

Difficulties of Introducing SEA into a Society

-Japanese Case-

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Abstract: Japanese government introduced a common SEA guideline in 2007 and a few local governments have already their own SEA systems prior to it. Though such state in Japan, it is still difficult to conduct good practice of SEA because of the requirement of more advanced information disclosure and public participation. As the situation might be better in local governments than national level, a panel survey was conducted on SEA in major local governments. Two individual surveys in 2002 and 2006 were done by the mailing method and additional interviews. All of the 60 autonomies responded to the survey. The analysis including statistical ones tells us the symptoms of the SEA movement, although these are not dominant in Japan. Based on the analysis, the sources of the difficulties of introducing SEA system into Japan are discussed.

Key words: Strategic Environmental Assessment, SEA guideline, panel survey, SEA in Japan

1. Introduction

As strategic environmental assessment (SEA) requires high level of transparency in decision-making process, it is not an easy task in many countries¹⁾²⁾. Though Japan is one of them, a few local governments are more positive. Harashina and Mochiki conducted a survey on all of major local governments to see the difficulties of introducing SEA in 2002³⁾. It was found that only four out of 59 had introduced SEA systems, and that 60% of the other authorities had the intention of studies on introducing SEA in the near future.

Just after this survey in 2002, Saitama Prefecture located in Tokyo area, introduced an administrative guideline on SEA applied at planning level⁴⁾, the first of its kind for local authorities. The Japan International Cooperation Agency amended its Guidelines for Environmental and Social Considerations in 2004⁵⁾ including SEA application. The Ministry of the Environment was finalizing the SEA guideline on national level in 2005⁶⁾. Because of these

changes, it was assumed that SEA introduction in local governments might have been progressed. Then, another survey was conducted to see the situation of the SEA systems in 2006, as a panel survey for the 2002 survey⁷⁾.

We discuss the difficulties of introducing SEA into Japan where the public decision-making is not quite transparent. We try to elucidate the difficulties based on the panel survey.

2. Method of the Study

Definition of SEA in the study

We define "SEA system" as the one which satisfies the following conditions³⁾; (A) applied at the strategic decision-making stages, (B) a wide range of scope of environmental, economic and social aspects to be reviewed, (C) transparent procedure through sufficient public participation.

However, since currently few systems meet these in Japan, then we defined "Quasi-SEA" by weakening the conditions B and C as follows:

(B') reviewed by external bodies, which is modification of condition (B)

(C) publication of the result of the review, which is modification of condition (C)

Moreover, the systems which meet the condition of either B' or C' at the plan/policy level were defined as "internal adjustment".

Outline of the survey

A mailing survey was conducted to the officers in charge of EIA in all of the major local authorities, i.e. 47 prefectures and the 12 major cities to see the status in January 2006⁷⁾. Through making big efforts, 100% of collecting rate was achieved. We could obtain very valuable data by the cooperation of the local governments.

The objectives of the survey were (1) to grasp the status of introducing SEA systems in 2006 and (2) to see the transitions of factors for/against introduction between 2002 and 2006, and (3) to see the transitions of the opinions of officers in charge of EIA during the period.

Only some of the results will be illustrated in this paper as the space is limited. The results in more detail are shown Harashina et al. (2007)⁷⁾.

3. SEA Introduction State and Factors for Institutionalization

3.1 State of introduction

Table 1 shows the state of introduction of SEA as of 2006. It was found that SEA or Quasi-SEA or Internal adjustment systems were held in 8 local authorities. Among these 8 authorities, 2 were

Table 1. SEA introduction as of

Current Status		The # of L.Gov.
Already institutionalized		8
Currently under study		8
Plan to study institutionalization	Necessary	14
	Not necessary	4
No plans to study institutionalization	Necessary	11
	Not necessary	15

Table 2. Classification of SEA systems among the 8 local authorities

Classes	Local Governments	Enactment	#of L.G.
SEA System	Saitama Pref.	2002.3	2
	Hiroshima city	2004.3	
Quasi-SEA System	Tokyo met. gov.	2002.7	3
	Kyoto city	2004.9	
	Kawasaki city	1994.10	
Internal adjustment	Yokohama city	1995.7	3
	Mie Pref.	1998.4	
	Kanagawa Pref.	2002.4	
Total # of Local Governments			8

classified as SEA, 3 were as Quasi-SEA, and other 3 were as "Internal adjustment" (Table 2). On the other hand, 26 authorities had no plan of conducting studies on introducing SEA (Table 1).

Table 3 shows the comparison of the state of introducing SEA in 2002 and 2006. The number of local authorities which institutionalized SEA increased from 4 to 8. Some progresses in "institutionalizing SEA system" or "under study" were observed. However, negative attitudes of introducing SEA systems were also observed.

3.2 Factors for introduction of SEA

Factors for introduction of SEA in local authorities which already established SEA or had been under study were summarized in Table 4 and Table 5. The factors for introducing SEA systems were extracted by applying the Quantification Method III to the data of 2002 survey. As the data from 2006 survey eligible for application to the analysis were so few, opinions collected were also considered in this case. Then, "influence by media reports" was extracted as the 2nd axis in the case of 2002. On the other hand, "Needs of the project

Table 3. Comparison of state of introducing SEA system between 2002 and

2006 2002	Instituti- onalized	Under study	Plan to study	No plans to study	Total #
Instituti- onalized	4	-	-	-	4
Under study	2	3	1	2	8
Plan to study	2	5	15	11	33
No plans to study	-	-	2	12	14
Total #	8	8	18	25	59*

Table 4. Factors for institutionalization by

Axes	Attributes
The 1st axis	Decision by primary stakeholders
The 2nd axis	Influence by media reports
The 3rd axis	Respect for the residents' will

Table 5. Factors for institutionalization

Items	The # of coments
① Env. sector realized the limitations of EIA.	11
② Opinions from experts	5
③ Direction from the head of a L.Gov.	2
④ The residents pointed out the limitation of EIA.	3
⑤ Problems occurred between proponent	0
⑥ Needs of the project was discussed in media.	0

was discussed in media”, which means the influence by media, was not answered in the case of 2006. Instead of media influence, “opinions from experts” was extracted.

4. Factors Resisting Introduction of SEA

4.1 Factors resisting introduction of SEA in the local authorities which had already introduced or were under study

The Quantification Method III was also applied to the data for identifying the factors resisting introduction of SEA. Figure 1 shows the results. The results were compared with the results of the similar analysis conducted on the data of 2002 survey.

Table 6 shows the transition of the factors resisting introduction of authorities which had

Table 6. Transition of factors against introduction 2002 and 2006

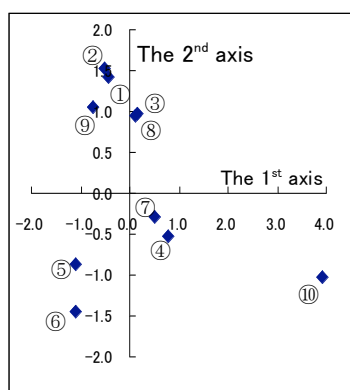
	2002	2006
The 1st axis	(a) Put emphasis on other available systems	(b) Secure capable persons who have skills/knowledge of the method of SEA
The 2nd axis	(b) Lack of experiences of env. consideration systems	(c) Sorting out the subject and the method of the SEA system
The 3rd axis	(c) Sorting out the systems concerning the plans subject to SEA	(a) Relationship with other systems

established SEA already or were under study. In 2002, “put emphasis on other available systems” was extracted as the 1st axis ((a) in Table 6). In 2006, “relationship with other systems” was extracted as the 3rd axis which corresponds to the 1st axis in 2002 (a). “Lack of experience of environmental consideration systems” was extracted as the 2nd axis in 2002 while in 2006 “secure capable persons who have skills or knowledge of the method of SEA” was extracted as the 1st axis which corresponds to the 2nd axis in 2002. In 2002, “sorting out the systems concerning the plans subject to SEA” was extracted as the 3rd axis, and in 2006, “sorting out the subject and the method of the SEA system” was extracted as the 2nd axis which corresponds to the 3rd axis in 2002. From the results, the axes (b’) and (c’) in 2006 should be the critical issues for introducing SEA.

4.2 Local governments not starting the study yet

The factors of resisting introduction were also analyzed in the local authorities, which were not starting the study yet. Those authorities were divided into 2 groups in the analysis. One group is those who have no change in 2006 and the other group is those who changed negatively in the introduction in 2006 (retrogression). Then, the factors of resisting introduction were integrated by the Quantification Method III for each group.

*Authorities classified into the group “no change”



- ① pending arrangement of relationship with low for EIA and SEA systems
- ② pending arrangement of relationship with PPPs in local governments and SEA systems
- ③ pending arrangement of relationship with other systems
- ④ unclear about considering the environmental aspect with economic and social aspects
- ⑤ unclear about information disclosure in SEA
- ⑥ unclear about methods for public participation in SEA
- ⑦ difficulty of interoffice coordination
- ⑧ unclear about emphasis on positioning among SEA systems to other systems
- ⑨ insufficiency of number of persons
- ⑩ insufficiency of human resources

Quantification Method III was applied to the data of the group classified as “no change”, which

	Eigenvalue	Contribution Ratio	Cumulative Contribution Ratio
The 1 st axis	0.359	27.3%	27.3%
The 2 nd axis	0.292	22.2%	49.5%
The 3 rd axis	0.222	16.9%	66.4%

stayed at the same stage as 2002. Taking the results into consideration, “methods of SEA are not well identified” was extracted as the 1st axis, and “insufficient information due to lack of manpower” was extracted as the 2nd axis. Such

Table 7. Provisions on SEA in the authorities

	Prescripts on SEA systems	2002 n = 4	2006 n = 8
Contents of the Report	Dealing with alternatives	1 (25.0)	6 (75.0)
	Inclusion of ‘no action’ plan	0(0)	0(0)
	Consideration of economic & social aspects	1 (25.0)	2(25.0)
Parties to examine the report	Examinationn by Env. department	3 (75.0)	6 (75.0)
	Examination by the third party	0(0)	4 (50.0)
Information disclosure	At the stage of initiating the development of alternatives	0(0)	3 (37.5)
	At the stage of selecting one plan out of alternatives	2 (50.0)	5 (62.5)
Methods of public involvement	Provide an opportunity of public comments	0(0)	5 (62.5)
	Provide proponent’s opinion by written documents	0(0)	4 (50.0)
	Hold public hearings	0(0)	3(37.5)
	Hold explanation meetings	0(0)	3(37.5)
	Hold opinion exchange meetings	0(0)	0(0)

The same kind of analysis was conducted to the group classified as “retrogression”, in which they acted negatively for introducing SEA systems in the year of 2002 and 2006. From these results, “enforcement of environmental consideration by other available systems” was extracted as the 1st axis, and “administrative offices’ intention for promoting environmental consideration policies” was extracted as the 2nd axis. It, therefore, was indicated that these factors mean a reason for not introducing the SEA system.

5. Change of Opinions of Officers in Charge of EIA and Provisions on SEA Systems

The transition of opinions of officers in charge of EIA from 2002 to 2006 was analyzed (Figure 2). Provisions on SEA systems were also discussed (Table 7 and 8). The provision whose response ratio of “necessary” was over 80% is defined as a “necessary item”. The

individual issues of an SEA system were extracted

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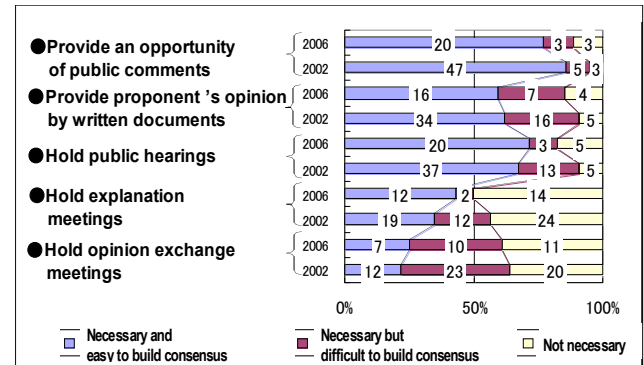
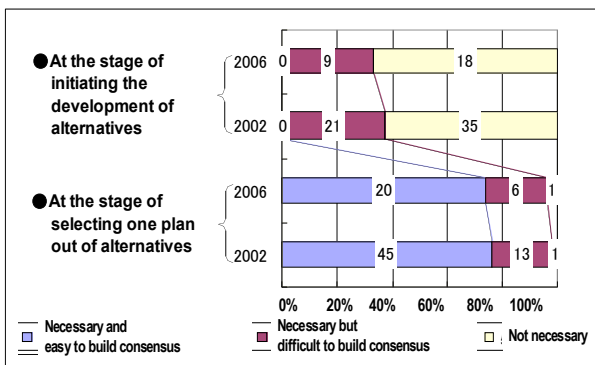
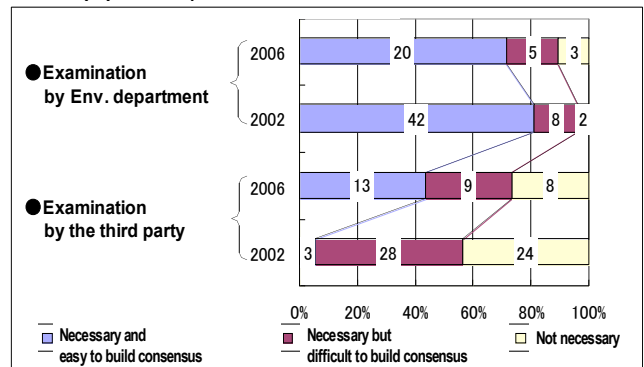
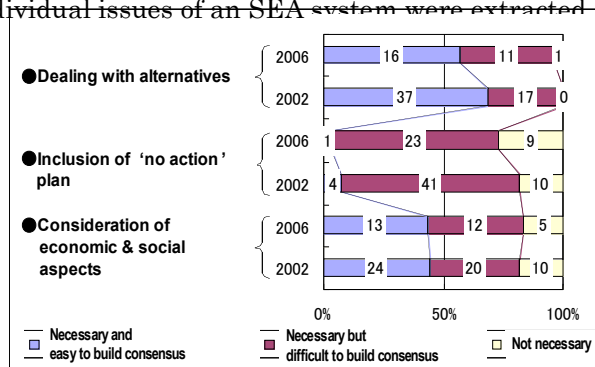


Figure 2. Transition of opinions of officers in charge of EIA/SEA between 2006 and

Table 8. Transition of items of “possible to adopt” and ”difficult to adjust”

	System Prescription	
	2002	2006
Possible to Adopt	Dealing with alternatives	Dealing with alternatives
	Examination by Env. department	Examination by Env. department
	At the stage of selecting one plan out of alternatives	At the stage of selecting one plan out of alternatives
		Provide an opportunity of public comments
		Holding explanation meetings
Difficult to Adjust	Inclusion of 'no action' plan	Inclusion of 'no action' plan
	Consideration of economic and social aspects	Consideration of economic and social aspects

consensus” was over 50% is defined as an item “easy to have a consent from the proponent department”. The item which was “necessary item” and “easy to obtain consent from the proponent department” is defined as the item “possible to adopt”. But if not “easy to have a consent from the proponent department”, it is defined as the item “difficult to adjust”.

Table 11 shows the transition of the items “possible to adopt” and “difficult to adjust” from 2002 to 2006. Regarding the items “difficult to adjust” the same results at the two time points were obtained. In contrast to this, “provide an opportunity of public comments” and ”hold public hearing” were added to the items group “possible to adopt” as new items.

6. Concluding Remarks

From these results and discussions, we conclude the study as follows;

Firstly, as far as SEA institutionalization is concerned, two directions of both progressions and retrogressions were observed. Although the number of the authorities having SEA systems was increased, some of authorities, which had planned to study on SEA in 2002, changed their attitudes to the negative direction.

Secondly, some changes among the factors for introduction were found. Though, “influence by media reports” was extracted in 2002, it was not extracted in 2006. Instead of this, the factor of “opinions from experts” was extracted.

Thirdly, as for “factors resisting introduction of SEA”, the more realistic issues which are

likely to be emerged at the stage of introducing an SEA system, such as “lack of SEA experts” and “methods of SEA” have become more common.

And lastly, regarding the items group of “difficult to adjust” and ”possible to adopt”, the group of “difficult to adjust” resulted in the same attributes between 2002 and 2006, while two new items were added to the group of “possible to adopt”. To include “no action” alternative or consider economic/social aspects requires information disclosure of the plan.

Thus, the results of the study tell us that the difficulties of introducing SEA into a society lie on the difficulties of disclosing information. The Ministry of the Environment established the SEA common guideline in 2007 after a decade of effort. The resistance of a ministry was quite strong as the power plants were cut out at the final moment of the establishment by a very opaque way⁷⁾. To our regret, we still have such problems in Japan. Progress of information disclosure and public participation must be the base for introducing SEA systems.

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