

The Status of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) practice in South Africa

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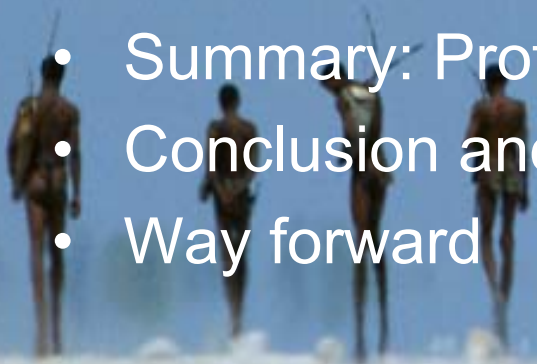
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Outline of the presentation

- Need for the research
- Research objective and questions
- Research methodology
- Results: Status of SEA practice in South Africa
 - Number of SEAs
 - Tiers of SEA
 - Types of SEA
 - Scales of SEA
- Summary: Profile of SEA practice in South Africa
- Conclusion and key challenges
- Way forward





Need for the research

- Need exists to tailor SEA to a particular context
- South Africa is regarded as a leading developing country in terms of SEA but very little research on:
 - Extent of SEA practice
 - Classification of SEA practice
 - Profile of SEA practice
- Need to review practice in order to:
 - Benchmark best practice
 - Facilitate continual improvement
 - Contribute to the emerging theory on SEA



Research objective and related research questions

- Research objective:
 - To investigate the SEA context in South Africa in terms of its SEA system as well as the current status and extent of practice
- Research questions:
 - How many SEAs have been conducted?
 - At what tiers were they conducted?
 - What types of SEAs were conducted?
 - At what scales were they conducted?



Research Methodology

- Only studies specifically termed SEA were considered
- Basic information on each case study gathered
 - Name and short description
 - Need for the SEA
 - Tier, type, geographic scale
 - Role players involved
 - Date initiated and date concluded

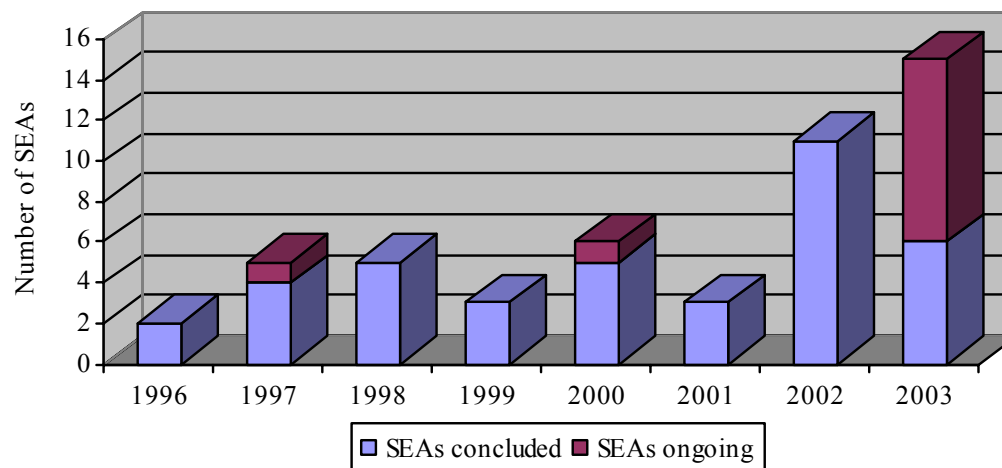


Research Methodology (2)

- Data gathering relied on multiple information sources
 - Survey questionnaire
 - Personal communication
 - Literature searches
- Challenges for the methodology
 - Voluntary SEA system
 - Lack of general clarity on SEA
 - Finding the right person to talk to
 - Information availability for each case study varied
- Outcome
 - 50 SEA case studies identified



Number of SEAs conducted in South Africa

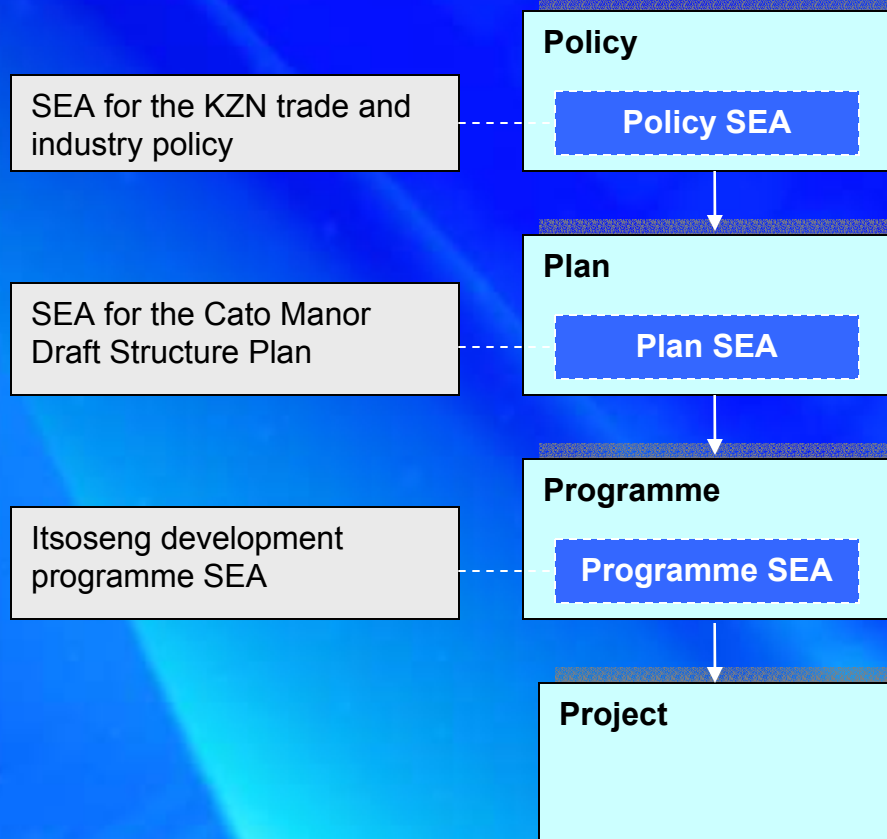


- Significant number of SEAs compared to other countries
- Increasing trend especially since 2000
- Can be expected to increase more rapidly in future
 - Planning related (303 every 5 years)
 - Water management related (19 WMA) etc.

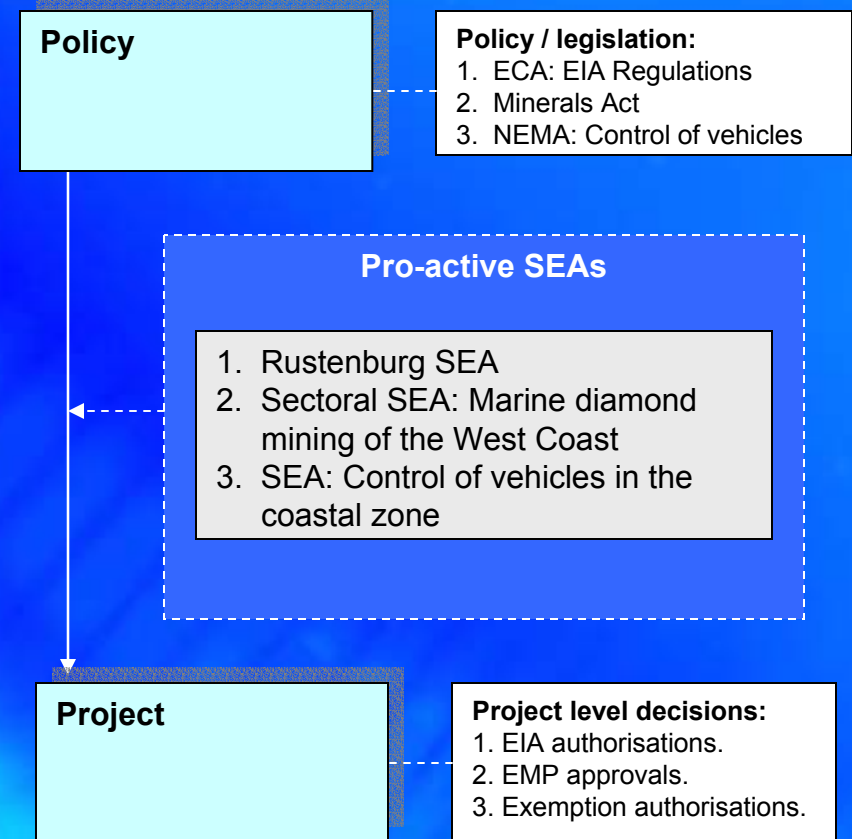


Tiered classification for SEA in South Africa

SEAs linked to a tiered decision making structure

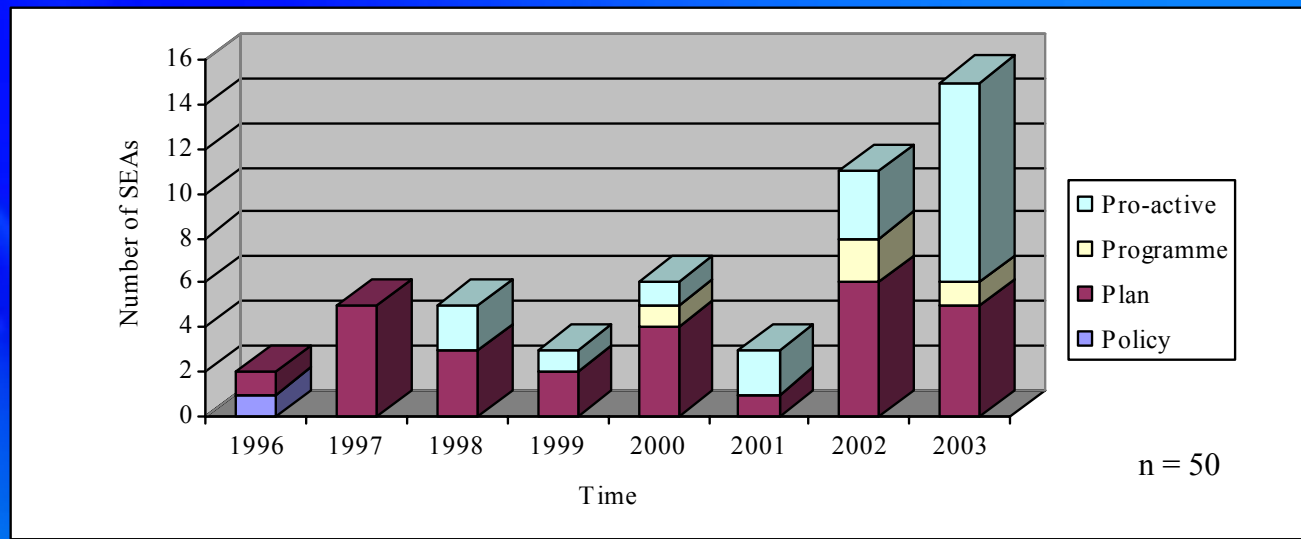


SEAs filling the void where a tiered decision making structure did not exist





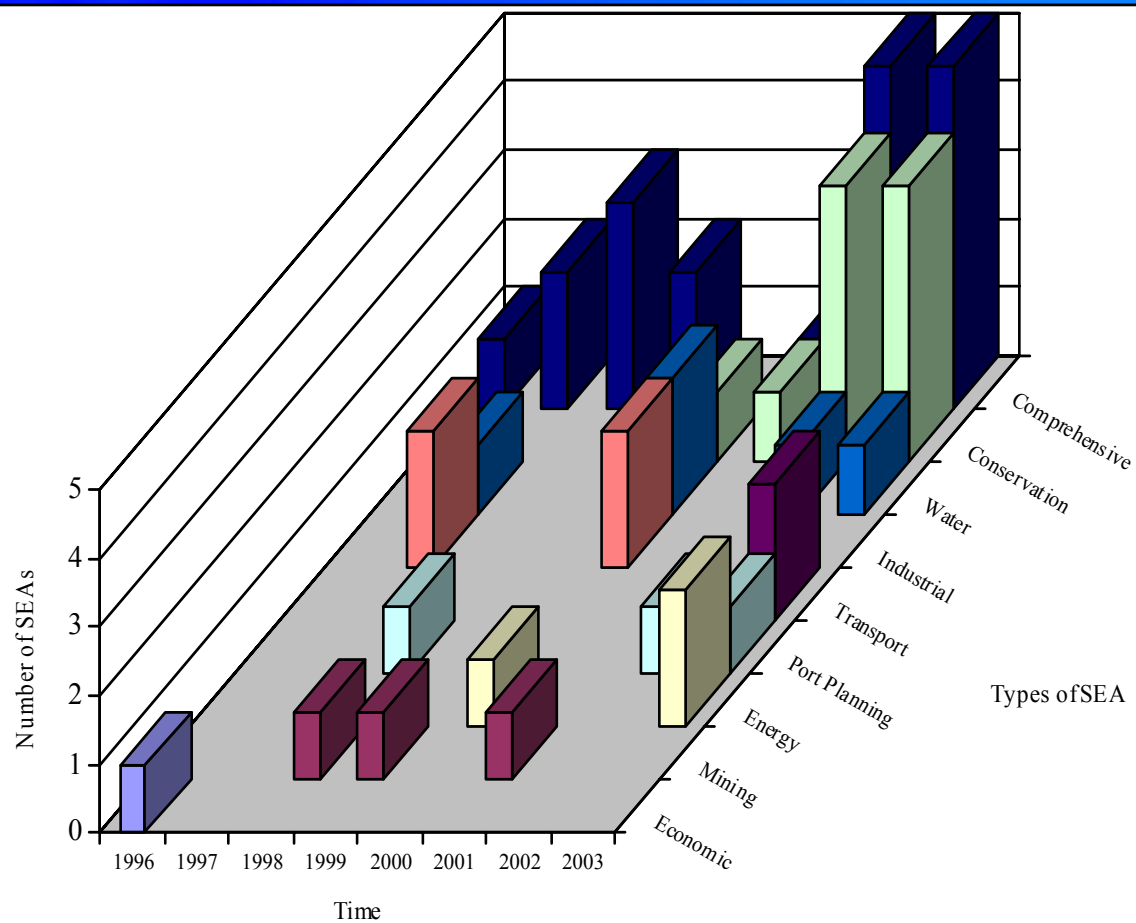
Tiered classification for SEA in South Africa (2)



- Policy and programme tiers poorly represented
- Plan SEAs well represented (54%)
- Pro-active SEAs emerged since 1998 in the wake of EIA legislation



Types of SEA in South Africa



n = 50



Types of SEA in South Africa – emergence of enabling conditions

- **Comprehensive SEAs**

- NEMA second amendment Bill, 2003 and Land Use Bill, 2003

- **Sectoral SEAs**

- Conservation and biodiversity management: Biodiversity Bill, 2003
- Water management: National Water Act, 1998 and draft SEA guidance, 2001
- Transport sector: Road Infrastructure Strategic Framework (RISF), 2002
- Port Development: Draft White Paper on a National Commercial Ports Policy, 2001
- Energy sector: Eskom Integrated Strategic Electricity Planning (ISEP) process as part of EMS



Scales of SEA in South Africa

- All scales were covered from local to national
- Cross-border SEAs focussed on resource boundaries
 - Water catchments (SEAs for the Mhlathuze catchment and Usutu-Mhlathuze WMA)
 - Biodiversity significance (SEAs for the Greater Addo Elephant National Park and CAPE action plan)
 - Development pressure (Rustenburg SEA)
- Wide use of GIS



Profile of SEA practice in South Africa

Geographic Scale	Tiers and Types of SEA							
	Policy SEA		Plan SEA		Programme SEA		Pro-active SEA	
	Sectoral	Comprehensive	Sectoral	Comprehensive	Sectoral	Comprehensive	Sectoral	Comprehensive
National			Water (2) Energy (1)		Energy (1)		Conservation (3) Mining (2)	(1)
Provincial	Economic (1)		Conservation (1) Energy (1)	(3)			Conservation (1)	
Sub-regional			Water (2) Industrial (1) Conservation (1)	(1)			Conservation (4) Transport (2) Mining (1)	
Local			Industrial (3) Port Planning (3)	(8)	Water (1)	(2)		(4)



Conclusion

- SEA practice is well established and on the increase – must be working!!
- SEA can act as an independent decision support tool in the absence of strategic level decision making processes
- SEA is adaptable to a wide range of decision making contexts
- Administrative vs. resource boundaries is problematic for the implementation of SEA



Key challenges for SEA in South Africa

- How to accommodate the anticipated increase in SEA practice within the existing administrative capacity and resource constraints?
 - Need for a effective screening mechanism
- How to systematically review the extensive experience gained to date in order to identify best practice and facilitate continual improvement?
 - Need for holistic SEA quality and effectiveness review, which is conceptually justified, methodologically sound and practically viable, for application in the South African context

Way forward

- To determine the quality and effectiveness of SEA in South Africa
 - Need for a quality and effectiveness review protocol to allow for systematic research
 - Need to identify representative SEA case studies for review
- Comparative SEA research on quality and effectiveness
 - SADC region
 - Between developing countries
 - Internationally

