

## IAIA SESSION CHAIRS REPORT (2008)

Session Number & Name: **CS4.13 Making SEA an effective tool for strategic decision making**  
Day: Thursday, 8 May  
Time: 08:30 AM - 10:00 AM  
Number of Participants: 26 – 30  
Session Chair: Fernando Loayza  
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- a. Three current issues in application of assessment process discussed in this session:
- In South Africa, people are relatively confused about what is SEA. This is affecting the proper use of SEA in development planning.
  - There is a need for strategic decisions.
  - Policy level is not yet included in environmental assessment and SEA in Greenland.
  - Need to find a way to get through to politicians.
- b. One or more emerging trends:
- Incorporation of climate change consideration in policies, plans and programs. This is an issue in China and South Africa, for example.
  - Rapid change (economic growth vs. sustainability).
  - Increase in exploration and exploitation permits (oil and minerals) is overloading the EA system.
  - Reduction in ice cap size due to climate change.
- c. (i) Issues relating to impact assessment effectiveness:
- In South Africa SEA is not being implemented very effectively.
  - A number of acronyms are very confusing.
  - Economic growth at a very fast rate.
- c. (ii) Challenges to impact assessment effectiveness:
- Capacity building
  - Understanding
  - Partnerships
- } In China they face significant environment and resource challenges.
- c. (iii) How might these challenges be overcome:
- By calling assessment as assessment and encourage strong planning.
  - Never give up and keep trying (cannot always change policies)
  - Effectiveness depends largely of institutional strengthening
  - A tool for SEA ([www.fes.uwaterloo.ca/research/sutasmt/seatools.html](http://www.fes.uwaterloo.ca/research/sutasmt/seatools.html))
- d. Comments on the arts and science of impact assessments:
- “To achieve sustainable development in China, we need everybody’s participation.”
- Other comments:
- Good exchange of knowledge, information.
  - There is an urgent need for enhancing the effectiveness of decision making (SEA).
  - Clarity on the added value of SEA is critical for its effectiveness as well as how to influence the behavior of key actors in the political arena.