

“Do’s and Don’ts” Guide to Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of Local Development Documents (LDDs)

General Do’s and Don’ts

DO

- ✓ Start the SEA/SA process as soon as you start your plan
- ✓ Remain strategic and keep it simple
- ✓ Focus on outcomes not activities
- ✓ Use SEA and SA to include the environment in decision making
- ✓ Engage others
- ✓ Be creative, interactive and flexible
- ✓ Consider cumulative effects throughout the process

DON'T

- ✗ Retrofit SEA/SA at the end of the plan-making process
- ✗ Get bogged down in detail
- ✗ Decide on the outcome before you start
- ✗ Marginalise environmental issues within SA
- ✗ Do it on your own
- ✗ Just use a tick box approach
- ✗ Assume conflict between environmental and economic issues

SEA/SA Stage	Environment Agency Role	DO	DON'T
Screening	We may need to advise on whether plans for small areas at local level or minor modifications need SEA (see OPDM Guidance)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Bear in mind that SA is required for all LDDs ✓ SEA for all LDDs as part of SA (except for small area plans or minor modifications with no significant effects) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Contact us: except on screening of small area plans and minor modifications ✗ Discount positive effects when considering significant environmental effects
Baseline	We can provide baseline information and data.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Stick to relevant issues ✓ Use data to inform decisions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Collect excessive detail ✗ Use information just because it is there
Scoping	You must consult on the scope of the SEA/SA.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Focus on significant issues ✓ Develop objectives & indicators ✓ Consider a range of options 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Get bogged down in trivial issues ✗ Develop too many objectives (12 -25 is normal) ✗ Be afraid of being creative and aspirational
Assessment and Reporting	We have no specified role in assessment, but we may be able to offer advice and assistance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Ensure assessment is evidence based ✓ Keep documents succinct ✓ Sign-post Environmental Report elements within SA Report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Hide uncertainties ✗ Overlook positive effects
Consulting and Decision making	You must consult on the Environmental Report.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Consider the aims of your consultation ✓ Make clear what contributions you want ✓ Use consultation responses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Expect consultees to do the assessment ✗ Overload consultees with too many documents
Monitoring	We have no specified role, but we may be able to assist with advice and data.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Think about future improvements to the plan and the process ✓ Remember your objectives & indicators ✓ Be open to change if needed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Be afraid to use simple approaches ✗ Lose sight of the SEA/SA objectives