EaPGREEN
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Main elements of a well-developed SEA and EIA system: What is important for efficient practice?

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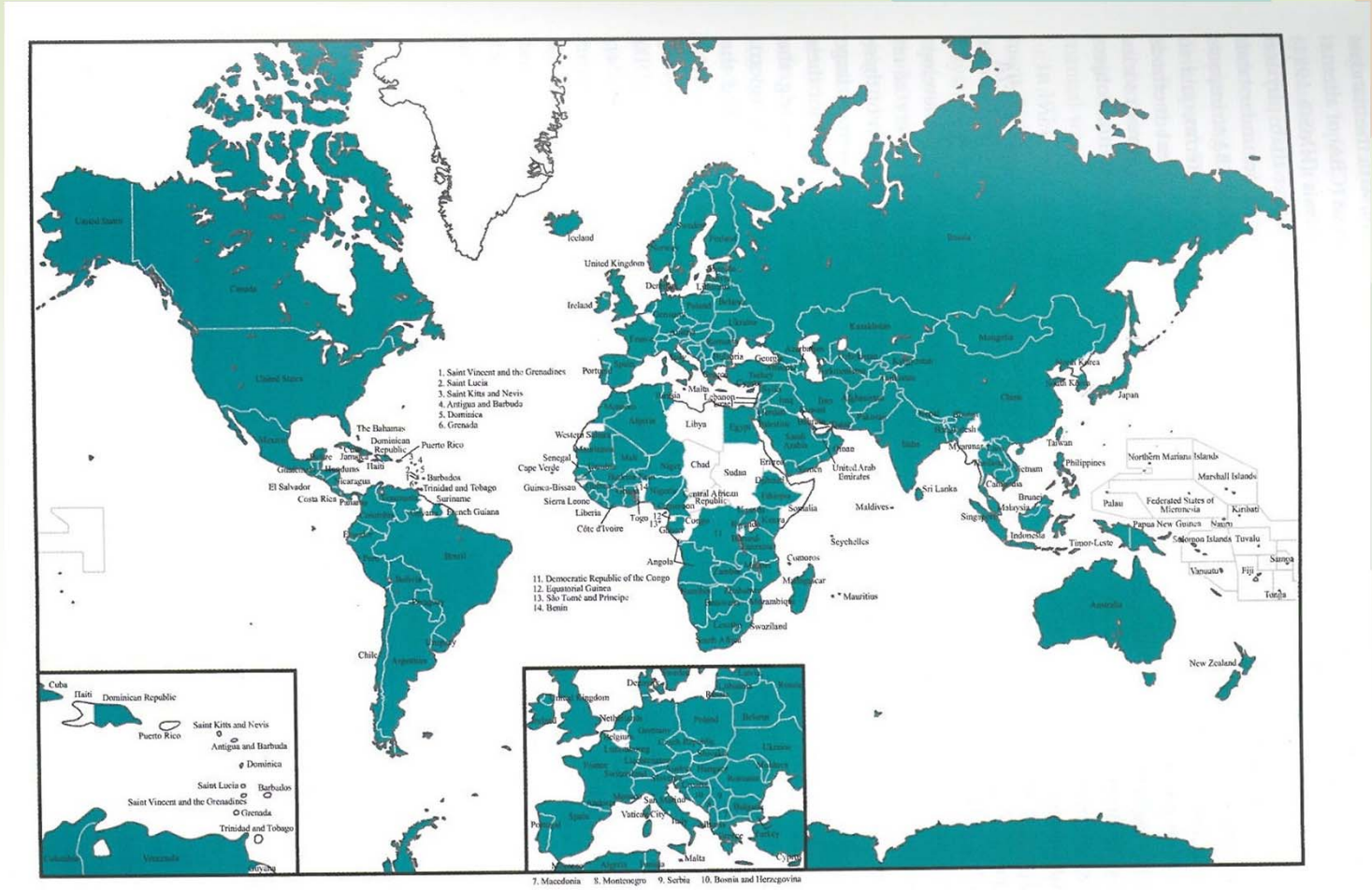
EA: A global phenomenon



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Elements of an effective system

1. The procedural framework:

- Legislation that provides for the key procedural elements of EA practice and is based on international principles of good practice:
  - screening, scoping, baseline study, consideration of alternatives, impact assessment and significance evaluation, mitigation, monitoring and auditing, public reporting and participation.
- Globally, we have more than 45 years of practical experience in SEA and EIA. We understand the procedural requirements.

Elements of an effective system

2. Institutions and capacity:

- Up-to-date guidelines.
- Trained administrators and practitioners.
- Appropriate resourcing of responsible and affected government institutions.
- Effective coordination between government agencies.
- Transparent and accountable institutions.
- Commitment to learning.

Case Example: Regulating EA Expertise

New EU (EIA) requirement: “experts involved in the preparation of environmental impact assessment reports should be qualified and competent”.

Government administered:

- Accreditation of consultants.
- Accreditation of training.
- Selection of consultants by independent panel.

Market mechanisms: e.g. England and Wales

- Professional recognition – the Chartered Environmentalist.
- Quality mark for consultancy companies.

Elements of an effective system

3. A strong system of quality control:

- A range of quality control measures are typically required to achieve effective and efficient practices: e.g.
  - Measures to ensure procedures are followed, projections are robust, commitments (e.g. proposed monitoring or mitigation) are implemented, etc.

Case Example: Quality Control Mechanisms (1)

Fundamental provisions in EU legislation:

- Access to judiciary (UNECE Aarhus Convention).
- Publicly accountable statements: e.g. on how the EA influenced decision-making.

Varying models used in practice:

- Denmark: Competent authority undertakes EA. Strong emphasis on 'policing by the public'.
- England and Wales: Market mechanisms & public inquiries.

Case Example: Quality Control Mechanisms (2)

Comprehensive governmental provisions:

- The Netherlands: For 'comprehensive projects' and SEAs, provisions include:
  - Scoping: NCEA forms specific expert panels comprised of the most relevant disciplines to advise on scope. Competent Authority makes final decision.
  - EIS Report: NCEA is responsible for undertaking a quality review of the EIS.
- Prior to 2010, the public statement on use of EA in decision making had to include a specification of whether the most environmental-friendly alternative was selected.

Elements of an effective system

4. Political support

- Support, from the top down, for achieving the purposes of EA (sustainable development/growth).
- Fundamental to how system operates in practice:
  - e.g. is it effectively resourced?
  - Is there an ongoing commitment to training?
  - Do decision-makers take the findings seriously/ integrate them into planning?

What influences effectiveness?

Table 10
The importance of selected factors for the contribution of EIA to more environmentally sustainable decision-making (Percentage "very important" or "important").

	DK	NL	UK
Legal requirements	57%	71%	75%
Quality of the research underlying environmental assessments (i.e. in terms of its validity and comprehensiveness)	64%	69%	88%
Transparency of the EIA process	59%	62%	80%
Extent to which the initiator as well as the competent authority were willing to take into account environmental values	81%	58%	83%
The costs of mitigation measures	57%	56%	69%
The way the results of the EIA were communicated to the proponent, competent authority and stakeholders	67%	53%	80%
Participation of stakeholders in the EIA	46%	51%	74%
Extent to which the EIA process was connected with the dynamics of the decision-making process	52%	49%	86%
Extent to which the project was elaborated before the EIA was conducted	53%	44%	37%

Efficient EA

- Screening: only for actions with potentially significant impacts.
- Scoping: widespread view that EAs often cover too many issues.
- Alternatives: focused on realistic alternatives.
- Coordination between legislation (incl. SEA to EIA) and government agencies.
- Data sharing.

Case Example: Scottish provisions for efficiency

- 'SEA Gateway' coordinates process for government:
  - manages formal correspondence with the Consultation and ensures responses are received on time (99% received on time between 2004-2010).
  - Ensures relevant information is made publically available via an on-line SEA Database.
  - Commissions guidance.
- Screening:
  - System of prescreening for actions with negligible impacts.
  - Provision of screening templates.
- Scoping: recommendation in 2011 for increased focus by government agencies on input at scoping stage.

Conclusions

In a well-developed SEA/EIA system:

- The legislative framework is in line with international expectations.
- SEA/EIA is recognized as a standard practice.
- Adequate institutional capacity for coordination, effective administration and for conducting SEAs and EIAs.
- Quality is high and the results are accepted by relevant stakeholders/decision-makers.
- The system operates transparently and decision makers are accountable.
- There is strong political support for the system.

Questions or comments?