



Ministry
of Defence

Sustainability & Environmental
Appraisal Tools Handbook

Section 3: Strategic Environmental Assessment



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How to use this guidance

This guidance forms Chapter 3 of the MOD Sustainability and Environmental Appraisal Tool Handbook ('the Handbook'). It provides information on Strategic Environmental Assessments.

[Section 3.1:](#) What is a Strategic Environmental Assessment?

[Section 3.2:](#) Why Strategic Environmental Assessment is important?

[Section 3.3:](#) When Strategic Environmental Assessment is required?

Who is the guidance aimed at?

This guidance provides a basic level of understanding to meet statutory and policy requirements within MOD and is targeted at Requirement Managers, Project Managers and Project Team Leaders.

Box 3.1 – SEA Guidance & Policy

SEA Guidance and Implementation:

DIO Environmental Planning Team (EPT): DIOTS-ENVPTEAMWDC@mod.gov.uk

SEA Policy

[JSP 850 – Infrastructure and Estate Policy](#)

MOD is always seeking to learn from good practice to improve the ways that guidance is provided. Please email any **suggestions or feedback** to DIOSDEUS-SusDevSpt@mod.uk

What is Strategic Environmental Assessment?

- 3.1.1 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is a statutory process to assess and propose measures to mitigate the likely significant effects on the environment of a plan or programme. SEA also considers reasonable alternatives and inter-relationships with other plans and programmes. SEA provides for transparent decision making requiring public consultations and publication of results of the consultations in decision-making.

Why Strategic Environmental Assessment is important?

- 3.2.1 SEA is a statutory requirement for certain plans and programmes and arises from European Directive 2001/42/EC (the SEA Directive) which is enacted by national legislation.
- 3.2.2 If SEA is required, failure to undertake SEA can lead to challenge to the adoption of the plan or programme or challenge to subsequent development consents and reputational damage to MOD.

When is Strategic Environmental Assessment required?

- 3.3.1 SEA is required for plans and programmes as defined in the SEA Directive which are likely to have significant effects on the environment. However the Directive and the enacting legislation is open to interpretation and professional advice regarding SEA applicability to a plan or programme should be sought as early as possible.
- 3.3.2 It is unlikely that SEA will apply to a MOD plan or programme but this requires case by case consideration and MOD policy may require alternative measures.

Who is responsible?

- 3.4.1 The Senior Responsible Officer for strategic planning and programming has ultimate responsibility for ensuring that SEA is properly considered and, if required, undertaken.
- 3.4.2 Requirement Managers, Project Managers or Project Team Leaders would normally be responsible for consideration of SEA by obtaining expert advice and, if required, procurement of SEA.

How to undertake a Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 3.5.1 SEA must be undertaken by suitably qualified and experienced experts. DIO EPT will be able to assist with SEA either in-house and/or assist with procurement and management of consultants to undertake SEA and the consultation process.

Cost and Timescales for an SEA

- 3.6.1 The time and cost to complete a SEA will depend on the nature of the plan or programme, the scope of the SEA and the availability of data. SEA could take 6 to 24 months and costs could be in the tens or hundreds of thousands of pounds.
- 3.6.2 Screening, to determine the applicability SEA, would normally be a fairly rapid process and could be undertaken in house by DIO EPT at no direct cost to the plan or programme.