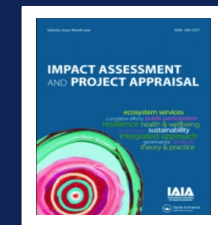


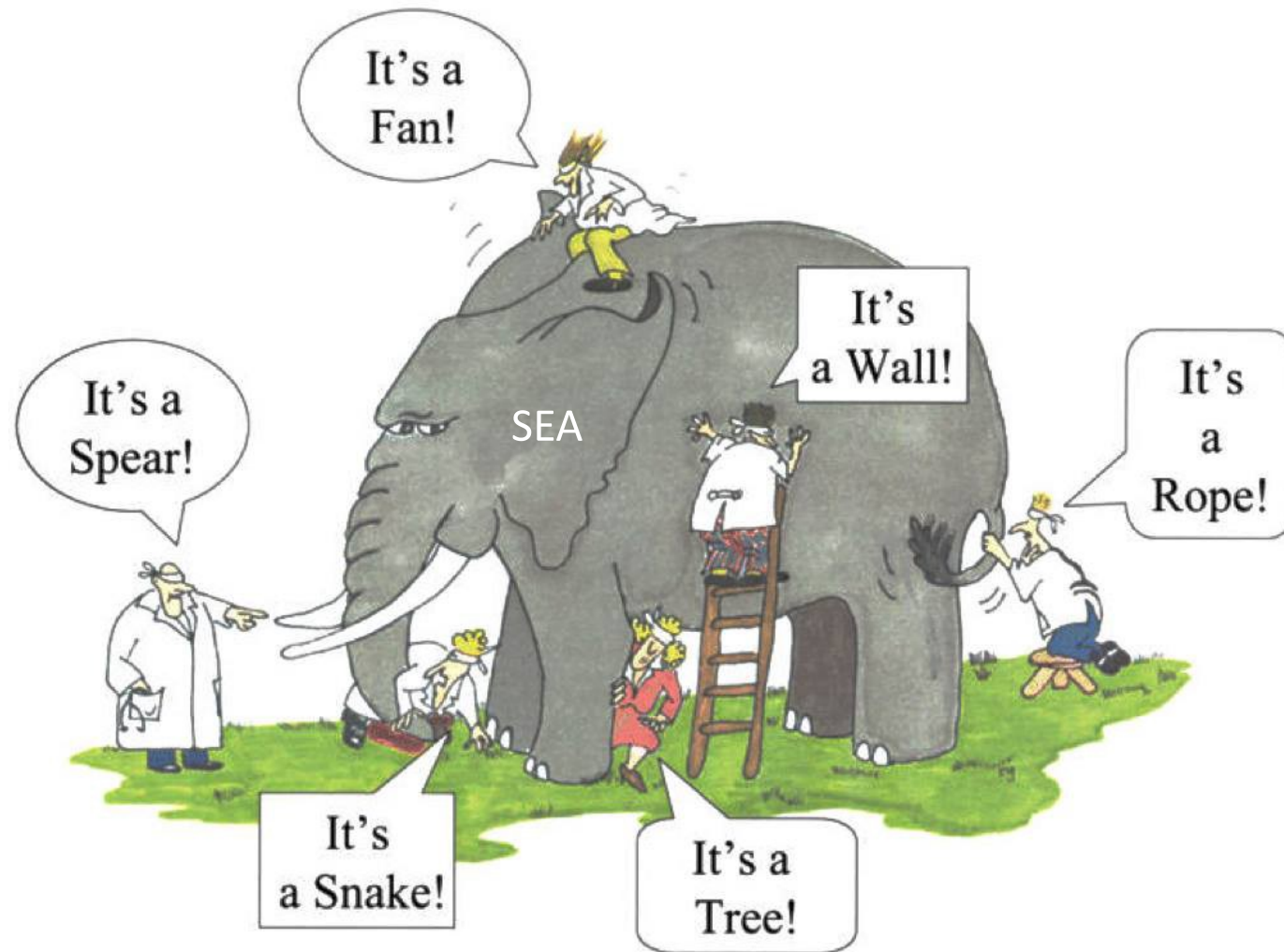
# Current gaps in Strategic Planning & SEA *knowledge*



Thomas B Fischer



# SEA – are our assumptions ‘right’?



# SEA – are our assumptions right?

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An early experience ...

# SEA – are our assumptions right?

---

*XXX (1996) State of the Art on Strategic Environmental Assessment for XXX, XXX:*

*‘extensive investigations, utilising computerised literature and Internet searches as well as professional person to person contacts, highlighted a disparity between the perception that the practice of SEA is widespread and evidence to support this assertion’ (XXX, 1996, pXX).*

*From the same author: ‘the term SEA should be used for any form of assessment of the environmental impacts of PPPs’*

# SEA – are our assumptions right?

- Systematic review of all transport and spatial PPPs in 1997/1998 in three EU regions: North West England, Noord-Holland and EVR Brandenburg-Berlin
- How many SEAs (any assessment of environmental impacts of PPPs) did I find?
- ‘A minimum of 80 assessments were identified for 116 spatial/land-use and transport PPPs’

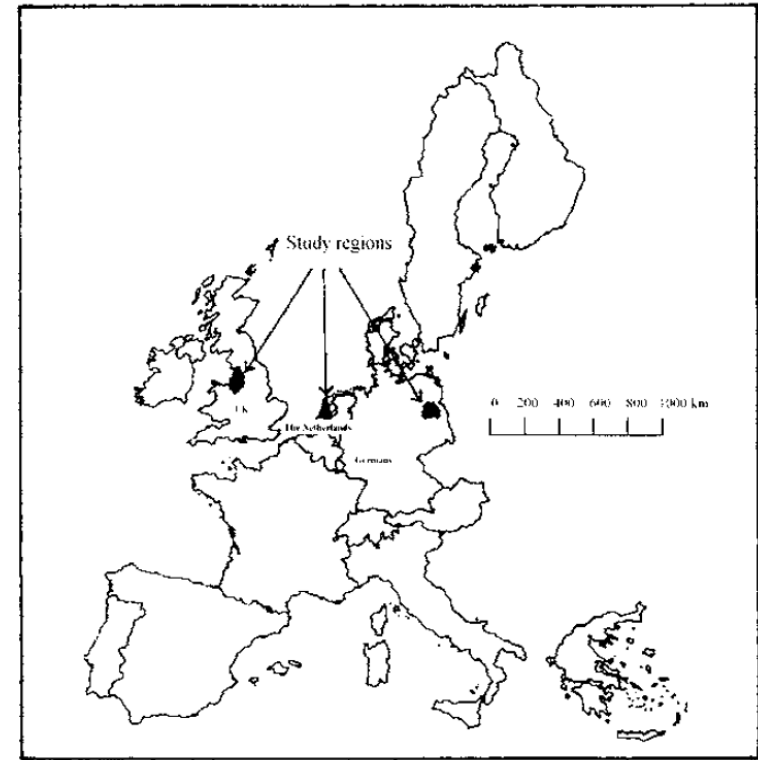


Figure 3. The study regions in an EU context.

*But none of them were called SEA...*

*Fischer, T.B. 2002. Strategic Environmental Assessment in Transport and Land-use Planning, Earthscan, London*

# What is SEA?

---

# What is SEA?

An assessment following the European Parliament and Council 'Directive on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment'?

- Doesn't mention SEA...

Strategic thinking EA?

- not covered by the Directive...
- may even be outside our usual 'PPP' references

A systematically tiered framework ('PPPs')?

- not reflected in legal requirements in any system

...

# What gaps? What for?



"I SPEAK SIX DIFFERENT LANGUAGES FLUENTLY BUT  
I DON'T UNDERSTAND MY TEENAGER DAUGHTER."



# What gaps? What for?

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*What should we be focusing on in order to achieve effective SEA...*

# Effective SEA?

---

# Effective SEA?

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## **Effectiveness:**

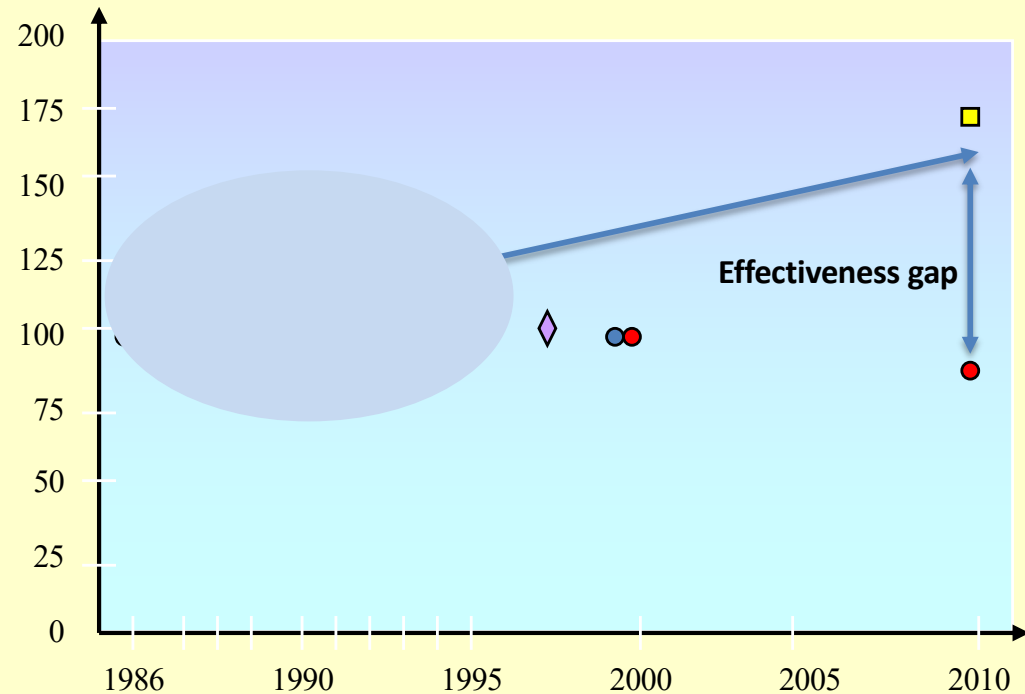
*‘the degree to which something is successful in producing a desired result; success.’*

# Effective SEA?

**Effectiveness:**  
*'the degree to which something is successful in producing a desired result; success.'*

CO<sub>2</sub>-emissions of road traffic

1986: 21300 KT



● development  
● SVV-II-goal  
● NMP-2-goal

◆ prediction SVV-II-policy 1992  
■ zero alternative

# Effective SEA?

---

*Substantive* and  
Contextual, Procedural, Pluralist,  
Normative, Knowledge and Learning and  
Transactive elements of effectiveness...

Therivel, R. and González A. 2019 Introducing SEA effectiveness. *Impact Assessment and Project Appraisal* 37(3-4): 181-187.

# Why do we have SEA / why do we need it?

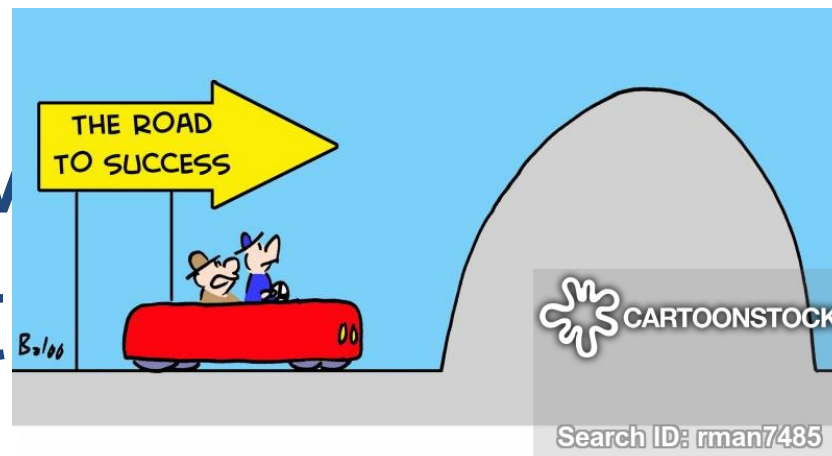
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# Why do we have SEA / why do we need it?

---

The 'SEA' Directive:

To provide a high level of protection of the environment



"Wow! — that's the biggest speed bump I've ever seen!"

# Why do we have SEA / why do we need it?

---

Lee, N and Walsh, F (1992) 'Strategic environmental assessment: an overview', *Project Appraisal* 7(3): 126–136



# Why do we have SEA / why do we need it?

---

*We need SEA in order to assess:*

- indirect and induced effects*
- alternatives that go beyond those considered in project EIA*
- cumulative effects*
- accounting for smaller projects*
- Effects that are not associated with one particular development*
- (more) compatible objectives and targets*

Lee, N and Walsh, F (1992) 'Strategic environmental assessment: an overview', *Project Appraisal* 7(3): 126–136

# Why do we have SEA / why do we need it?

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“Never mind how others see you, how do you see yourself?”

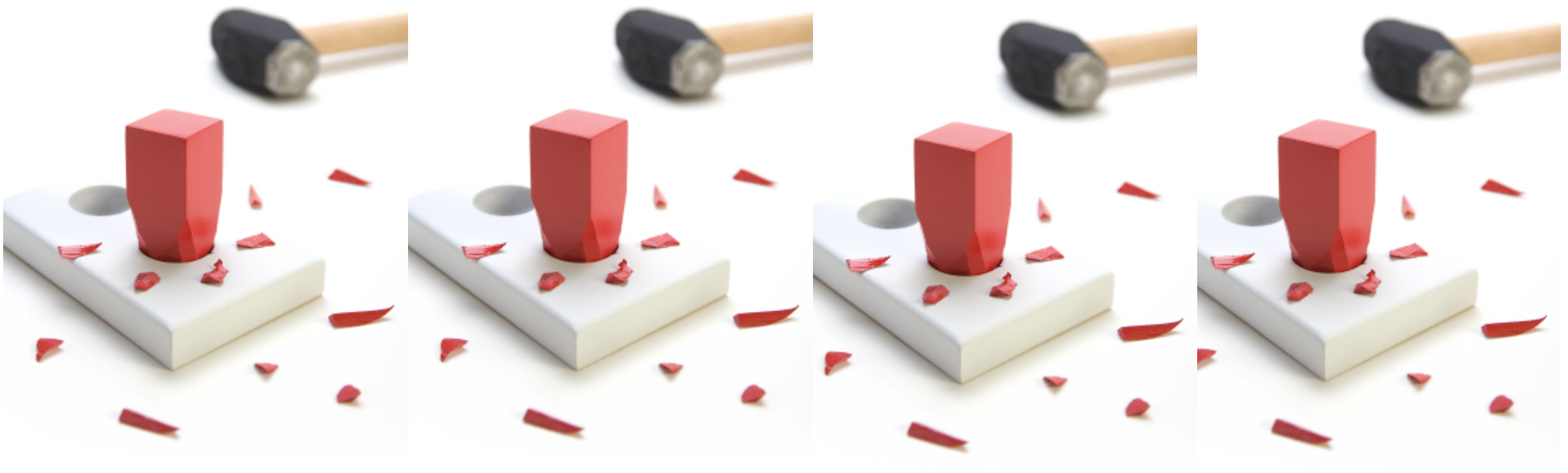
# 'Issues' with our approach to SEA

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# 'Issues' with our approach to SEA

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*Four examples....*



# 'Issues' with our approach to SEA

***Example 1:** We (some of us) consider SEA as a 'quasi' rational procedure (screening, scoping, analysis und report, monitoring, participation), and we aim at achieving (more or less) ambitious objectives – e.g. global climate change below 2C ... (Trend is in excess of 3C in this century)*

*At the same time we have economic growth targets of e.g. 3%...*

*Objectives and targets are frequently not defined through SEA, but 'externally' (SDGs...).*

*Compatibility is rarely 'secured' and 'trade-offs' that should not be made are made..*

*And SEA is (frequently) 'toothless'*



# 'Issues' with our approach to SEA

Ambition...



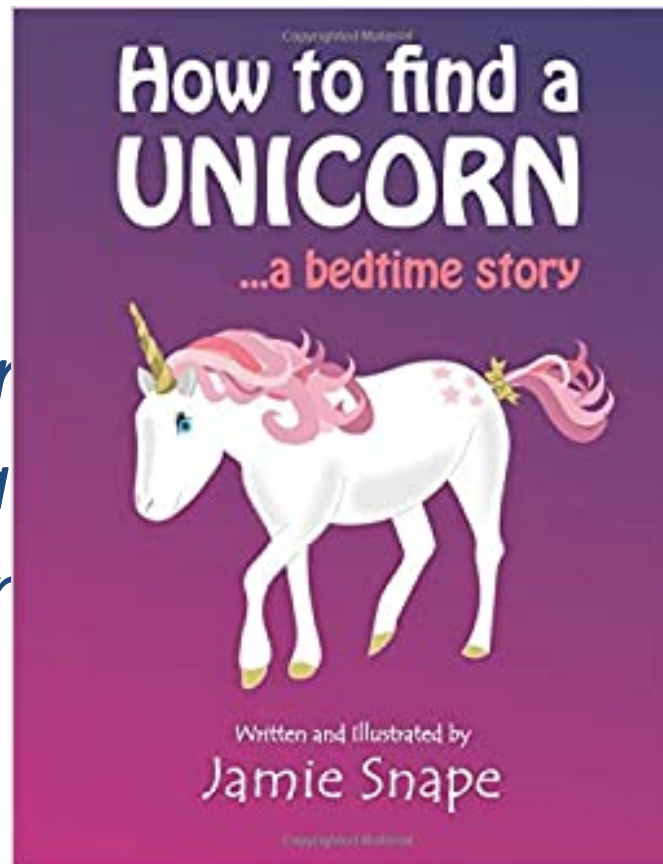
... and Reality



# 'Issues' with our approach to SEA

---

*Are 'we' (or  
options that  
environment*



*e) open for  
order to reach*

# ‘Issues’ with our approach to SEA

---





# 'Issues' with our approach to SEA

## Example 2: We 'Confirm'

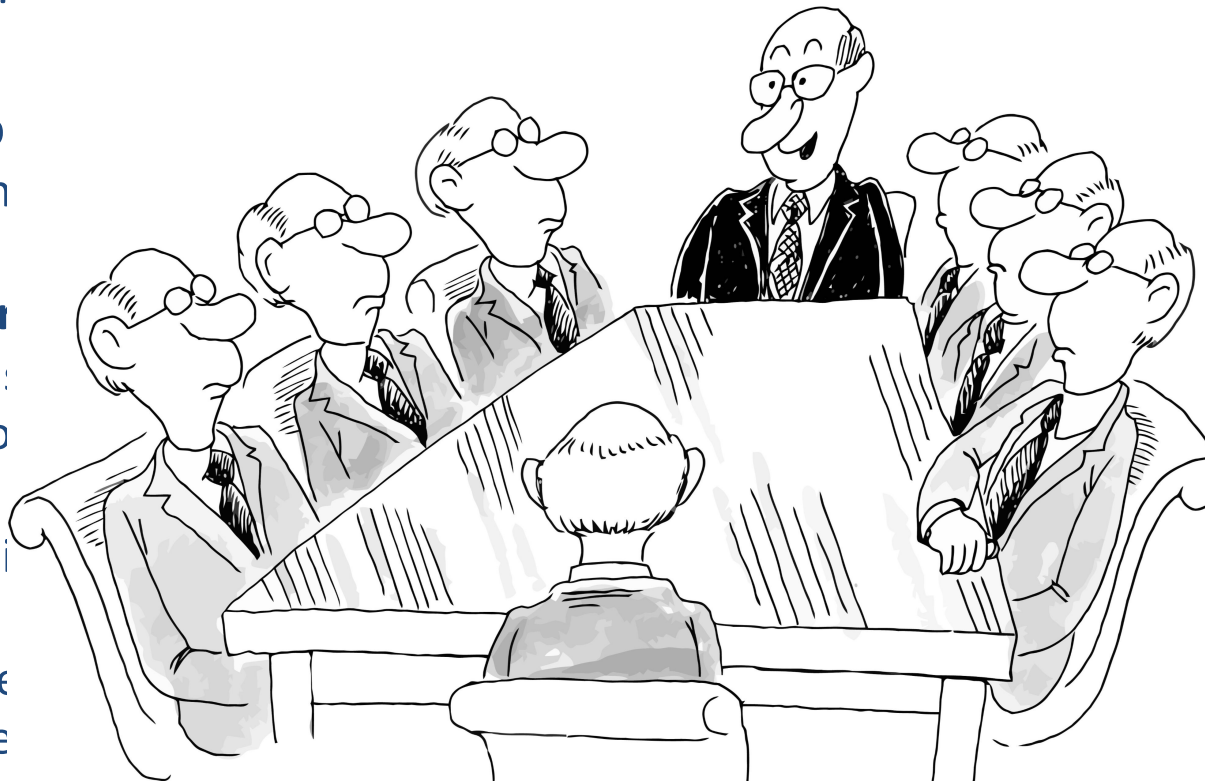
'Confirmation bias' - reinforcing our world view / the way we see things

The 'Dunning-Kruger Effect' - coming across as an expert who comes across as a novice

When a conclusion is reached, it is often based on a limited set of data

The backfire effect - when a person's beliefs are challenged, they may actually become more convinced of their original beliefs rather than accepting new information

'Groupthink': so



with their existing

I think that person is, everybody talking about

defend it

s,

ns.

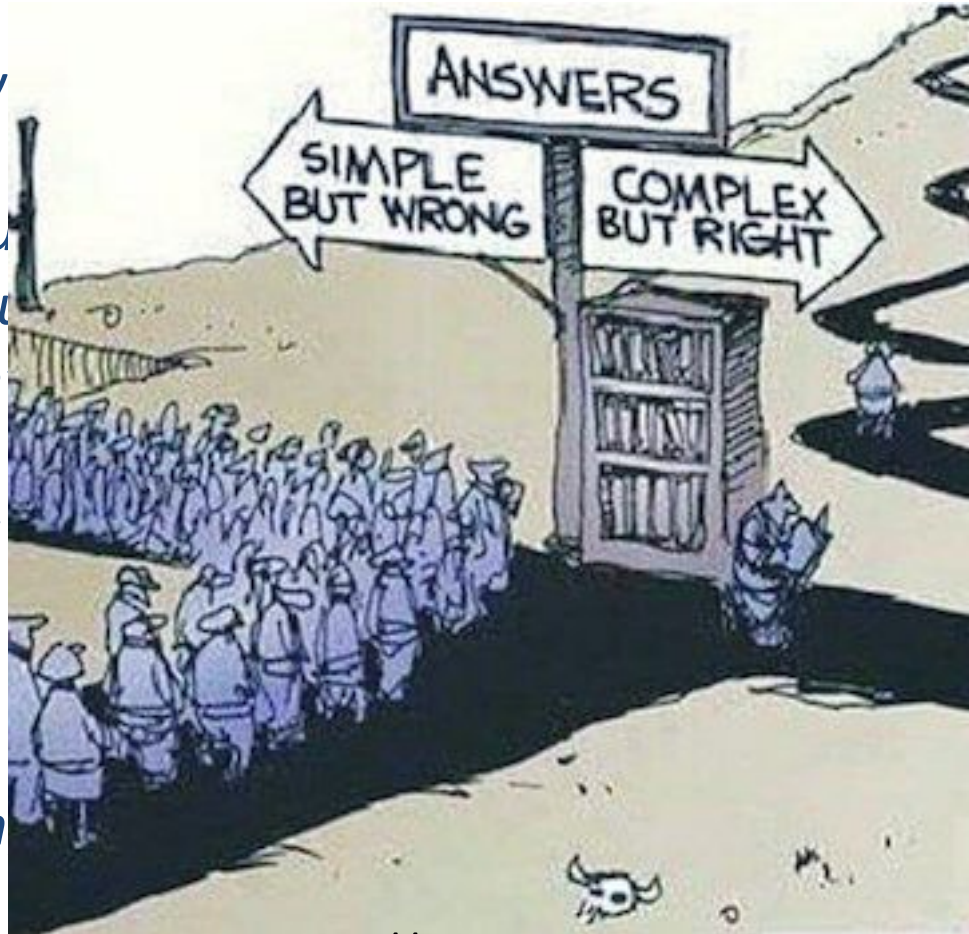
Today's theme is "Getting Beyond Group Think"

Source: <https://productmanagement.buzz>

# 'Issues' with our approach to SEA

## *Example 3: Power*

- A regional authority (owning about 10% of the process hasn't made assumptions and that this
- The problem
- ... and the impact



*We know that X  
project. – but the  
what our  
is way too low  
on...*

*champions...*

Source: <https://independentaustralia.net>

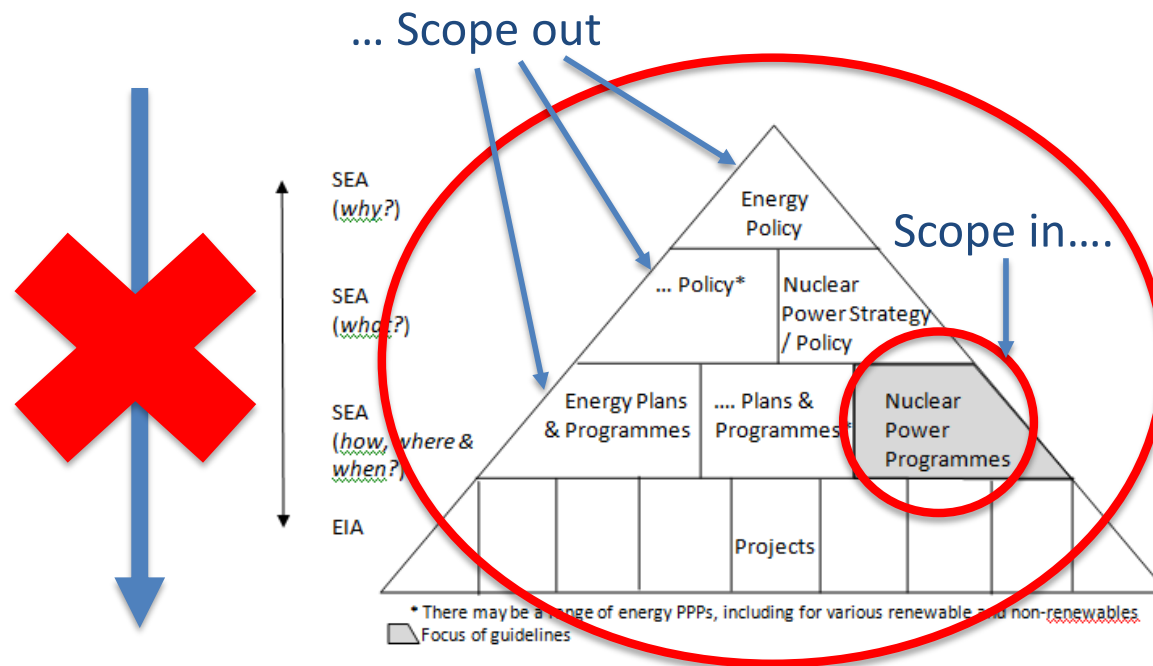
# ‘Issues’ with our approach to SEA

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# 'Issues' with our approach to SEA

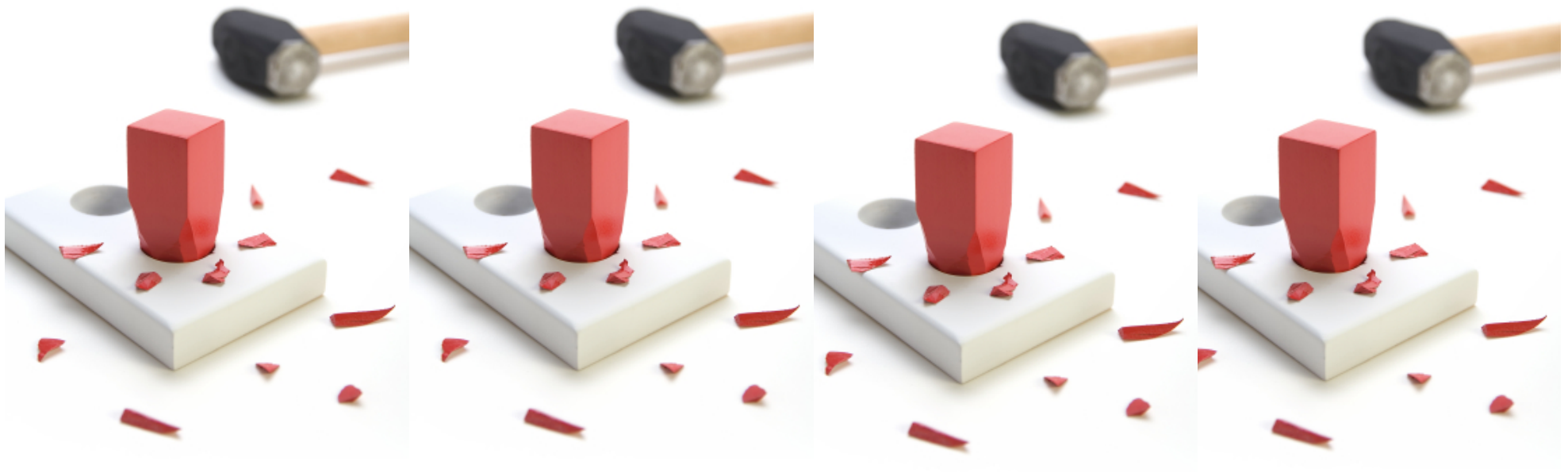
*Example 4: We still treat SEA as an 'isolated' process, which is applied to a particular plan / programme*



*And don't allow for an assessment of 'logical' options*

# So, what do we need to do?

---



# Easy...

---

During the [Apollo 13](#) space mission, an [oxygen tank](#) explosion left the [command module](#) uninhabitable. Using the [lunar module](#) as a [lifeboat](#), the crew evacuated into the lunar module for the rest of the trip to the [Moon](#) and back to Earth. Among the problems they had to solve was that the [carbon dioxide scrubbers](#) were being used up too quickly, being designed for the requirements of two [astronauts](#) for 1 ½ days, not three for four days. There were unused canisters in the command module, but those were cube-shaped and large, not cylindrical and small as in the lunar module. [Ground Control](#) put together a team with the objective to find a way to use only items available on the [spaceship](#) to build something to make the control module canisters usable. Using plastic sample bags and cardboard from the log books covers as a funnel, the cabin air was pumped through the [lithium hydroxide](#) using a [pressure suit](#) hose, into a [fan](#) and then through a [sock](#), which acted as the [filter](#). The whole thing was held together with [duct tape](#).<sup>[11]</sup>

Source: Wikipedia.org

# To end with ... an assertion...

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# To end with ... an assertion...

We know a lot!

**Edward Elgar**  
PUBLISHING

## Handbook on Strategic Environmental Assessment

Edited by **Thomas Fischer**, University of Liverpool, UK  
and **Ainhoa González**, University College Dublin, Ireland

This comprehensive *Handbook* shows how Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), an important decision support tool for strategies, policies, plans and programmes, is applied globally. It reflects on SEA practices and the advancements made over the past three decades in the development of SEA.

Forty-six expert international contributors discuss the conceptual approaches and applications of SEA in 31 countries, examining numerous sectors, including land-use, transport, energy and water. They also explore how SEA is applied at trans-national, national, regional and local levels, and at a range of decision tiers, including in strategy and policy, as well as in plans and programmes. Analysing how different situations of application are systematically approached, chapters provide a critical insight into the objectives of SEA and the range of methodologies that are available. Taking a forward-thinking approach, the *Handbook* also identifies key trends and prospects for SEA in addition to addressing issues of SEA effectiveness and theory development.



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But don't (can't?) use / apply that knowledge...



# Thanks! Danke! Tänan! Tack!

---

*‘Success consists of going from failure to failure without loss of enthusiasm’*

