) ▪ Interviews (separately with management and work floor)
Management	▪ Vision/Strategy/multi-annual plan exists and informs the work of the actor ▪ Vision/strategy/planning documents accessible and known ▪ Decisions are taken, communicated and acted upon ▪ Regular planning/ coordination meetings are held ▪ Management encourages exchange and learning ▪ Management anticipates new developments	▪ Document analysis (including guidance documents) ▪ IMS6/data base analysis ▪ Interviews (separately with management and work floor)
Knowledge and skills	▪ Expertise available to perform all SEA administrative tasks (can be split into indicators for specific tasks relevant for organisation, depending on role of the actor in the SEA system, i.e. SEA screening, SEA scoping, SEA review, field inspection, providing	▪ State budget/ organisations budget ▪ Interviews (separately with management and work floor)

[6] Information Management System

	SEA advice to practitioners, stakeholder engagement, follow-up) ▪ Staff regularly trained and effort made to maintain knowledge and skills for tasks and institutional memory ▪ Appropriate finances and mechanisms available to access external expertise if needed (such as for SEA review) ▪ Finances and mechanisms available to access (external) data bases and sources of information if needed (specifically for SEA baseline and impact assessment)	
Maintaining strategic relations	▪ Co-ordination/co-operation with relevant partners takes place ▪ Leadership in SEA of organisation duly recognised by partners ▪ Platforms/networks/coalitions for exchange (both national and international) identified by organization, and organisation (pro)actively participates in these ▪ Organisation willingly shares data and information ▪ Status of environmental agency in the government hierarchy ▪ Organisation justifies decisions made to external stakeholders	▪ Interviews (separately with people inside and outside the organisation itself)

Capacity of environmental and social assessment professionals (ESAPs)		
Result	**Indicators**	**Means of verification**
Resources	▪ Number of ESAPs available is sufficient to meet the demand for SEA work ▪ ESAPs have access to data, maps, etc required to undertake SEA work ▪ There are tools available to support SEA work (formats, check-lists, etc)?	▪ Document analysis (including guidance docu-ments) ▪ Interviews (separately with management and work floor)
Knowledge and skills	▪ ESAPs have expertise available to do SEA work (can be split into indicators for specific tasks relevant for organisation, depend-ing on role of the actor in the SEA system, i.e. SEA screening, SEA scoping, SEA review, field inspection, providing SEA advice to practitioners, stakeholder engagement, follow-up) ▪ ESAPs are regularly trained and have opportunity to develop career as a professional in SEA	▪ Interviews (separately with management and work floor)
Maintaining strategic relations	▪ ESAPs work together with CSOs, government agencies, and knowledge institutes in their ESIA work ▪ ESAPs partake in platforms/networks/coalitions for SEA (if these exist). ▪ ESAPs share data and information to improve SEA practice, among each other but also with government or other external parties.	▪ Interviews (separately with people inside and outside the organisation itself)

Capacity of NGOs, CSOs, civil society		
Result	**Indicators**	**Means of verification**
Mandate (role), structure and resources	▪ The role of CSOs in SEA is clearly defined in legal texts ▪ Structural financing secured for CSOs to execute their role in SEA practice ▪ CSOs have offices established, facilities and equipment needed available ▪ Number of CSOs active in SEA is sufficient to fulfil CSO role ▪ CSOs have access to databases, maps, etc required to be involved in SEAs ▪ There are tools available to support CSOs in their role in SEA (formats, checklists, etc)?	▪ Analysis of legal texts ▪ Organisation's budget ▪ Human resources policy ▪ Workload assessment ▪ Document analysis (including guidance documents) ▪ Interviews (separately with management and work floor)
Knowledge and skills	▪ CSOs have expertise needed to perform role in SEA (can be split into indicators for specific tasks relevant for organisation, depending on role of the actor in the SEA system, i.e. SEA screening, SEA scoping, SEA review, field inspection, providing SEA advice to practitioners, stakeholder engagement, follow-up) ▪ CSO staff are trained on SEA and have opportunity to specialise in SEA work ▪ Finances and mechanisms are available to CSOs to access external expertise if needed (such as for SEA review)	▪ Organisation's budget ▪ Interviews (separately with management and work floor)
Maintaining strategic relations	▪ CSOs work together with ESAPs, government agencies, and knowledge institutes within SEA processes ▪ CSOs partake in platforms/networks/coalitions for SEA (if these exist).	▪ Interviews (separately with people inside and outside the organisation itself)

	▪ CSOs share data and information to improve SEA practice, among each other but also with ESAPs, government or other external parties.	

Capacity of other government agency (with specific role in SEA)		
Results	**Indicators**	**Means of verification**
Mandate, structure and resources for SEA	▪ Mandates clearly defined in legal texts ▪ Structural financing secured to execute mandate ▪ Staff, facilities and equipment available are sufficient ▪ Information management system exists giving access to information required to perform tasks ▪ Tools/guidance available to support tasks (working procedures, checklists, etc)	▪ Analysis of legal texts ▪ State budget/ organisation's budget ▪ Human resources policy ▪ Workload assessment ▪ Document analysis (including guidance documents) ▪ Interviews (separately with management and work floor)
Management of SEA tasks (input, advice, review, comment, implement, follow up)	▪ Decisions regarding SEA are taken, communicated and acted upon ▪ Regular planning/coordination meetings are held ▪ Management encourages exchange and learning	▪ Document analysis (including guidance documents) ▪ IMS[7]/data base analysis ▪ Interviews (separately with management and work floor)
Knowledge and skills	▪ Expertise available to perform their SEA tasks (can be split into indicators for specific tasks relevant for organisation, depending on role of the actor in the SEA system, i.e. SEA screening,	▪ State budget/ actor's budget ▪ Interviews (separately with management and work floor)

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	SEA scoping, SEA review, field inspection, providing SEA advice to practitioners, stakeholder engagement, follow-up) (yes/no) ▪ Staff regularly trained and effort made to maintain knowledge and skills	
Maintaining strategic relations	▪ Co-ordination/co-operation with relevant partners takes place ▪ Proactive participation in platforms/networks ▪ Actor willingly shares data and information ▪ Actor justifies decisions made to external stakeholders	▪ Interviews (separately with people inside and outside the organisation itself)

Other Capacities if relevant		
Result	**Indicators**	**Means of verification**
	Other 'group' with a role in SEA? If so, discuss the most relevant questions above and select suitable indicators and means of verification.	

Capacity of specific individual to perform his/her SEA related task		
Result	**Indicator**	**Means of verification**
SEA Professional fully capable of performing task	▪ Knowledge & expertise needed to perform task sufficient & up to date (yes/no) ▪ Person feels confident to perform task (yes/no) ▪ Access to knowledge and information secured (yes/no) ▪ Position of staff duly recognised and respected (yes/no) ▪ Enabling atmosphere to openly exchange and discuss (yes/no) ▪ Leadership respects and defends staff technical stand points (yes/no)	▪ Training evaluation results ▪ Coaching reports ▪ Evaluations of quality of work ▪ Interviews ▪ Analysis of decisions

4.3 SEA performance indicators – Process level

For the process level, two different types of indicators can be used, with different purposes.

Firstly, an assessment can be made of the general procedure followed for SEA processes within a certain system. In this case, the process steps (see frontpage of this document) should be further specified, since each system has its own procedure. Because generalisation is not possible here, there is no standardised set of indicators available. The NCEA's SEA mapping tool (currently being developed) can be used for this purpose.

Secondly, an assessment can be made of the quality and results of an individual SEA process. For this purpose, the indicators below can be used. These indicators have been designed to assess the results of the NCEA's advisory work in concrete SEA processes and can be used to track the results of the NCEA's Terms of Reference (ToR) and SEA review advice, as well as to coaching. Note that M1, M2 and M3 denote monitoring forms previously developed within the NCEA. The forms are designed to collect monitoring information on results achievement.

Individual SEA process		
Results	**Indicator**	**Means of verification**
Improved SEA report and process	▪ NCEA advice followed (yes/partially/no) ▪ Assessment complete and of appropriate scope (yes/partially/no) ▪ Alternatives identified and compared and led to recommendation for plan (yes/partially/no) ▪ SEA covers how risks can be addressed in plan implementation (yes/partially/no) ▪ Key stakeholders in plan involved in all of the above? (yes/partially/no) ▪ SEA integrated into plan process (in terms of different process steps, SEA team/plan team working together, combined SEA and plan public meetings?) (yes/partially/no)	▪ NCEA review of SEA report (when relevant) ▪ M2 form administered as interview and/or written questionnaire
Improved decision-making on plan	▪ Formal decision (adoption of plan) made (precondition indicator) (yes/no)	▪ M3 form administered as interview and/or written questionnaire

	▪ SEA recommendations taking into consideration in the plan deliberations or in decision statement (yes/partially/no)	▪ Decision analysis
More sustainable plan	▪ New alternatives incorporated into plan (yes/partially/no) ▪ Mitigation measures incorporated into plan design or implementation plan (yes/partially/no) ▪ Stakeholder concerns incorporated into plan (yes/partially/no) ▪ Plan is more environmentally friendly (see MDG references in M3) and socially acceptable (yes/partially/no)	Follow-up interview(s) to update M3 form, with focus on implementation
Improved capacity (if SEA had additional aim of learning, such as joint review with counterpart team to demonstrate how to do review or by involving experts (e.g. Dutch and local water expert))	▪ Relevant staff exposed to/participated in new way of working (Nr. of relevant people participated in counterpart team) ▪ Way of working incorporated in own practice (yes/partially/no) ▪ Case used for training/education or as practice benchmark (yes-no)	Interviews
Satisfactory advice has been delivered and has led to concrete action	▪ Level of satisfaction on content of advice (high/medium/low) ▪ Level of satisfaction on timing of advice ((high/medium/low) ▪ Distribution of advice (% stakeholders involved in drafting advisory ToR versus stakeholders having received final ToR) ▪ Adoption of advice (yes/partially/no) ▪ Concrete actions on advice taken (consider specifically any change in budget allocated to SEA) (yes/no)	M1 form administered as interview and/or written questionnaire
Improved governance	▪ Support/awareness for plan increased through SEA (more participation/transparency of plan process) (yes/partially/no) ▪ SEA facilitated collaboration between govt. agencies (yes/partially/no) ▪ Institutional arrangements (monitoring plan, capacity, etc) to deal with environmental and social risks during plan implementation are planned or in place (yes/partially/no)	M3 form administered as interview and/or written questionnaire
Improved planning overall	▪ SEA influenced other levels of decision-making (i.e. other plans, SEA based project decisions) (yes/partially/no)	Follow-up interviews

4.4 SEA performance indicators – System performance

The enabling conditions, actor capacities, and individual processes all contribute to SEA system performance in terms of the number and quality of SEAs. System performance is tracked through the results and indicators below. Note that the results are now formulated in terms of relative changes rather than as absolute qualities. This is because the determination of what constitutes sufficient quality of SEA practice, adequate level of SEA application or a good practice SEA, will be relative to the starting point in the system concerned, as well as on the ambitions set for that specific SEA system.

System performance: numbers and quality of SEAs		
Results	**Indicators**	**Means of verification**
Improvement in SEAs quality	▪ Proportion of SEAs considered of sufficient quality ▪ Proportion of SEAs considered influential (on decision-making and implementation)	▪ Analysis of SEA sample and/or ▪ Interviews (for example, with those responsible for SEA review)
More co-ordination between governmental agencies takes place within SEA processes	% cases that other govt agencies/departments are consulted in screening, scoping etc (estimate)	Interviews
Improved application of SEA (Note: depending on ambitions for SEA, in some cases lower nr. of SEAs over time could signal an improvement)	Nr. of SEAs undertaken annually	SEA tracking system (partner responsibility)

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