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# **What is a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)?**

*... and why consider undertaking a SEA?*

**IMPAC3**

Marseille, France

23<sup>rd</sup> October 2013

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## **Environmental Impact Assessment**

- case by case assessment of individual developments/ actions on the environment

## **Strategic Environmental Assessment**

- 'Big picture' or landscape scale assessments
- Assess potential impacts on the environment from implementing a broad policy, plan or program (*perhaps comprising multiple developments?*)

## ***How might a SEA differ from the more traditional EIA approach?***

<b>Strategic Environ. Assessment</b>
<b>Integrated approach</b>
<b>Large nested scales</b>

<b>Traditional EIA</b>
<b>Often driven by one sector</b>
<b>Localized geographic scale</b>

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<b>Considers entire ecosystem (and therefore multiple species)</b>	<b>Often focuses on only a few individual species (eg. target species in fisheries)</b>
<b>Considers humans as an integral part of ecosystems</b>	<b>Often does not consider impacts on wide range of community values</b>

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<b>Long-term perspective</b>	<b>Short to medium term perspectives</b>

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<b>Long-term perspective</b>
<b>Sustainable production and with wider perspective of ecosystem goods and services</b>

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<b>Stochastic management not integrated with monitoring</b>
<b>Short to medium term perspectives</b>
<b>Managing commodities alone (<i>often without the wider perspective of EBM</i>)</b>

*(adapted from McFadden and Barnes, 2009)*

# Examples when a strategic assessment might be appropriate



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- **projects involving multiple stakeholders or complex, large-scale actions or classes of actions**
- **projects characterised by multiple values or requiring high level or multiple assessment(s)**
- **where a proactive and consistent approach to natural resource management across jurisdictions is more effective**
- **where there is scope for developing a regional capability**

# Possible benefits of a strategic assessment?



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- **Set clear 'goal posts' or requirements for protection of the environment 'up-front' at the planning stage**
- **Provide greater certainty to local communities and developers over future development**
- **Reduce burden for developers, NGOs, governments and the community through:**
  - avoidance of potentially duplicative and separate EIAs by different levels of government (eg. federal, state, territory or local governments)
  - substantial reduction in number of EIAs required for an area
- **capacity to achieve better environmental outcomes and address multiple and cumulative impacts at the landscape level**





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# Some case studies from around the world .....