SEA at a Crossroad
Trends in Austria’s Transport Infrastructure Planning

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SEA in Austria's transport infrastructure planning system

- SEA Directive
  - National high level transport network
    - Transport Planning Act (incl. SEA)
  - Provincial road networks
    - SEA according to Land Use Planning Acts
    - SEA according to Road Acts
    - No SEA requirements
Learnings from 15 years of SEA practice in Austria

- Limited effect due to application mainly for specific routes rather than entire network or relevant parts of the network and many exceptions
- Good results and effects when fully integrated in planning process
- Moderate results and effects when practiced as “EIA light”
- Importance of extensive scoping (alternatives, focus on significant effects)
- High acceptance as an instrument of “good planning” rather than instrument for rigid environmental assessment
- No experience in cross boarder planning processes despite high degree of spatial and infrastructural interlinkage
Recommendations for the future development of the SEA Directive

- Objectives: emphasis on process requirements rather than content or outcome requirements
- Focus: shift from environment to sustainability
- Role: full and early integration in planning process instead of “end of pipe“ assessments (of e.g. plan drafts)
- Scope of application: add policies, clarify plans and programmes
- Scope of assessment: stay away from EIA (esp. Annexes)
- Implementation: encourage tailor made national implementation
Let’s continue the conversation!
Post questions and comments in the IAIA24 app.

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