E3: Developing SEA guidance	
Session leader	Bobbi Schijf, e-mail: b.schijf@ameco-ut.nl
Focus and Approach	E3.1 Common challenges and effectiveness in developing SEA guidance Papers: - Development and use of SEA guidance for the EU SEA Directive (Riki Therivel) - SEA Guideline for Japan (Yasuku Kurosaki) Discussion: Discussion was structured around establishing what was effective and what was not effective in developing SEA guidance E3.2 What should be common to all SEA guidance material Papers: - Keeping it short: The Environment Agency SEA "Do's and Don'ts Guide" (Jo Diamond) - Analysis of objectives in SEA of EU structural funds planning (David Pereira) Discussion was structured around identification of what should be common to all guidance, and which content is context dependant
Main trends and issues	- Difficult area to make generalisations, since the type and content of SEA guidance is very much context dependant. - SEA guidance can serve to propagate good practice SEA, but good practice principles are not necesarily clear, and may also be context dependant. - However, guidance should bring across that SEA is not a rigid, mammoth instrument but can serve different purposes and lead to different outputs at different decision moments in the planning process.
Profile of the status, quality and effectiveness of SEA	Much SEA guidance exists, there is little overview and there are no common standards. Different types of guidance possible with good arguments for each approach: Catered to sector, SEA user group, or level of planning (in a tiered system) Little systematic analysis of effectiveness, but:
Key findings and lessons	Insight into some of the things that work and some that do not work in developing SEA guidance based on practice (see below). Lessons can be drawn out at two levels: • Very practical recommendations for SEA guidance (importance of including cases, testing guidance in pilots, encouraging simple SEA,) • Very generalised almost philosophical recommendations about what kind of thinking about SEA guidance should encourage (SEA as a flexible instrument, different adaptations possible)

	Other lessons difficult to generalise since these are dependant on the type of SEA and planning process to which the guidance applies (such as the level of integration of the two).
Future directions	- Use SEA guidance to provoke shift in SEA practice towards less rigid and more purpose based SEA - Some good lessons from practice drawn out of the session, possibly compile these and make them available for comment and use - Develop a better overview of existing SEA guidance material (link to the SEA knowledge centre session outcome)

Effective in developing SEA guidance:
- Adapting the guidance to existing needs, being careful with preconceived notions of SEA
- Being clear about the nature of the guidance and the intended audience (guidelines vs. Manual)
- Testing guidance material in pilots
- Developing guidance early in the process of introducing SEA, however guidance should evolve as SEA practice evolves. Open question as to whether general guidance (what is SEA?) should precede more detailed guidance (concrete sectoral how to) or the other way around.
- Include cases
- Using simple language

Not effective in developing SEA guidance:
- "One size fits all" approach
- Giving rise to unrealistic expectations about what SEA can achieve
- Lengthy, unattractive guidance (use colour!)
- "Recipe book" guidance (stifles creativity and suggests rigid application SEA)

All SEA guidance material should:
- Demystify or demonsterise the SEA process;
- Explain that SEA is a flexible intrument with different forms and applications;
- Explain that simpler SEA is often better SEA;
- Address SEA methods: not by descriptive treatment of the methods but explanations on how to choose the best method for a specific SEA purpose. Emphasise the importance of (expert) judgment in SEA. Also outline common problems that result from the application of some types of methods, i.e. "unrecommend" some types of methods for certain uses;
- Explain the importance of indentifying where a specific plan and SEA fit into the planning hierarchy/environmental management system, particularly what level of impacts are being considered;
- Adress uncertainty as an inherent aspect of SEA, outline ways of dealing with uncertainty (not necessarily technical solutions, a way of dealing may be simply creating acceptance of uncertainty in the process);
- Adress packaging of the SEA report – different outputs are possible for different decisions;

- Explicitly encourage innovation in SEA, because guidance, by prescribing SEA, may also reduce innovate SEA practice (i.e. lower the ceiling) that might occur in the absence of guidance.
- Include summary/overview of basic practical recommendations (such as in the Environment Agency SEA dos and donts guide) that can serve as a snappy reminder of what it is all about.
- Consider the possibility of web-based guidance, one advantage is that it can contain different types of guidance (for different groups) in one place.

SEA guidance cannot please all users: best guidance probably guidance that is hated equally by all.

Tip by Olivia Bina: EU research coming out on SEA methods