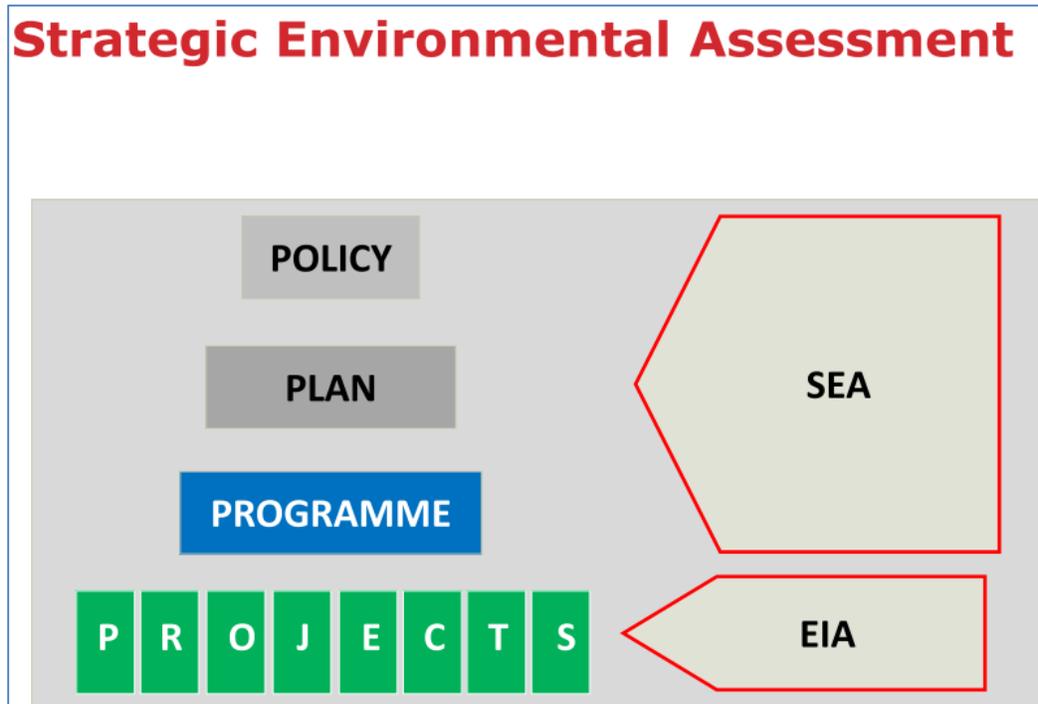


## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ON STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT ASSESSEMENT (SEA).**

### **1. What is SEA?**

Strategic Assessments take a bigger-picture and more holistic approach to environmental planning and impact assessment. Rather than looking at how a single activity will affect nationally protected matters as is the case for EIAs, a strategic assessment (SEA) looks at how a group of activities (under a policy, plan or program) will affect these matters on a regional scale. SEA helps protect a city's unique biodiversity, and has been seen to benefit entire communities, investors, developers, decision makers and government by cutting red tape and providing long-term certainty.

Behavioral change in the way governments handle plans, programs and policies will come a long way in ensuring the certainty of city's future natural resource management and maintenance. It is the responsibility of each and every stakeholder to ensure that these holistic impacts are put into consideration prior to implementation. SEA provides a critical role on how environment concerns can be integrated in strategic decisions.



## **2. What are the benefits of undertaking a SEA?**

A Strategic Assessment considers the direct and indirect impacts of implementing a long term program on natural resources that are of public interest. This single process could cover a wide range of individual assessments and combines offsets to get good environmental results. These Strategic assessments reduce the known government red tape by considering holistic environmental concerns in a single assessment process, and cuts out the need for individual assessments. As such, once a strategic assessment is complete and approvals have been given, individual proponents will not have to seek independent approvals, as long as they undertake their projects in accordance with the endorsed policy, plan or program. By looking at cumulative impacts on the environment over the whole landscape before projects begin, strategic assessments help to shape policies, plans or programs from the earliest stage, rather than requiring them to be modified later on. And by outlining what can and cannot be done in the future, they provide greater upfront certainty to developers, landholders, planners, industry, government and the community in which such programs are implemented.

It has been realized that driving forces at local-global level such as globalization, regionalization, industrialization, regional infrastructure are often insufficiently addressed by EIAs and other environmental tools. As such, a need to focus on and improve Policies, Plans and Programs to address future cumulative, spatial impacts, social and economic impacts to inform, influence and improve decision making and implementation of policies, plans and programs.

SEA has been seen to soften institutional silo mentality through establishment of interdepartmental working groups, linking environmental issues to broader development issues and integrates all agendas of environmental institutions, empowers weaker working groups, improves environment governance, enables community participation and in turn results in transparency and accountability all of which close the implementation gaps.

SEA assists in building stakeholder engagements for improved governance, facilitate trans boundary cooperation around shared environmental resources and contribute to conflict prevention.

## SEA Effectiveness

- **Procedural?**
  - Undertaken in accordance with legal procedure?
- **Improved environmental outcomes of Policy, Plan or Programme?**
- **Improved environmental governance?**



- Transparency
- Accountability
- Empowerment of weaker stakeholders
- Learning - knowledge/value changes



SEA can enable check of drastic impacts that different activities have on the land. For instance in the image above if a combined project appraisal is done to result in a holistic strategic plan in place to control the extents of the impact on land. This will undoubtedly provide a healthier environment. SEA is able to integrate generic issues with mitigation measures applied across the whole programme.

### 3. What are the intentions of a SEA?

A SEA should be able to answer 5 I's. These include;

- i) **Influence** – Influence the planning, the decision-making process, implementation
- ii) **Inform** – inform planners, stakeholders, decision makers
- iii) **Interact** – enable interaction among planners, stakeholders, decision-makers
- iv) **Institutions** – analyse, strengthen/build capacity, reform (if necessary)
- v) **Integrate** – environment in other sectors, development themes

### 4. Why do we need a SEA?

- To raise awareness of environmental problems
- Empower communities to make decisions on natural resource utilization and management
- Create an understanding of the burdens of environmental degradation
- Develop a system to hold policy makers accountable for their decisions
- Develop an understanding of the linkages between environment and growth sectors
- Provides for timely mitigation of possible environmental impact.



### 5. What are the current national provisions for SEA in Uganda?

Whereas, SEA is still a relatively new concept, Uganda provides for an environmental legislation for mainstreaming the nation's environment issues into development. NEMact cap 153 provides for statutory functions of NEMA to;

- Ensure integration of environment concerns in overall national planning through coordination with relevant ministries, departments and government agencies
- Propose environment polices and strategies of the policy committee on environment

- Ensure observance of proper safeguards in planning and execution of all development projects, including those already in existence and are likely to have significant impact of the environment.

In addition, the National Environment management Bill and the revised National Environment Policy 2016, have incorporated SEA principles.it is imperative to note that the NEM act is currently under review and will incorporate more specific requirement of SEA upon review.

Currently, NEMA has prepared step by step guidelines clearly specifying the roles, responsibilities for carrying out, reviewing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating SEA.

### 6. What is the difference between SEA and the EIA?

<b>EIA</b>	<b>SEA</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is reactive to development proposals</li> <li>•Narrow perspective, high level of detail and project specific</li> <li>•Addresses a specific project; e.g. local investment</li> <li>•Legal requirement to enable license to operate with environment conditions</li> <li>•Well defined beginning &amp; end</li> <li>•Assesses direct impacts and benefits</li> <li>•Focuses on mitigation of impacts</li> <li>•Provides specific technical solutions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Is proactive, informs development proposals; i.e broader and strategic</li> <li>•Wider perspective, less detail focus on key environment issues and longer time horizon for large areas, regions or sectors of development</li> <li>•Addresses Policies, Plans, and Programs (PPP)</li> <li>•Focuses on informing and influence, Planning, decision, and implementation</li> <li>•More open process i.e dynamic and able to adapt to politics and timing</li> <li>• Assesses cumulative impacts across resources</li> </ul>

### 7. What are the development activities that are likely to have significant environmental impact?

Currently, a lot of the SEA undertaken in Uganda is donor driven and the following activities / developments require SEA.

- New Infrastructure developments and extensions
- Spatial plans such as coastal zone development plans, urban or industrial development

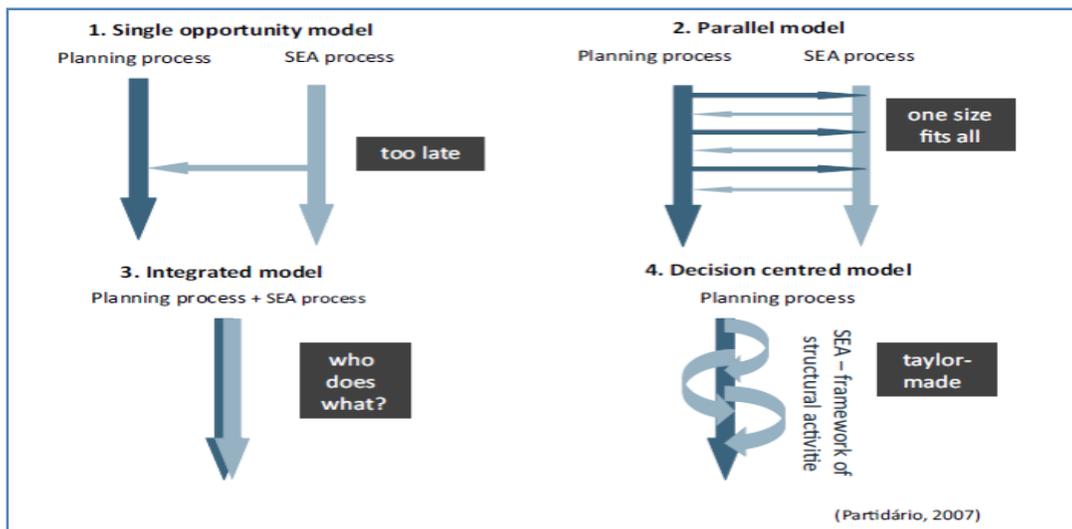
- Multi intervention programs where individual project appraisal is not cost effective
- Cumulative impacts i.e. impacts of individual projects is limited, however SEA is significant when the projects are linked.
- Macro policies such as poverty reduction strategies; tax reform; public sector reform; agric. policies, privatization, trade policy.
- Sector wide policies with national impacts such as water, drainage, environmental management, waste management, transport planning, energy and infrastructure.

**8. What are those significant resources that are likely to be affected by such developments**

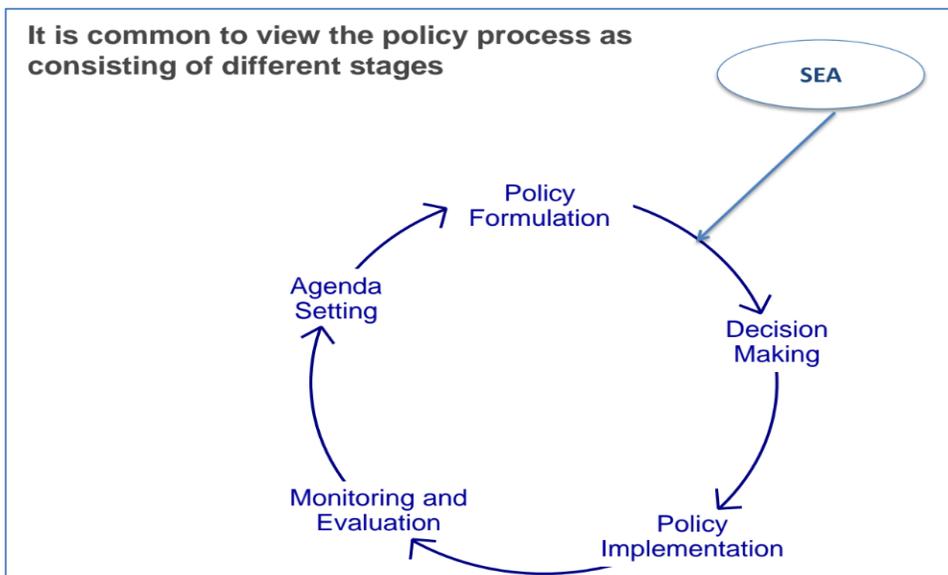
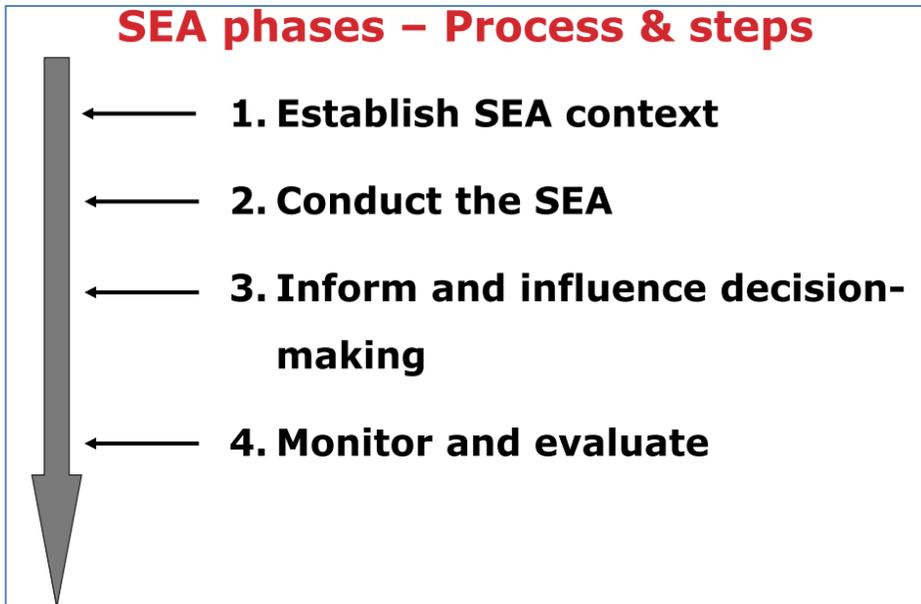
- Heritage sites and cultural heritage
- Ancient Monuments
- Flora and fauna
- Wetlands
- Threatened species and fragile ecosystems
- Migratory species /Biodiversity
- Water resources (riverbanks, lakeshores & waterfronts, streams, water channels)
- Green cover (rangelands, open spaces, forests, woodlands, swamps etc)
- Human health
- Cross territorial resources
- Environment under threat or degradation

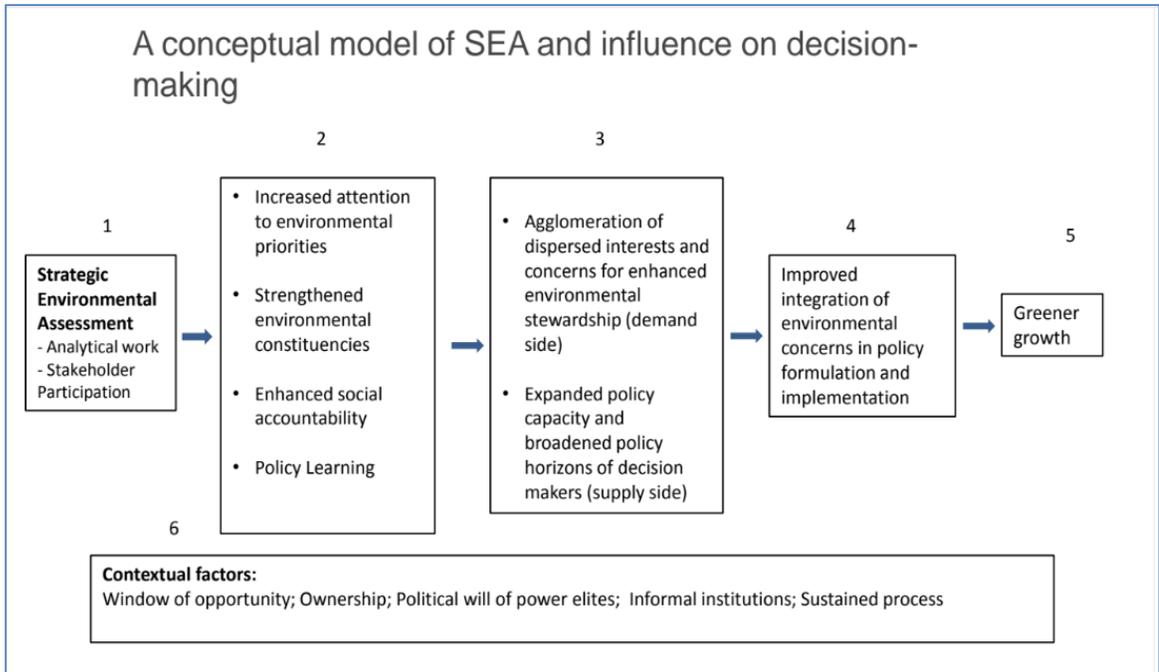
**9. What are the approaches taken when conducting a SEA?**

SEA can be conducted in four different models including Single opportunity model, Parallel model, Integrated model and Decision centered model.



SEA comprises of mainly 4 phases. These include; establishment of the SEA context, conducting the actual SEA, informing and influencing the decision making process and Monitoring and Evaluation.



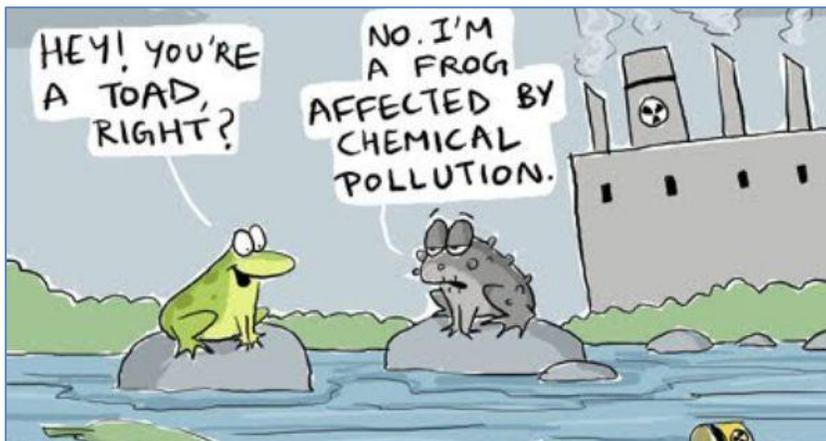
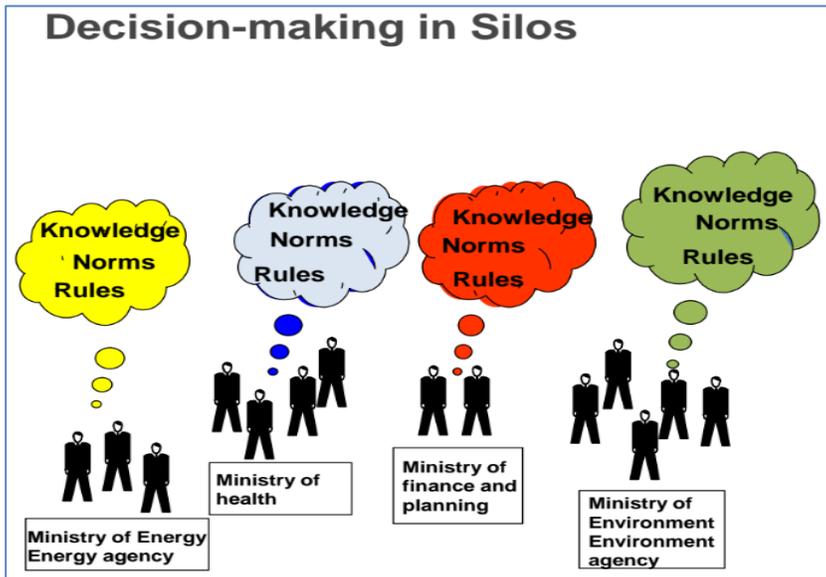


## 10. Public participation in the SEA process

Effective stakeholder participation is critical during SEA Planning and implementation. Successful SEAs have had clear and transparent mechanisms of citizen participation. Without the community commitment to protect and realize their relevance in managing the environment, a lot of resources continue depleted by the community themselves. As such, citizens have been found to have a critical role in decisions that impact on environment both positively and negatively.



A lot of institutions are managing resources and implementing programs upon decisions made in silo tendencies. SEA provides an opportunity for institutional coordination and setup of environment working groups to oversee policy plans and programs in a more holistic manner.



It is everyone's responsibility to ensure that the environment is protected and resources are managed appropriately. Citizen attitude towards managing resources is critical to enable healthier flora and fauna and protection of the biodiversity.

An effective SEA provides for decision makers with robust, timely clearly presented information about environmental impact of their plans; helps change the values, attitudes and perceptions of stakeholders; increases participation, collaboration , consensus and inclusiveness in the planning process; builds stakeholder capacity; provides institutional support and legitimacy; and helps changes within institutional processes.



Each stakeholder has a vital role in managing resources within their jurisdiction and territorial boundaries.



### 11. Who is responsible for undertaking a SEA?

SEAs can be undertaken by either a ministry, department of government agency responsible for Policy, Plans or Programmes . These institutions are mandated to carry out a SEA that is likely to have significant or cumulative impact on the population and the environment.

### 12. How can SEAs be undertaken in Uganda?

A report detailing the environmental impacts of the Plan, Policy or Program must be prepared and submitted to the relevant ministry, department or government agency to enable assessment of whether the impacts are provided for in law in turn resulting in effective protection and efficient use.

Once this is critically assessed and realized, such a policy plan or program may be endorsed to approve the activities acceptable during implementation.

This process is highly participatory and considers citizen inclusiveness as critical to the overall decision or outcome. As such, SEA requires extensive consultation with stakeholders including local communities, environmental experts, NGO, multidisciplinary categories of professional, property owners and legislators.

### **13. What information is important during data collection for a SEA?**

Successful SEA must have vital information on the following;

- Thorough reconnaissance survey
- Baseline survey : Situation survey and analysis of critical resources
- SWOT
- Stakeholder analysis and their respective roles

### **14. What are the benefits of strategic assessments for the community?**

- A sense of inclusion in the plan making process and implementation
- Improved commitment to decisions made
- Sense of belonging

### **15. How can KCCA benefit from undertaking SEAs?**

- Improved strategic action (identification of preferred alternatives, authoritative planning decisions)
- Effective implementation on the strategic actions such that the actions are implemented as planned, monitoring is also followed through
- Environmental protection and sustainability
- Improved future plan making
- Improved integrated and inclusive planning process