

13. World Trend

13.1 Sustainable Development

Although approaches of SEA differ between countries for matching with their own situations, institutional frameworks and political circumstances, all SEA tend to be developed in a direction towards achieving sustainability-led PPPs.

- **Characteristics of sustainability-led PPPs :**

1. Focus on Long-term impacts, e.g. Environmental Carrying Capacity, so as to avoid impacts on future generations (e.g. TDSR);
2. Address Environmental Capital Stocks (e.g. Environmental Baseline Report of SUSDEV21);
3. Follow the principles of Sustainable Development by adopting the principles of Agenda 21 (e.g. TDSR), by considering environmental implications and economic factors simultaneously (e.g. RDS2); and
4. Provide adequate environmental information for conducting Sustainability Impact Assessments (e.g. HK2030).

13.2 Performance Criteria of International Association for Impact Assessment (IAIA)

IAIA has published in January 2002 a one page summary of SEA performance criteria. This document provides general guidance on how to build an effective SEA process and to evaluate the effectiveness of the existing SEA processes. According to the document, a good SEA process should possess the following characteristics :

- Integrated
- Sustainability-led
- Focused
- Accountable
- Participative
- Iterative

More information on this document could be obtained at <http://www.iaia.org/Publications.htm>.

13.3 Regional Centre of Excellence

To avoid repeating previously encountered SEA problems in other countries or cities and to share techniques in tackling major strategic environmental issues during SEA processes, there is a genuine need for a forum to share SEA knowledge around the world. Thanks to the wide applications of internet, knowledge sharing is much easier nowadays. However, there are still barriers that need to be removed to make knowledge sharing more effective. For example, understandings of different cultures and implementation frameworks of countries need to be enhanced to enable practitioners and decision-makers to fully appreciate the issues and to really benefit from the lessons learnt elsewhere. Otherwise, lessons learnt could easily become just another “text book” on the shelf and could not avoid problems repeating again and again in different time and spatial horizon.

One possible solution is to build up the “regional center of excellence” so that places with more experience on SEA could be tasked to disseminate the knowledge and information to other regions. To increase effectiveness in information sharing, it needs to illustrate the principles and practices of SEA by real examples to show that these principles really work and have been put into practice with major environmental outcomes. Regional centers, in particular those with common language and/or similar cultural background would therefore be much more effective in conducting the task.

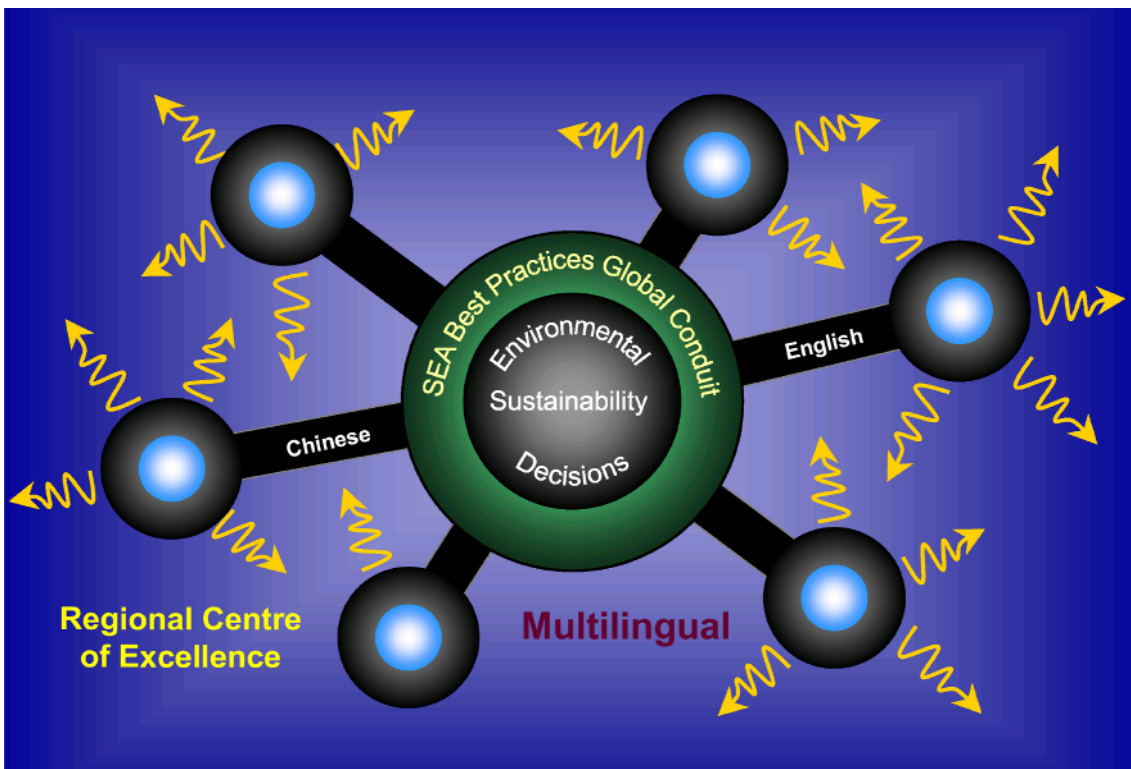


Figure 20 Vision for the future : SEA multilingual global enabling network