



Best Practice in Strategic Environmental Assessment in the Greater Mekong Subregion

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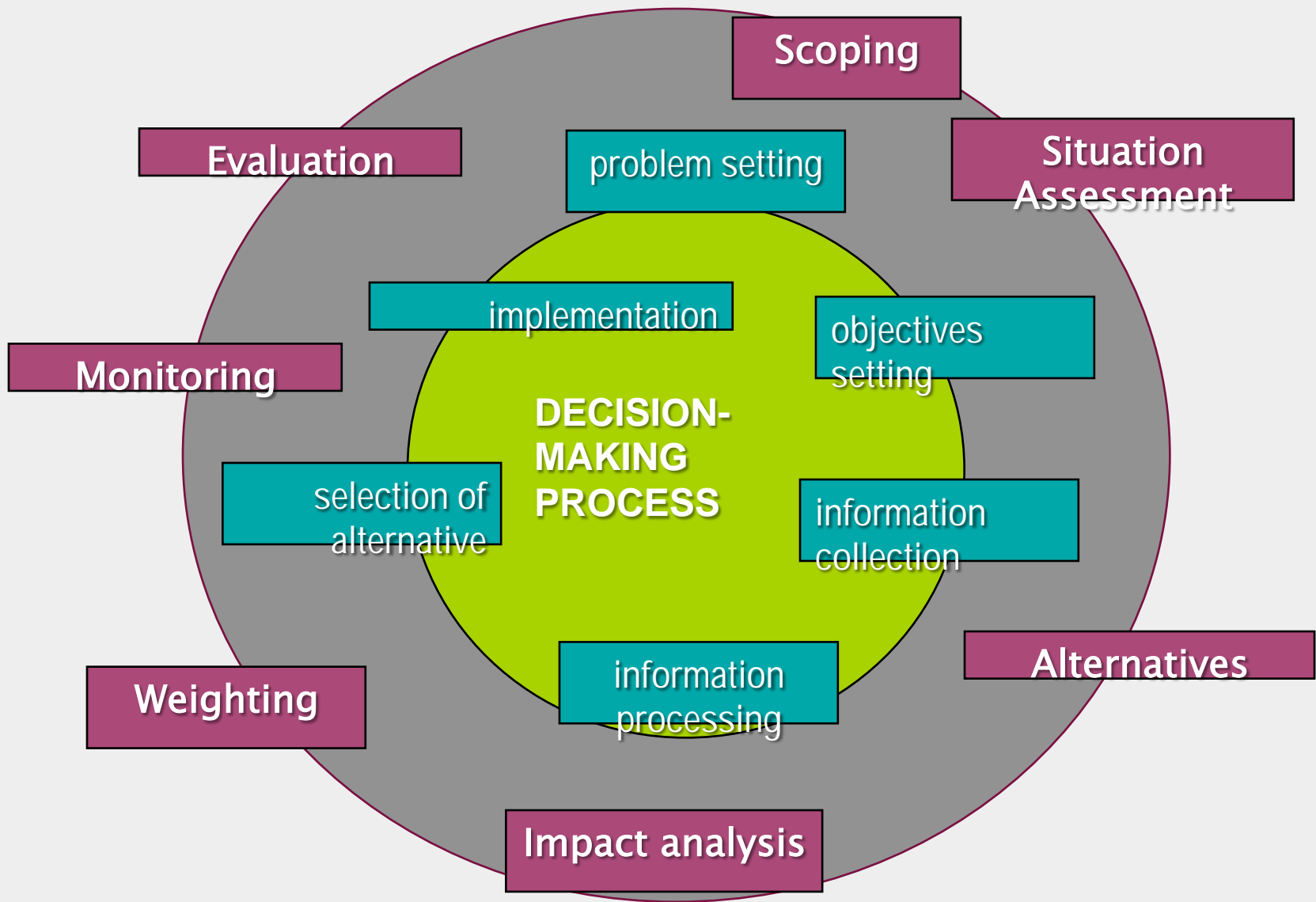
1. Defining SEA
2. SEA process
3. Overview of SEA in the GMS
4. Lessons learned for scaling up SEA in the GMS





- SEA is an **approach** to support more effective, efficient and sustainable decision making for development
- Utilizes a range of analytical and participatory tools to **understand** the environmental, social and economic effects of PPP; most commonly plans
- SEA is most useful when adopted at the **onset** of formal planning processes and **aligned** with planning phases

SEA Process



ACTIVITY

LOCATION

Energy Sector SEA

SEA capacity development in the energy sector

Viet Nam

SEA support for National Power Development Plan VII

Viet Nam

Capacity development for an Energy Sector SEA

Lao PDR

Tourism Sector SEA

National Tourism Sector SEA

Cambodia

Regional Tourism SEA for the Golden Quadrangle

PR China, Lao PDR,
Thailand

Multi-sector area-based SEA

Quang Nam Provincial Land Use Planning SEA

Viet Nam

Five provincial macroeconomic assessments

Cambodia, Viet Nam

River Basin SEA on water resource planning

Viet Nam

SEA of the North-South Economic Corridor

PR China, Lao PDR,
Myanmar, Thailand

GMS Economic Cooperation Program assessments

Environmental assessment of the GMS ECP Strategic Framework

GMS Subregion

SEA of Economic Corridors and Sector Strategies



- **SEA of Quang Nam LUP**
2011-2020 developed provincial level SEA capacity and documented improvements in the LUP as a result of SEA analytical inputs and recommendations
- **Cambodia tourism SEA**
promoted environmentally sustainable corridor development planning to conserve important biodiversity, and tourism development that avoids cumulative impacts on ecosystem services



SEA of Economic Corridors and Sector Strategies

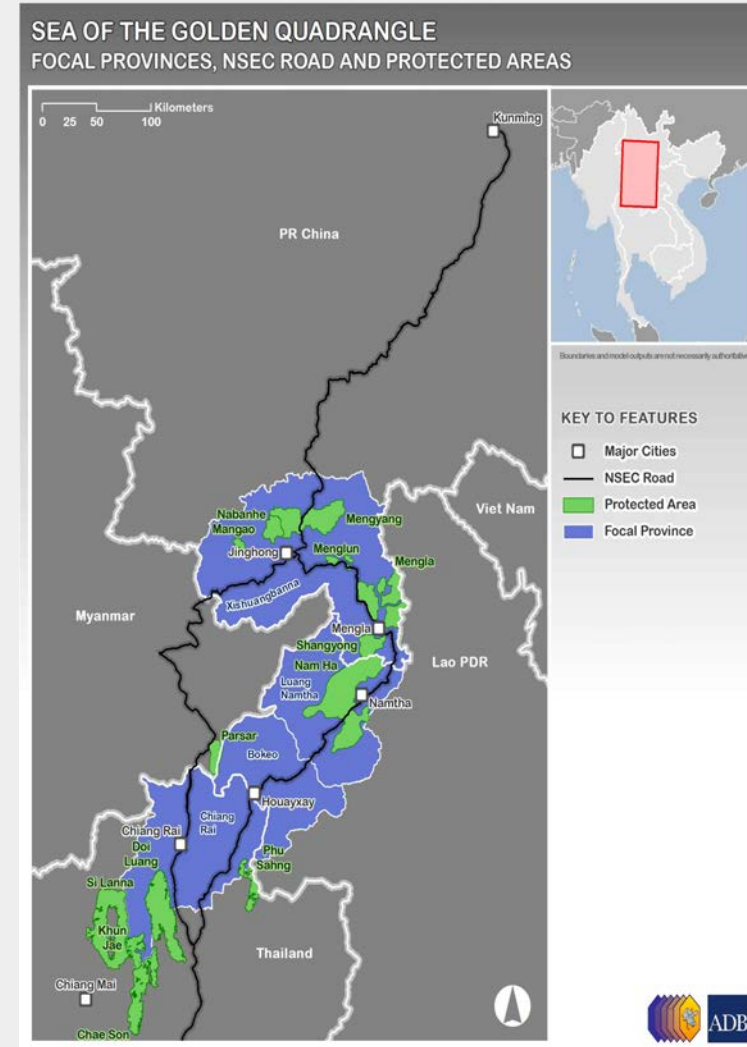
- **SEA of Viet Nam's PDP** integrated environmental sustainability and social equity considerations into strategic energy planning and supported development and revision of PDP7 for 2011-2020
- **NSEC SEA** assessed impacts of investments in the corridor; and sought to integrate environmental considerations, particularly concerning road transport development, into the corridor SAP



SEA of Economic Corridors and Sector Strategies



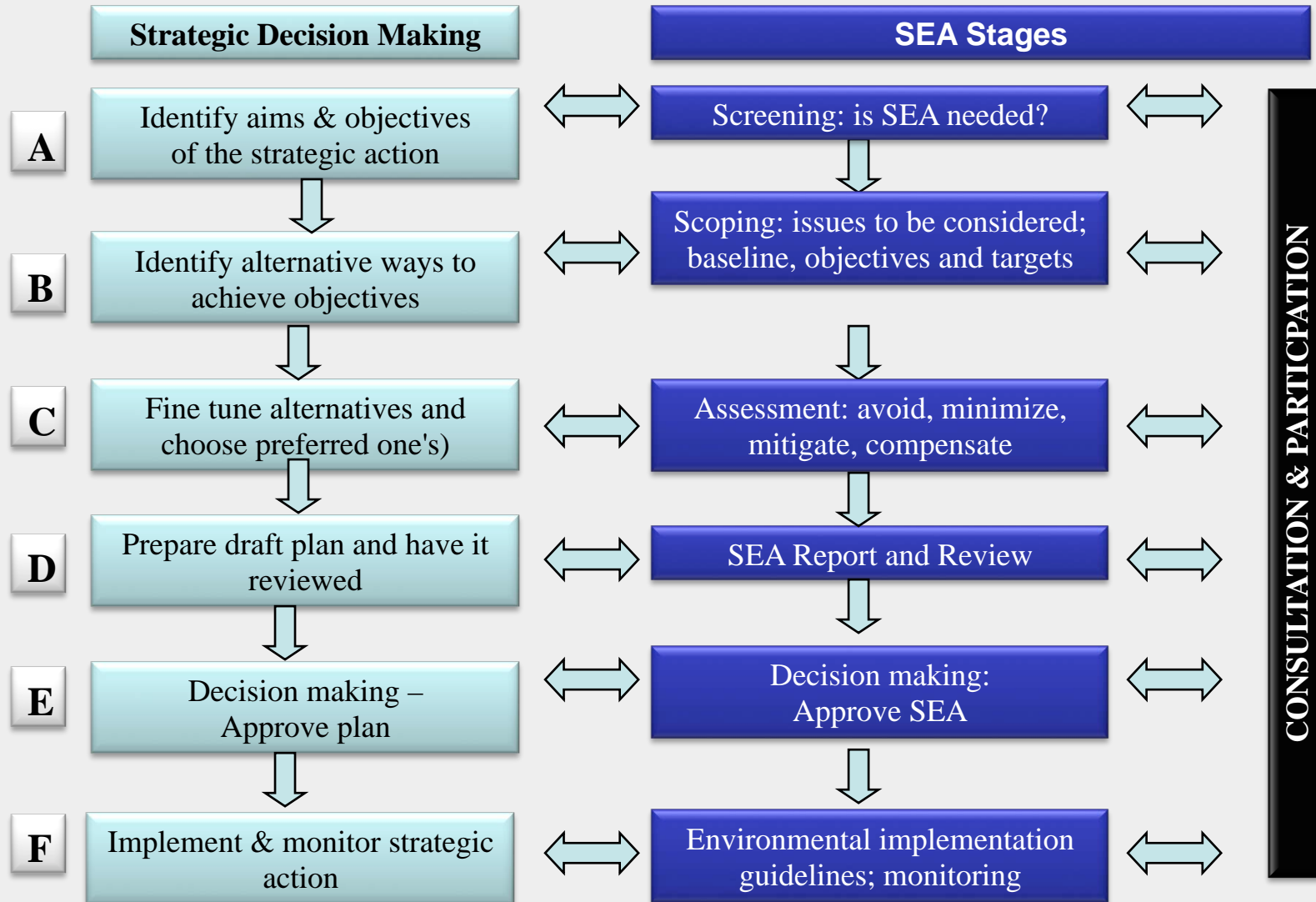
- **SEA of the Golden Quadrangle Tourism Sector** built on an existing tourism development planning framework and NSEC SEA
- Overall goal of three countries involved was to promote and anticipate desired significantly increased tourist arrivals
- Issues with environmental and social pressures related to increased numbers and negative impacts of other development on tourism assets and appeal





- SEA legal frameworks and enabling environments are **required to improve uptake** of SEA in the GMS
- **Late adopters** such as Cambodia, Myanmar and Thailand will need to establish supporting legal frameworks, complimented by technical guidelines on procedures and tools
- For China, Lao PDR, and Viet Nam, who have legal SEA frameworks, the challenge is to more **strongly anchor** SEA in their respective planning processes

Lessons Learned – Sequencing



- An understood limitation of project level EIA is that they can realistically only inform the **lower end** of the decision-making process
- Desirable to **tier assessments**, with SEA first assessing the environmental and social consequences of a plan
- SEA can help strengthen EIA by providing a **framework** for project level assessment, including helping understand cumulative impacts, plus possible time and cost savings



- Central to all SEA is an emphasis on **multi-stakeholder participation**
- Typically, this involves planning authorities, government officials from various sectors, private sector interests, experts from research institutes and universities, and community representatives
- Multi-stakeholder participation helps generate a common pool of knowledge, stimulates discussions on planning options, and provides opportunities for stakeholders to understand each other's interests
- Also ensures more transparency on the SEA process, leading to greater **acceptance and legitimacy**



There are a variety of tools that can be used when undertaking an SEA:

- **Matrices** list the key issues, risks, and opportunities
- **GIS** identifies key issues and categorizes baseline information
- **Expert knowledge** (priorities determined by stakeholders)
- **SMCA** routing suitability analysis, vulnerability analysis, and identification of alternative locations for infrastructure
- **Economic analysis** of different transport options
- **Trend analyses** (CLUE, GLOBIO) which aid in assessment of future land use patterns and related biodiversity loss



- Greater communication efforts are needed to dispel **misconceptions** about SEA
- One factor contributing to slow uptake of SEA in the GMS is the perception that it is a costly and time-consuming **regulatory hurdle**
- More effort is needed to better **communicate the value** of SEA to sector ministries
- SEA reports must also be **reader-friendly** with key information and recommendations targeted specifically for busy decision makers

- Demonstrating the **performance** of an SEA in contributing to environmentally sound and sustainable planning outcomes can be difficult
- Easy to document how an SEA influenced a planning process but difficult to determine how the SEA **positively influenced** plan implementation – due to lag between SEA conduct and plan implementation
- Important to put in place at least an M&E framework to **demonstrate**, with evidence, the benefits of SEA

Thank you

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