Netherlands Commission for Environmental Assessment

Cameroon

SEA profile

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Contact & history

Country contact on SEA

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Country's planning system

In Cameroon, strategic planning is done at national, local and sectoral levels.

At the national level, Cameroon inaugurated five-year development plans after its independence. This practice was interrupted in the late 1980s through the adoption of structural adjustment plans during the economic crisis. With the completion of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries initiative, Cameroon returned to strategic planning in the context of the development of Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) in the early 2000s. To enhance the economic recovery, a long-term vision for development in the next 25 to 30 years was formulated in 2007, with the support of civil society, the private sector and development partners. On the basis of this "Vision 2035" a Strategy Paper for Growth and Employment (SPGE) was developed in 2009. It was designed for a decade, but as a strategic planning document, it could be revised and adjusted to the national socio-economic development and international environment, through an iterative and participatory process.

At the local level, regional and local authorities develop Local Development Plans, on the basis of the powers as conferred on them by the laws on decentralization.

In terms of sectoral development, most departments develop their own development strategy, which is in line with the options of national development. These sector strategies include among others: the Strategy for Rural Sector Development (DSDSR), the Transport Sector Strategy, the development plan for the electricity sector, the mining sector strategy which is currently being finalized, and so on.

History of SEA

The Decree No 2013/0171/PM lays down rules for conducting environmental and social impact studies (ESIA). This Decree also legally introduces Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA). Provisions for ESIA generally also apply for SESA.

Legal framework for SEA

Framework/Enabling law

The environmental management law 96/12 (August 1996) implicitly prescribes SESA through its article 14, which states that environmental considerations need to be integrated into all economic plans and programs. Article 40 specifies the same requirement for urban planning and public and private land subdivision.

Year of introduction of enabling law

1996

Approving authority of enabling law

The President of the Republic approved the framework law.

First national detailed SEA regulation

Decree No 2013/0171/PM.

Year of introduction of first national detailed SEA regulation

2013

Approving authority of first detailed SEA regulation

The Decree was signed by the Prime Minister, Head of Government.

Current national detailed regulation for SEA

Detailed regulations relevant for SEA are:

- Decree 2001/718/PM of September 2001, modified by Decree 2006/1577/PM in September 2006, outlining the organisation and functioning of the Inter-Ministerial Committee on the Environment (CIE).
- Decree 00004 of MINEP of July 2007 defining the conditions to approve environmental consultants to carry out environmental studies and audits.
- Decree 00001 of MINEPDED of February 2016 establishing the category of activities that should be subject to ESIA or SESA.

Objective SEA

According to the Decree (2013), the objective of the SESA is to evaluate the environmental effects of a policy, plan, programme or a project with multiples components.

Scope of SEA application

Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA) applies to policies, plans and programs or projects with multiple components. Decree 00001 of MINEPDED of February 2016 further specifies the activities that are subject to SESA.

Exemptions from SEA application

Strictly speaking, there are no provisions for exemptions from SESA application. However, policies, plans, programs and projects with multiple components which are related to national security and defense, are free of public consultation and public hearing procedures (Article 23 Decree 2013/0171/PM).

SEA approach

An ESIA-based approach is chosen for SESA. The processes followed for SEA generally overlap with the ones for ESIA.

SEA tiering with EIA

The relationship between the SESA and the ESIA is not made explicit. Article 4 of the decree (2013) states that the proponent of a policy, plan, program or project with multiple components can do an SESA. However, for the implementation of each project or each component, the developer still needs to carry out an environmental and social impact assessment.

Institutional setting for SEA

Central SEA authority

The Ministry of the Environment, Nature Protection and Sustainable Development (MINEPDED) is the central SESA authority.

(De)centralisation of SEA mandates

There is no decentralization of SESA mandate.

Initiator of the SEA

According to the Decree 2013/0171/PM, the initiator of the SEA is the promoter of the policy, the plan, the program or the project with multiples components.

SEA procedure

Establishing context

Overview SEA procedure

Decree 2013/071/PM does not make a clear distinction between the procedure for ESIA and SESA. For both, the procedure consists of the following steps:

- Screening (not mandatory)
- Preparation of ToR to be approved by the MINEPDED after the advice of the relevant sectorial administration.
- Preparation of the ESIA / SESA report with public consultations.
- Review of ESIA report / SESA and public hearing
- Decision of the Minister in charge of the environment on the quality ESIA / SESA report.

Identification of stakeholders

In the final SESA report, it is expected that the principal stakeholders are identified and their concerns are included.

Implementing the SEA

Participation in scoping

Article 20 of Decree 2013/071 states that during the ESIA and SESA study, stakeholder inputs must be collected through consultation meetings and public hearings. It is not made explicit that consultations should take place at the scoping phase.

Content of SEA report

The SESA report should contain as follows:

- The summary in plain English and French language.
- The description of the policy, plan or program and its alternatives.
- The description of the institutional and legal framework in relation to the policy, plan or program.
- The description and analysis of the receiving environment of the policy, the plan or the program
- Identification of the key stakeholders and their concerns.
- The evaluation of the potential environmental impacts.
- The prescription and recommendations and relevant measures of environmental management in an environmental management plan (EMP).

SEA review

The environmental management law (article 20) provides that any impact assessment gives rise to a reasoned decision by the administration in charge of the environment, after advice from the

Inter-ministerial Committee for the Environment (CIE).

In Decree 2013/071, the procedure to review SESA is mixed up with the procedure to review ESIA.

Participation in review

Public hearings are required for ESIA/SESA to enable stakeholders to react on the conclusions of such studies (Article 20 of Decree 2013/071). After the administration responsible for the environment announces its conclusion on a study, a large public consultation is organised and an ad hoc commission established to report upon the outcomes. This report is submitted to the Minister in charge of the environment and the Inter-Ministerial Committee on the Environment (CIE) for their consideration in review.

Informing and influencing decision-making

SEA and planning decision-making

When a project or plan is subject to ESIA or SESA, it is required to obtain a certificate of environmental conformity from the Minister in charge of the environment.

Monitoring

SEA practice

Year of first SEA

1998: Environmental Assessment of Transport Sector Program.

Annual no. of SEAs

No statistics on the annual number of SEA is available for the moment, as the provisions for SEA are very recent (in 2013).

Central SEA database

Within the framework of joint project between MINEPDED and ACAMEE, an environmental assessment information management system (SIGEES) was developed and is being tested in 2013. It provided space for information on SESA.

Practice reviews

No information is available.

Case studies

- 1998: Environmental Assessment of Transport Sector Program.assessment of environmental
- 2004: Social and environmental impacts assessment of the Forest and Environment Sector Program (PSFE)

Professional bodies

Cameroon Association for Environmental Assessment (ACAMEE)

SEA links

Links to laws/regulation

Website Ministry of Environment, Nature Protection and Sustainable Development