

# **IEMA Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)**

## **Environmental Report (ER) Review Criteria**

*The criteria below are also applicable to the review if the plan or programme is acting as a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) as well as an SEA report.*

Note: where a 'plan' is mentioned this also refers to a programme depending on the document being reviewed.

### **1. Description of the procedure for the production of the plan or programme and the SEA/SA**

- Has the purpose / aim of the SEA/SA been described, with a mention of the Regulations which underpins the document?
- Is the general process for the development of the plan, the SEA/SA and their interaction been described?
- Have environmental protection/sustainability objectives within relevant local (community), regional and national policies, plans or programmes been described and their synergies, inconsistencies and constraints addressed?
- For SA's, has sustainability been defined?

### **2. Characterisation of the existing environment**

- Has the existing state of the environment/sustainability been clearly described, with baseline levels provided (quantitatively where appropriate), especially for potential sensitive areas?
- Has the future state of the environment/sustainability without the plan been described?
- Are the main environmental/sustainability concerns, with their locations, clearly stated and is it clear whether could they be affected by the plan?
- Has the wider area, beyond the physical boundaries of the plan area, been considered where it is likely to be affected by the plan?
- Where surveys have been undertaken have the methodologies and indicators used for the baseline information been described and justified?
- Have the limitations with the data collected or difficulties encountered been described?

### **3. Objectives used for the SEA/SA**

- Has the approach to the SEA/SA been 'objectives-led' and have the objectives been described and defined, quantitatively where appropriate?
- For SA's, have objectives been provided for the following areas:
  - Maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth?
  - Social progress which recognise the needs of everyone?
  - Effective protection of the environment?
  - Prudent use of natural resources?
- Has the methodology for the development of SEA/SA objectives been described?
- Has the ER identified and described any conflicts that exist between the objectives of the SEA/SA, the plan and other policies and plans? Has the resolution of these conflicts been considered?
- Has priority been provided to any objectives and if so have they been fully justified?
- Is the relationship between the objectives and the indicators (and any targets) clearly described?

#### 4. Alternatives

- Are the potential alternatives within the plan described and considered against the environmental/sustainability objectives?
- Have the methodology been described for identifying the alternatives and the reasons for choosing them been described?
- If any alternatives have been eliminated have the reasons been provided?
- Has alternatives considered either the do minimum or business as usual scenario's?
- Has the potential performance and significant impacts of each alternative been clearly described with a defined level of impact?

#### 5. Consultation

- Has the scope of the SEA/SA been discussed, the consultees identified and their responses described?
- Has the ER stated when the consultation was conducted in relation to the development of the plan and has it demonstrated how consultation has been considered? Could the consultation be seen as not being 'early and effective'?

#### 6. Assessment of Environmental/Sustainability Impacts

- Where any environmental/sustainability characteristics are to be significantly affected, are they clearly described?
- Are the methodologies for assessing environmental/sustainability impacts described?
- Is the full range of positive and negative impacts addressed?
- Where there are uncertainties in assessing the impacts and assumptions have been made, have they been justified and the worst case scenario used?
- Have the magnitude of impacts been described clearly for the potential environmental/sustainability effects of the plan, with either quantifiable data or qualitative data, as appropriate?
- Where impacts are likely to be significant, does the assessment evaluate the likely significance for the preferred alternative?
  - For SEA's the topic's potentially include: biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors.
  - For SA's the topic's potentially include: the above and should include social and economic impacts.
- Does the assessment include and clearly outline the effects that are short, medium and long-term, permanent and temporary, positive and negative?
- Does the assessment address secondary, synergistic and cumulative impacts and states the potential impacts clearly?
- Where impacts have not been assessed due to non-significance, have the reasons been clearly stated?
- Are mitigation measures clearly described and committed to that will prevent, reduce or remedy any significant adverse effects on the environment/society and economy resulting from the implementation of the plan?

#### 7. Monitoring and Follow Up

- Where there are gaps in the baseline information, uncertainties or a foreseen requirement to test the accuracy of the predictions, has monitoring been suggested to improve the future baseline work and improve the accuracy of information on the existing environment/sustainability?
- Are the indicators for monitoring clearly defined and are they based upon the original baseline information, indicators and the objectives of the plan and the SEA/SA?
- Are any environmental/sustainability targets provided and if so, are they clearly defined?

- Where monitoring may reveal adverse effects, does the report identify a commitment to undertaking contingency arrangements to mitigate the potential environmental/sustainability impact?
- Are plans for the delivery of follow-up measures described, e.g. timing or the responsibility of plans?

#### 8. Decision making and Implementation of the plan

- Are the environmental/sustainability considerations that have been taken into account and rationale for any changes to the plan clearly described?
- Are the links to other potential follow-up procedures been specified, e.g. project EIA, design guidance etc.?

#### 9. Presentation

- Is the SEA/SA systematic, transparent, consistent, concise and to be understood by the general public?
- Have the results been made explicit?
- Where the ER has used existing data or other publications have they been adequately referenced?
- Does the Non-technical Summary provide an overall clear summary of the ER and has it been produced as a stand alone document to facilitate in the wider readership of the document?