

VEHICLES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



Lesson Learning Goals

At the end of this lesson you should be able to:

- Summarize policy, legislative, administrative, and operational requirements to enable progress towards sustainable development
- Outline at least four policy options aimed at reducing poverty and protecting the poor
- Specify at least three legislative remedies that would promote sustainable development
- Define and describe the purpose of CEA, SEA and IREM

Questions

How do we:

- Prepare for the journey towards sustainable development?
- Decide what are the important issues?
- Know when we're going in the right direction, moving towards sustainable development?
- Measure progress towards sustainable development?

Preparing for the Journey Towards Sustainable Development

- Policy Setting
- Enabling Legislation
- Institutional Reform

Some Policy Remedies

- Set prices consistent with sustainability, e.g., for energy, transportation, forests, water use, fisheries, land use, waste discharges
- Offer incentives for sustainable development
- Rearrange societal priorities - focus primarily on poverty
- Adjust discount rate to properly value long-term environmental costs
- Engage public (stakeholder) participation in policy and decision making

Policies Specific to Poverty

- Protect current access by poor people to natural resources
- Protect the environment on which the poor depend from pollution by industry
- Develop emergency response programs for the poor during natural disasters
- Transfer ownership of natural assets to the poor and confer property rights in law

Policies Specific to Poverty (Cont'd)

- Co-invest in, and co-manage, natural resources with the poor
- Emphasise small-scale (appropriate) technology for rural development
- Engage the poor in resource development planning: decentralised, people-focussed partnerships
- Implement policies with accountability, responsibility, transparency, gender equality

Legal and Institutional Remedies

- Build legislation and organizational structures on sound principles and policies
- Integrate and harmonise environmental and development laws, policies, strategies, plans, and the institutions administering them
- Ensure those affected by development have influence on decisions, and an equitable share in the rewards

Other Legal and Institutional Remedies

- Emphasise long-term perspectives and cross-sector integration at ecosystem and watershed levels and across national boundaries
- Strengthen enforcement of environmental laws
- Apply the principle that:
 - » Polluter pays
 - » Resource user pays
- Eliminate administrative fragmentation, duplication, and competition

How to Decide What is Important?

- Cumulative Effects Assessment (CEA)
- Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

Cumulative Effects Assessment

Definitions:

Cumulative = Accumulation = Add Together

- CEA is a process for identifying and evaluating the additive and interactive effects of human activities on complete ecosystems over time

The Importance of CEA in the Mekong River Basin

- Guide Mekong River Commission (MRC) in fulfilling its mission to coordinate sustainable development in the MRB
- Raise awareness of the interdependence of each riparian country's development plans
- Promote responsive, responsible, and mutually beneficial development in the MRB

Examples of Possible CEA

Cumulative effects on MRB ecosystems of:

- Logging in Lao PDR
- A dam on a Mekong tributary in Lao PDR
- Removal of flooded forest trees in Cambodia
- Illegal fishing and logging in Cambodia
- Removal of mangrove forests in Vietnam
- Overuse of pesticides in Mekong Delta
- Mekong tributary diversion in Thailand
- Industrial discharges in Northeast Thailand

Strategic Environmental Assessment

- SEA is the systematic evaluation of the environmental consequences of proposed policy, legislation, or program plans
- SEA is designed to guide or correct policy, legislative and planning decisions to ensure overall ecosystem health

Looking at the Big Picture

- SEA takes a 'satellite level' overview of the potential effects of policies and legislation
- Allows riparian countries and the MRC to assess the long-term consequences of proposed courses of action to ensure they will be mutually beneficial
- Provides early warning of potential problems or conflicts
- Focus is on **prevention**

Advantages of SEA

- Transcends traditional levels of government, sector boundaries, and individual country frontiers for the greater good of all
- Permits riparian countries to harmonize development policies and legislative plans to promote overall sustainability in the MRB
- Assists in setting sustainable development priorities and limits

How Do We Know When We're on the Right Track?

- Integrated Resource and Environmental Management (IREM)

Integrated Resource and Environmental Management

- IREM takes a holistic view of managing natural resources by integrating ecological, social, and economic criteria
- Takes account of interdependencies
- Emphasis is to protect and, where possible, enhance ecosystems, and to prevent their degradation
- Purpose is long-term viability of ecosystems for well-being of future generations

Integrated Resource and Environmental Management (Cont'd)

- Geographic scope covers entire MRB watershed; extends across country boundaries
- Engages cross-sector teams:
 - » stakeholders, the public, and
 - » environmental and natural scientists, and
 - » economists, agronomists, foresters, and
 - » engineers, fisheries specialists, and
 - » social scientists, anthropologists, and
 - » policy makers, legislators, and managers

Inventory of Natural Environmental Values

- To know what is to be sustained during development, must have data on existing biology and chemistry of ecosystems
- Need baseline inventories of:
 - » biota - terrestrial and aquatic species and abundance, endangered species
 - » water chemistry, river flow regimes, water use
 - » topography, soil chemistry, land uses
 - » forest cover, types
 - » human demographics, consumption patterns

Concluding Thoughts

Important points to remember are:

- Sustainable development is founded on sound policies concerning the economy, natural resource use, pricing, incentives, poverty relief, environment, technology, individual and community rights
- Enabling legislation will be based on these principles and will focus on integrating environmental and development laws, and on a just distribution of costs and benefits

Concluding Thoughts (Cont'd)

Additional points to remember are:

- CEA and SEA are tools to identify and evaluate regional key indicators of sustainable development
- IREM integrates many disciplines to provide holistic ecosystem management
- Monitoring of sustainable development starts with accurate baseline data