

The role of tiering in delivering effective EAs

The Case of the Rail Baltic High Speed Rail

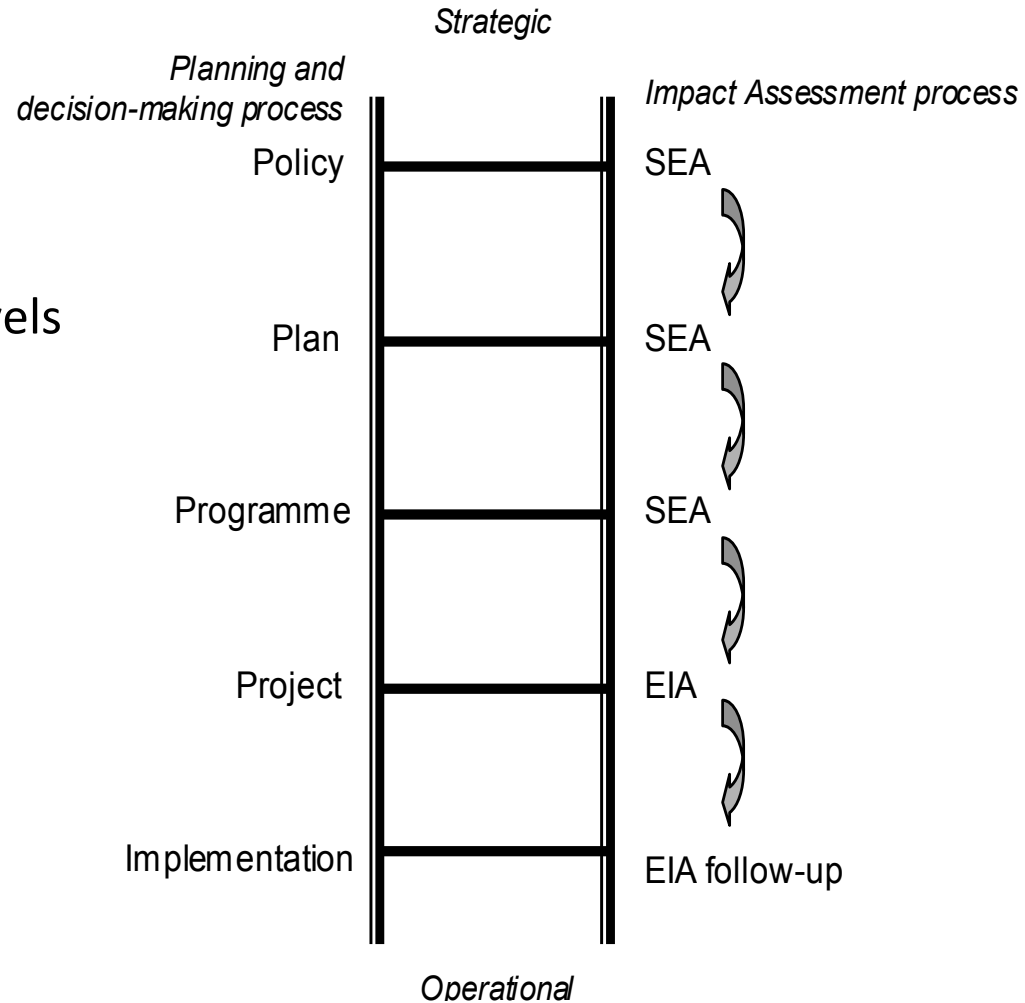
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Content

- Evolution of the concept of tiering
- Case: Rail Baltic High Speed Rail
- Effectiveness and EA
- Leadership, how it is linked with effectiveness,
- How tiering may support effectiveness in EA
- Discussion and conclusions

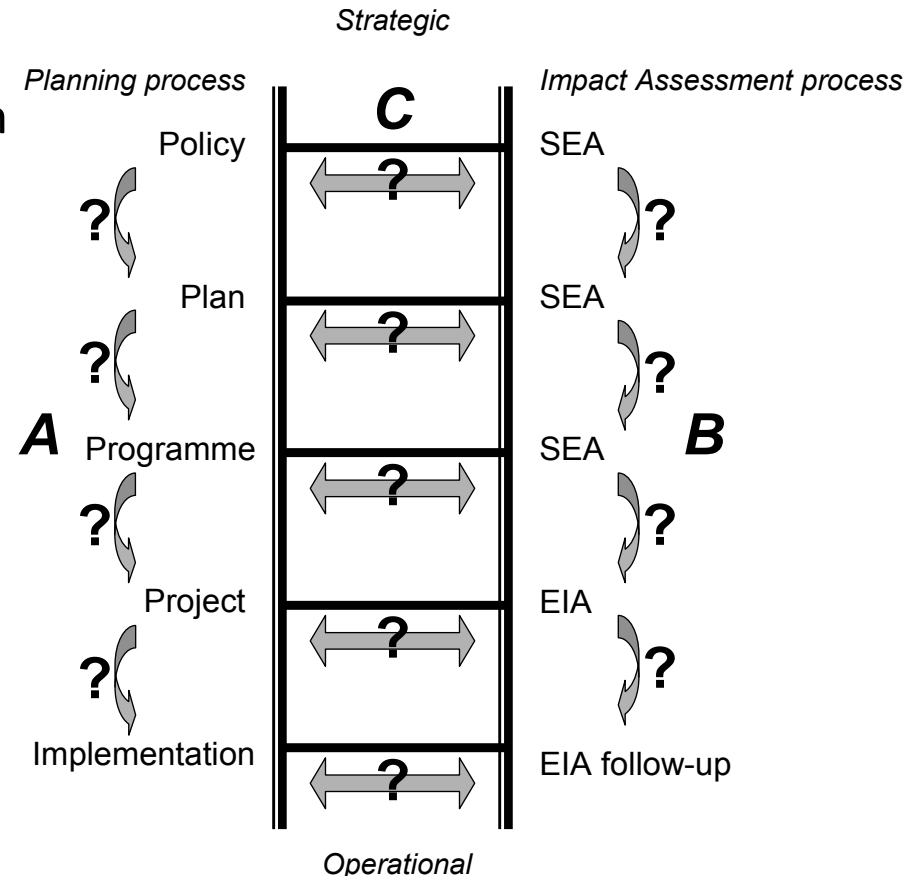
Tiering

- Tiering is a central concept in EA: EAs made at different planning levels influence each other and related planning decisions.
- Tiering is about handing over information, linking EAs
- SEA can only deliver sustainable outcomes if tiering takes place



Evolution of the tiering concept

- The development of the EA concept in relation to planning and implementation issues has resulted in its evolution into different forms SEA, EIA and follow-up at different planning tiers.
=> development of the concept tiering
- Thinking about tiering has also evolved: from a simple top-down concept to how to link EAs at different tiers (B) – from plans and programs to project and implementation (A) – as well as to link EA with planning and decision-making (C) (i.e. vertical and horizontal tiering).



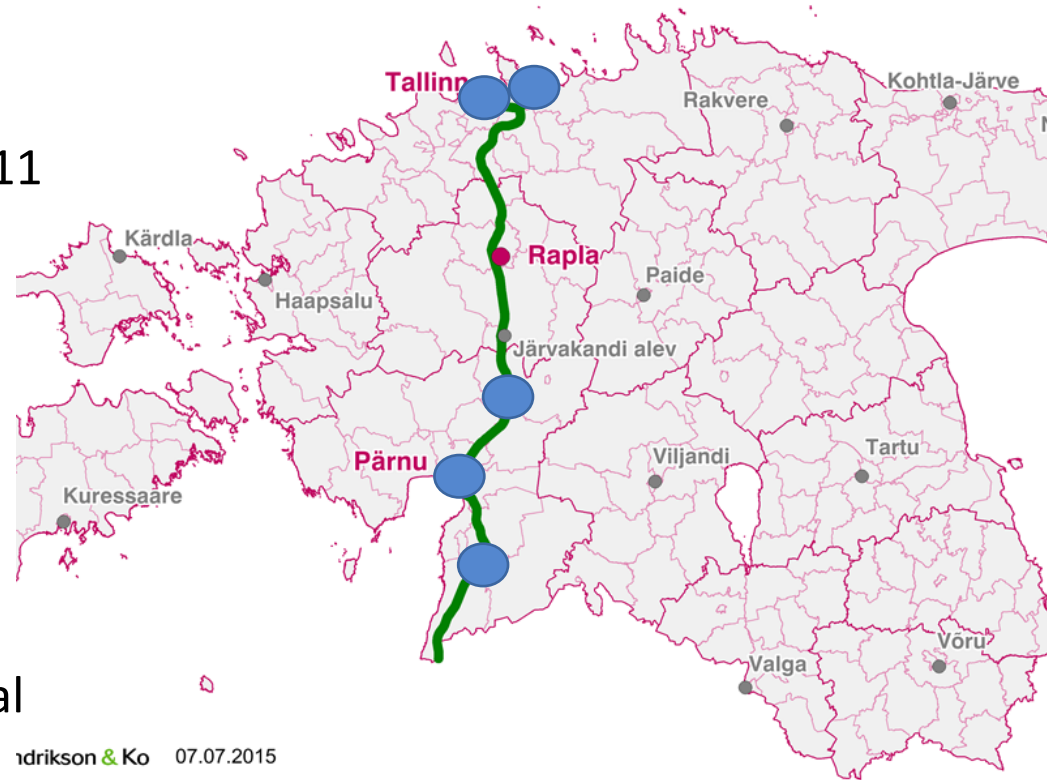
Tiering in practice: Rail Baltic Case

- 700 km of new high speed rail in Estonia Latvia and Lithuania. Linking the Baltic railway system with EU.
- 200 km will be in Estonia
- Initiated through a feasibility study in 2010
- EU initiative together with the Baltic states

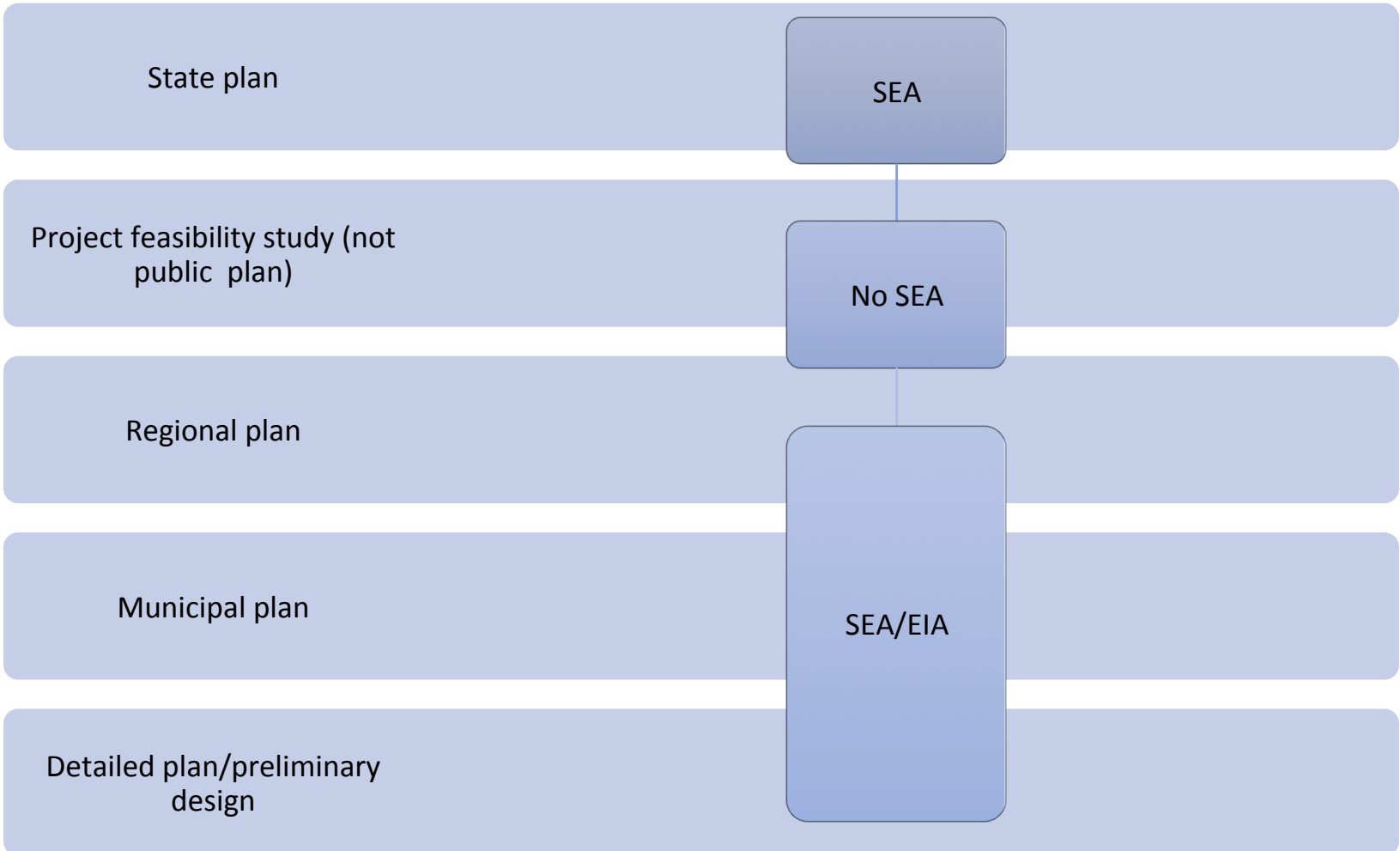


Rail Baltic Estonia

- New state level plan, fixing the principal corridor, approved 2011
- County corridor plans and SEA carried out and approved 2016
- The SEA encompassed three county plans
- Detailed plans of stations and preliminary design were made simultaneously with the regional plans, and EIAs were done. Some are EIAs are still in process



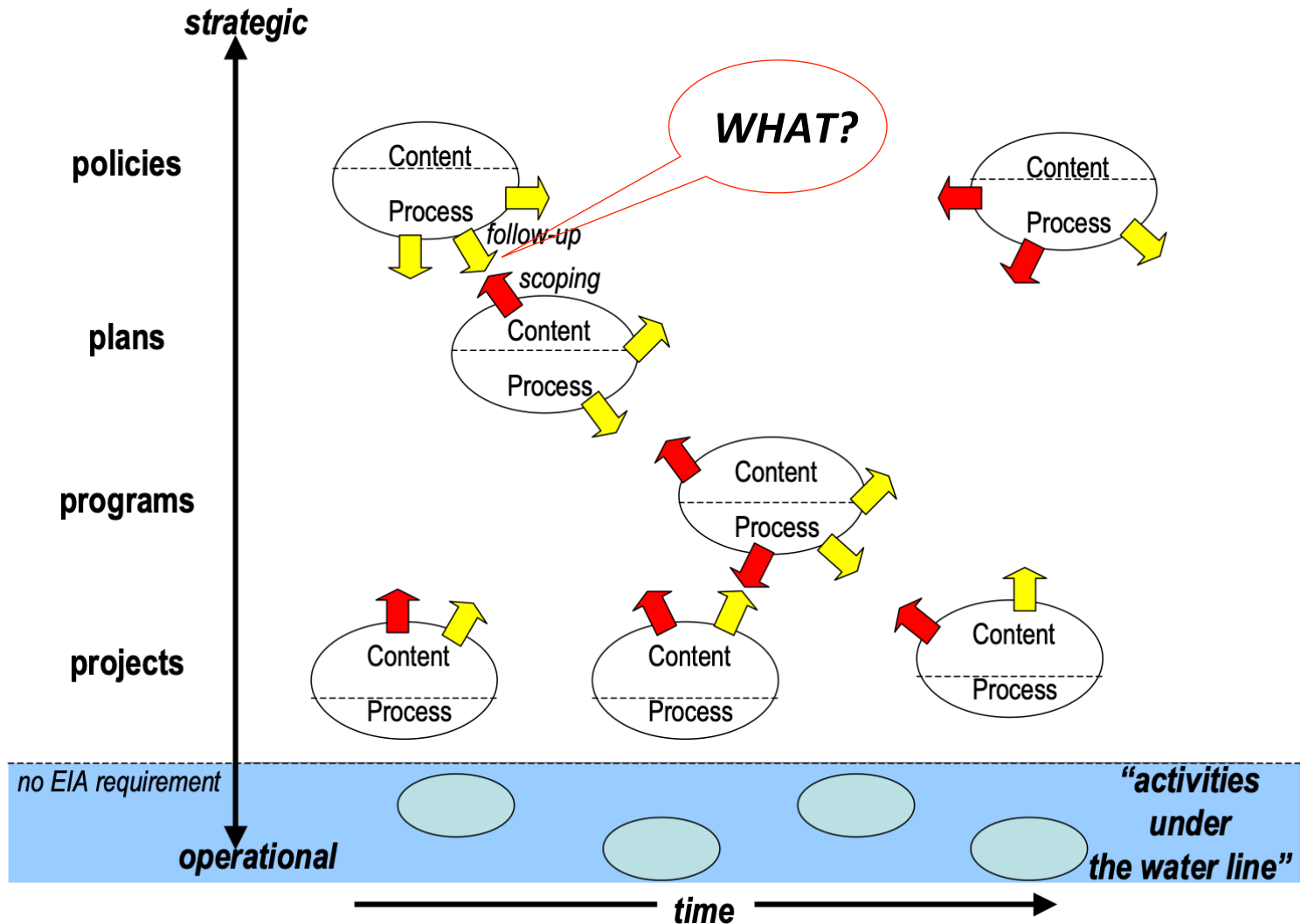
Rail Baltic planning tiers



Rail Baltic: Lessons learned

- Planning and impact assessment issues that should have been addressed at state level had to be solved through SEAs done at the county level ('repair EAs')
- Simultaneous planning at regional and local level created many challenges:
 - There is a high dependence on information transfer between the different planning and EA teams.
 - Links to subsequent tiers is provided through Environmental Management Plans (EMPs).
 - If EAs are made at different tiers, this proves to be not per se implying tiering; for tiering information (and the principles behind this) should be handed over.
 - The practical task of *effective* handing over information (and principles) to next tiers proved to be difficult.
 - Different disciplines, sectors, organizations, teams were involved at the various planning levels (different worlds with different languages and rationalities).
 - There were high demands on the various team leaders with regard to EA *leadership* in order to deliver (sustainable) outcomes.

Tiering: connecting the islands of EA



Effectiveness

- Lesson from tiering practice – such as Rail Baltic case:
Isolated EAs are not effective. Isolated effectiveness is no effectiveness.
- Tiering is closely related to effectiveness in EA.
I.e.: does EA influence the plan, project, or implementation?
(evidence-based decision making)
- All forms of effectiveness as usually distinguished in literature can be seen (see e.g. Bond et al.):
 - Procedural
 - Substantive
 - Transactive
 - Knowledge and learning
 - Normative

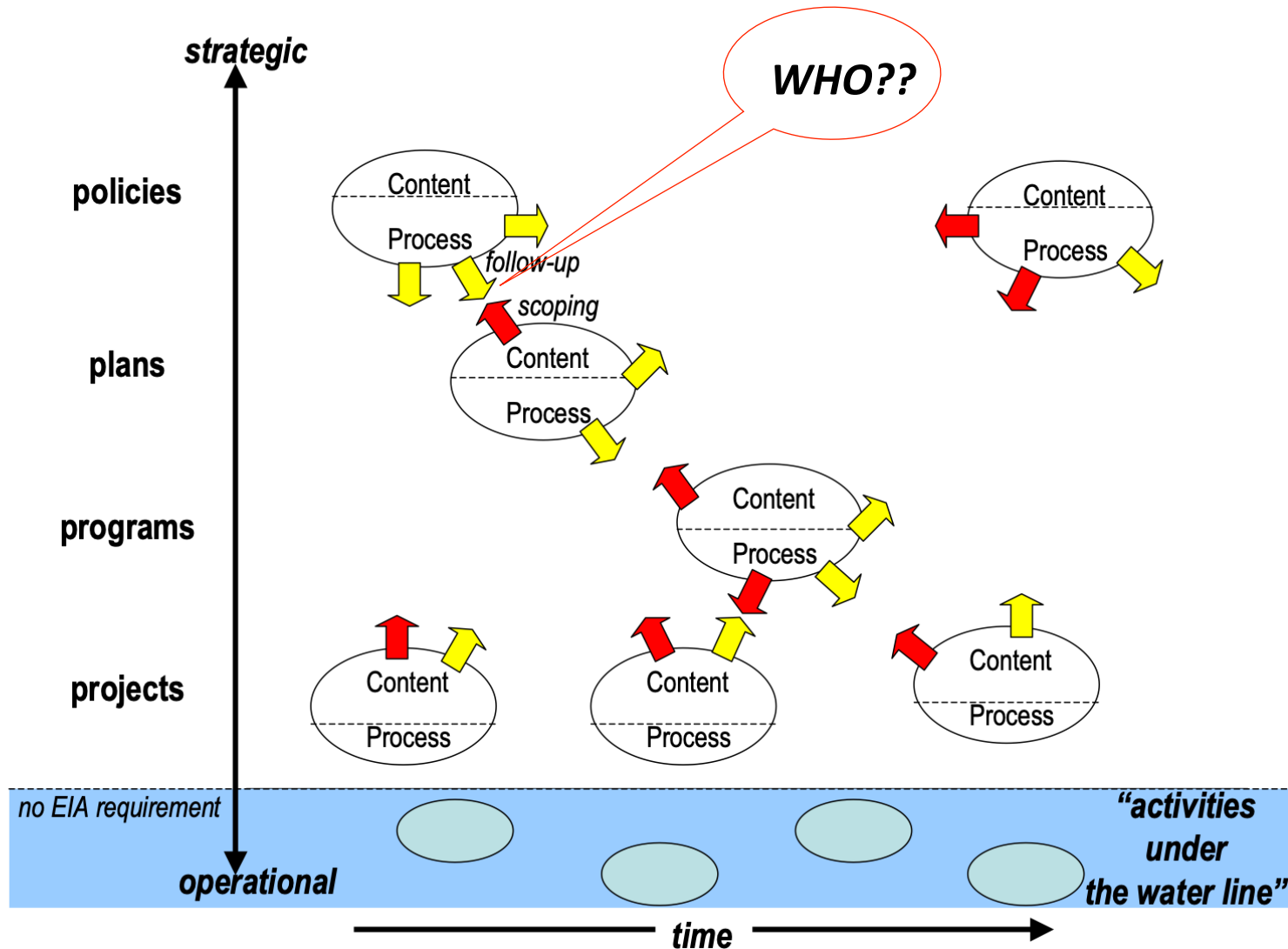
The role of tiering for the various types of effectiveness (I)

- Procedural effectiveness –
The EA system needs to be organised in a way in which EAs at different planning stages are linked. All relevant planning levels need to have requirements on EA. Otherwise, the role of the EA will be to revisit earlier planning stages in order to solve key issues that have not been dealt with at higher tiers ('repair EAs'). Guidance needs to include support with regards to tiering.
- Substantive effectiveness –
If the results of a well-performed SEA process are not transferred to subsequent stages, the substantive effectiveness of SEA will be low. This means that tiering is key for substantive effectiveness (achieving sustainable outcomes). In order to deliver substantive effectiveness, careful linking of different planning levels, from more strategic to more operational tiers, is vital.

The role of tiering for the various types of effectiveness (II)

- Transactive effectiveness –
Without good tiering, some studies or assessments will have to be made all over again. Also, subsequent stages will not have sufficient information which means that the allocation of resources (time and money) might not be right. This would lead to lower transactive effectiveness.
- Knowledge and learning oriented effectiveness –
Information transfer is a key part of tiering. Well-functioning tiering helps the transfer of knowledge between different planning stages as well as provide learning between different EA team.
- Normative effectiveness –
This is about translating policy norms and principles into practice. Well-functioning tiering could help to operationalising policy norms to plan and project decision making.

How to go beyond islands of effectiveness?



Rail Baltic issues: How to maintain links between tiers, EAs?

- EA and planning involves different people and discourses ‘different worlds, with different languages, rationalities’ (‘islands’)
- Tiering is about follow-up of the current EA and scoping of the next EA. Thereby tiering challenges the boundaries both current and next EAs.
- Tiering implies *cross-boundary working* – linking with the next level and previous level – which requires leadership; leaders who are working beyond boundaries (boundary spanners).
- Leadership in *challenging and connecting* different disciplines, sectors, organizations.
- Leadership means challenging EA, maintaining of the focus on the objectives (scope) safeguarding effectiveness.

Conclusion

- Tiering developed as a concept because of the *evolution* of EA: preventing foreclosure => attention to earlier decision-making (SEA).
- Tiering is in essence a quite *revolutionary* idea as it challenges current and subsequent EAs, linking different 'worlds' by handing over information and principles.
- Tiering is a vital element for *effective* EA without tiering there will be no information transfer.
- Tiering addresses the importance of the issue of *leadership* in relation to EA effectiveness.
- However, the evolution of tiering as a concept and in practice is only very *little explored* to this day.

=> Work to be done!